

A guide to
**Meetings
of Council**



ABOUT MEETINGS OF COUNCIL:

The meeting of Council is made up of all 42 elected members (councillors). It is held in public and decides the council's policy framework and budget.

There are usually seven timetabled meetings held each municipal year, including the annual meeting.

Annual Meeting of Council

The Annual Meeting of Council is held at the start of the municipal year (May), at which the chairman is elected and the vice-chairman appointed. As well as chairing meetings of Council, the chairman also represents the district at civic functions and a range of events held throughout the year. The Annual Meeting of Council also elects the leader of the council, appoints councillors to committees and decides on changes to the council's constitution, 'The Way We Work'. Annual meetings of Council do not include public or member question times or notices of motion.

Extraordinary Meetings of Council

In addition to the ordinary, timetabled meetings, extraordinary meetings can also be called by the chairman of the council, the council's monitoring officer or any five councillors, to discuss specific items of business. As with annual meetings, extraordinary meetings do not include public or member question times or notices of motion, unless specified in the requisition for the meeting.

Ordinary Meetings of Council

In addition to items of business, which the Council is required to consider standard items dealt with at ordinary meetings of Council include communications, public question time, member question time and notices of motion.

Communications

During this item, the chairman, vice-chairman, leader, cabinet members or the chief executive are able to inform members of specific items of interest.

Public Question Time

Members of the public are able to ask up to two questions of the leader of the council, cabinet members or chairmen of committees at ordinary meetings of Council.

Questions can be about anything that is the responsibility of the council or otherwise affects the district and must be submitted to the chief executive in writing (or e-mail) by 10am on the third clear working day before the meeting.

Questions must include the name and address of the questioner and the name of the councillor to whom it is addressed.

At the meeting, a questioner can ask one supplementary question, related to the initial question or the response.

Member Question Time

Councillors may also ask questions of the leader, cabinet members or chairmen of committees and are governed by similar rules to those set out in public question time.

Notices of Motion

Councillors can also make formal proposals for consideration at a meeting of Council about anything which is the responsibility of the council or otherwise affects the district. Formal notification of these motions must be given prior to the meeting. Any such motions submitted by councillors will be included on the agenda for that meeting.

Urgent motions can be considered at short notice in certain circumstances.

Agendas and Minutes

Agendas detailing the business to be considered are published five clear working days before each meeting. Following the meeting, minutes are issued recording the decisions made.

Agendas and minutes are available on the council's website at www.basildon.gov.uk

PROCEDURE AT MEETINGS:

Firm rules govern meetings of Council, including time restrictions for public and member question times, the presentation of reports and the contribution by councillors to a debate. Full details of these rules of procedure are contained within the council's constitution, 'The Way We Work', which is available to view at the Basildon Centre reception desk and on the council's website at www.basildon.gov.uk

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AT MEETINGS:

Members of the public are welcome to attend the meetings of Council to view the proceedings and see decisions being made. However, these meetings are council meetings held in public, not public meetings. This means that, apart from public question time, members of the public are not able to make comment or to take part in the debate.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

For further information on meetings of Council contact:

Helen Chapman,

Electoral and Central Services Manager,

Tel: 01268 294351

E-mail: helen.chapman@basildon.gov.uk

or write to:

Central and Electoral Services,

Basildon District Council,

The Basildon Centre,

St. Martin's Square,

Basildon, Essex

SS14 1DL.

For information on other council committees, contact

Paul Burkinshaw,

Democratic Services Manager,

Tel: 01268 294422,

E-mail: paul.burkinshaw@basildon.gov.uk

or write to:

Overview and Scrutiny

Basildon District Council,

The Basildon Centre,

St. Martin's Square,

Basildon, Essex

SS14 1DL.

Further information can also be found on the council's website at www.basildon.gov.uk

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