



## Rutland County Council

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### **Guidance for Deputations or Questions at Meetings**

This guidance applies to the submission of deputations or questions at meetings of the Council or its Committees (including Scrutiny). The processes for submission of petitions and speaking on planning applications are covered in separate guidance.

Full details of the processes to be followed can be found in the Council's Procedure Rules at Part 4 of [the adopted Constitution](#).

#### **Deputation**

A deputation is a verbal statement to the Council or relevant body concerning a matter affecting Rutland and for which the Council has responsibility.

A deputation does not guarantee you an answer or any particular course of action. It does enable you to state views on a matter known to Councillors and will be presented at a public meeting that will usually be minuted and recorded as a matter of permanent record.

#### **Question**

A question is where you seek an answer from the Council or relevant body on a specific matter, this may be information you have not previously obtained or may be a method by which to ensure the answers are heard in public.

A question will receive a response but is not a method to state your own views, nor can a question trigger a debate or discussion which is the right of elected Councillors.

#### **Submission of Deputations or Questions**

- Deputations and Questions can be submitted to meetings of:
  - The full Council
  - Audit and Risk Committee
  - Conduct Committee
  - Constitution Commission
  - Employment and Appeals Committee
  - Health and Wellbeing Board
  - Planning and Licensing Committee (But not on specific applications)
  - Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Deputations and Questions should be submitted to the Council's Governance Team who are also available to assist and advise you where needed. The team can be contacted at [governance@rutland.gov.uk](mailto:governance@rutland.gov.uk) or at Catmose, Catmos Street, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HP. Or by telephone during working hours at 01572 720993 or 01572 722577
- Your deputation or question should be addressed to the person presiding at the meeting (usually the Chair or Vice-Chair).

- A deputation or question should not among other matters:
  - Cover more than one topic.
  - Be regarding a matter for which the Council or relevant body has no responsibility or which does not affect Rutland.
  - Be offensive, frivolous, defamatory or of a personal nature.
  - Be substantially the same as a petition, deputation or question which has been put at a meeting of the relevant body within the previous six months.
  - Be about any matter where there is a right of appeal to the courts, a tribunal or to a Government Minister.
  - Be about any specific matter which would require confidential or exempt information to be divulged as defined in the [Access to Information Rules](#).
- The deadlines for submitting a deputation or question are set out below

Participation Method	Deadline
Deputation	A request to make a deputation should be made by midday 3 working days before the meeting in question.
	The text of the deputation should then be delivered by midday on the day of the meeting in question.
Questions with notice	The question should be submitted by 3 working days before the meeting in question.
Question at short notice (Not applicable to meetings of Full Council)	<p>Questions may be submitted up to 15 minutes before the meeting provided it relates to an item on the agenda.</p> <p>However, it may not always be possible to provide an answer for a question at short notice, in which case it will be answered in writing after the meeting.</p>

#### Example of Deadlines throughout the week

Day of a Meeting	Day on which a question or request to submit a deputation should be submitted, with +1 for every Saturday, Sunday and bank holiday in the days before the meeting.
Monday	Preceding Wednesday
Tuesday	Preceding Thursday
Wednesday	Preceding Friday
Thursday	Preceding Monday
Friday	Preceding Tuesday

## Attendance at a meeting to submit your deputation or question.

- The Clerk will introduce you to the Committee members at the relevant point in the proceedings and the Chair will welcome you and ask you to read the text of your deputation or question.
- For in-person meetings a dedicated seat at the meeting table will be provided for this purpose. For online meetings you will be invited to join the meeting as a panellist.
- **Please read your deputation or question to members exactly as submitted. No changes or amendments to the submitted text are allowed.**
- The total time allowed by the Chair for each deputation will be **5 minutes**. The total time allowed by the Chair for each question submitted with notice including the response will be **5 minutes**. The total time allowed by the Chair for each question submitted at short notice including the response will be **3 minutes**.
- You may therefore wish to practice reading your question or deputation out loud before submission to ensure you can read it in time.
- If you are not able to attend the meeting, then you may ask a representative to put the deputation or question on your behalf, but you must notify the Governance Team when the notice of the question is given.
- If the person who is to ask the question is not present at the meeting when the question is reached on the agenda, the question shall be taken as printed on the agenda and answered. A copy of the answer shall then be sent to the person asking the question and published with the minutes.
- After your deputation has been made, Members of the body may then ask you questions for a period of no more than five minutes.
- After your question has received a reply, you may ask one supplementary question for the purposes of clarifying the reply if you submitted your question with notice. If you submitted your question at short notice, then no supplementary question will be allowed.
- Every representation will be put and answered without discussion. No discussion nor resolution is permitted on any question or in reply to a question.
- The maximum time allowed for presenting deputations and questions at a meeting shall be 30 minutes. Any questions not resolved at the end of 30 minutes shall be answered in writing and published with the minutes.

## Please Note

- Meetings take place in public so please be courteous and polite as you would at any similar public place. Any remarks should relate to the subject matter only and should not constitute a personal attack upon any person or contain any offensive language or aggressive gestures.
- Use of inappropriate, offensive or aggressive language and/or behaviour will not be tolerated. Should unacceptable behaviour persist, the Chairman reserves the right to order that the speaker leave the meeting.

## **Assistance**

If you require any help or advice, the Governance Officers can assist you, this may include:

- Explaining and clarifying the contents of this guide and the process.
- Helping you to reword the question to meet our requirements.
- Assisting with minor grammatical errors prior to publishing the text of your deputation/question.

**If you have any queries relating to the above information or require an accessible version of this document, please contact the Governance Team ([governance@rutland.gov.uk](mailto:governance@rutland.gov.uk) 01572 720993)**