



WORTHING BOROUGH
COUNCIL

Getting Involved:

Making the most of Worthing Borough Full Council Meetings

A visitor's guide

Welcome to Worthing Borough Council

Meetings of the Council and its Committees are open to the public so that there is transparency in the decisions taken by elected Councillors, which affect our everyday lives.

Members of the public are always welcome at our meetings. For those who have never been before, this brief guide is designed to explain exactly what is happening.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask any of the councillors or officers, either before or after the meeting. They can all be identified by name cards on the tables so you will know who you are talking to.

Whilst you are not permitted to take part in the discussions, time has been set aside during the meeting for the public to ask relevant questions.

You will be invited by the Mayor at the appropriate point to put your question.

The Council meeting is more formal than Committee meetings. The meetings are governed by a set of procedure rules to be followed. Councillors must stand to speak and officers of the Council do not usually join in any discussions.

Health and Safety

At the start of each meeting the arrangements for Health and Safety, including emergency evacuation, will be read out.

Please ensure that you are able to identify the Emergency Exit nearest to you.

Who does what?

The Mayor

The Mayor sits at the centre of the dais in the Council Chamber facing the Councillors in the Council Chamber. The Mayor's role is to preside over Council meetings, ensuring business is carried out efficiently and with equality for all participants. The Mayor also ensures that the Council meeting is a forum where issues of concern to the local community are considered.

Deputy Mayor of the Council

The Deputy Mayor takes charge in the Mayor's absence. In the Mayor's presence the Deputy Mayor sits at the Mayors' right during Council meetings.

Senior Officers

The Chief Executive and Directors sit on the front bench directly below the Mayor's dais. To the Mayors' left sits the Monitoring Officer and a Democratic Services Representative.

The Members

The members of the Council (i.e. the elected councillors) are seated in the Chamber in their political groups. The Council has 37 councillors elected to represent you. They all meet together at full council during the year but much of the work is done by Cabinet Members or committees, either those that decide on Policy or those scrutinising and advising the Council.

The Press and Public

The public are able to sit in the public gallery and there is an area for reporters. Councillors and Officers are entitled to be treated with respect during the meeting and, except during public question time, comments from the public gallery are not permitted.

Recording of the meeting

The open part of full meetings of Council are audio live streamed including public question time. The recording is made available on the Council's website:

<https://democracy.adur-worthing.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=397>

Those wishing to record the meeting themselves must adhere to the recording of Council meetings procedure rules that can be found in the Council's constitution:

<https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/about-the-councils/constitutions/>

The Agenda

Available to you is a copy of the agenda. This lists all the items that are going to be discussed. Most items have a written report including one or more recommendations.

On the agenda is an opportunity for the public to ask questions. Public question time will not exceed 30 (thirty) minutes. Pre-submitted questions must be given to Democratic Services by midday, two clear working days before the date of the meeting. During public question time any person, after giving his/her name and address, may ask any member of the Council no more than two oral questions. A member of the public who has put a question in person, may also put one supplementary question without notice, to the Cabinet Member who has replied to their original question. A supplementary question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.

There is also an opportunity to hear deputations from the public. A deputation cannot exceed five minutes and only one person will speak on behalf of the group. That person will speak for no longer than five minutes, following which they may answer any questions from Members. For more information about asking public questions and deputations please contact the Democratic Services Manager on the details at the end of this document.

A few matters are exempt from discussion in public. There will be a good reason for this, e.g. because the matter involves personal details of an individual or financial information about private sector firms which could benefit their competitors. You will be asked to leave the Chamber before such matters are discussed.

Exempt items are normally discussed at the end of the meeting to avoid causing you any inconvenience.

The agenda must be published and available to councillors and the public five clear working days before the meeting. This gives everyone time to read and understand the reports. You can find copies of agendas here:

<https://democracy.adur-worthing.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteeId=397>

Urgent Items

Occasionally urgent matters arise after the agenda has been produced and, if the Mayor agrees and the urgency is justified, these are also discussed at the meeting.

Making Decisions

Resolutions

The matters that come before the Council for decision are as follows:

- (1) Executive Recommendations (Joint Strategic Committee, Cabinet and Cabinet Members);
- (2) Recommendations from Joint Audit and Governance Committee
- (3) Scrutiny Reports and Recommendations;
- (4) Approval of specific Plans and Strategies;
- (5) Items only the full council can approve, e.g. The Council tax base, The Local Plan

Executive Recommendations;

The agenda will contain recommendations for the Council to consider.

Scrutiny Reports;

The Council may ask Overview and Scrutiny to carry out a piece of research, investigation or review Council services. These findings will be included on the Council agenda.

Approval of Specific Plans and Strategies;

The Council, as a sovereign body, must approve certain things like the rate of Council Tax and the Corporate Plan. The Cabinet will be able to make suggestions to Council on these issues.

Special Council Meetings

The Council may hold a debate on a specific matter which affects the Borough of Worthing. There will be publicity of the date and subject. This can include meetings granting Aldermanship or granting of the Freedom of the Borough.

Voting

The Council will debate the items before it. Once a councillor moves a proposal it must be seconded before it can be put to the vote by way of a show of hands. Another councillor can propose an amendment to change the original proposal.

Voting may sometimes appear confusing because amendments to a recommendation have to be voted on first. Amendments are dealt with one at a time in the order proposed.

The Mayor will explain what is happening so that both councillors and the public know exactly what is being voted on.

Sometimes Councillors request a recorded vote. This is where each Councillor will be asked how they have voted - and this will then be recorded in the minutes.

The Minutes

The record of what went on at the meeting is called the 'Minutes'. The Democratic Services Officer writes these shortly after the meeting and copies can be obtained at the council offices or from the Council's website approximately two weeks after the meeting.

At the beginning of the next meeting these Minutes have to be approved as correct, or have any factual inaccuracies corrected, before being signed by the Mayor. Thus, a permanent and accurate record is kept of all the business dealt with by the council and its committees.

This record is available to the public and you can ask to see it.

The Constitution

A document known as the Constitution is available setting out the detail of how the Council makes decisions. Copies are available from Democratic Services or on the internet at: <https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/about-the-councils/constitutions/>

Democratic Services Manager

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Where and when are meetings held?

The meetings are usually held at 6:30pm in Worthing Town Hall on Chapel Road. You can find more details here:
<https://democracy.adur-worthing.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=397>