

## Summary of the Scheme of Public Participation for Public Meetings after 6 May 2021

In line with legal requirements, and subject to Coronavirus risk assessments and procedures:-

- A small number of members of the Press and public can register to attend and **observe** the meeting in person;
- In addition, seats in the meeting room are provided for those who register to **speak** on each item<sup>1</sup>, by following the procedure below:-

1. **Written notice of a wish to speak at the meeting** (by means of the procedure below) **must be given, either to [membersservices@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:membersservices@ashford.gov.uk) or on the Council's website at <https://secure.ashford.gov.uk/committeesystem/haveyoursay.aspx>, by 15:00 hours on the second working day before the meeting.**

Hence, for example, for meetings of the Planning Committee on Wednesdays:-

- (i) If there is no Bank Holiday on the Monday preceding the meeting, written notice must be given by 15:00 hours on the Monday.
- (ii) If there is a Bank Holiday on the Monday preceding the meeting, written notice must be given by 15:00 hours on the preceding Friday.
- (iii) If the meeting immediately follows the Easter Weekend, written notice must be given by 15:00 hours on Maundy Thursday.

2. **Registering to speak at the meeting confers the right to submit (and, if desired, make in person) a speech** as follows:-

- (i) on a first-come, first-served basis, one speech in support of, and one speech against, an item for decision, or
- (ii) as a duly-authorized representative of the Parish Council<sup>2</sup> or Community Forum affected by an item for decision.

3. **All those registered to speak must submit to [membersservices@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:membersservices@ashford.gov.uk), by 10:00 hours on the day of the meeting, a copy of their speech in written, legible English.**

Speeches must be no longer than 400 words, printed in 12-point non-italic sans-serif font (e.g. Arial); any text above 400 words will not be read out. No speech should contain personal data about individuals, other than the speaker's name and (if relevant) postal address.

Any registered speakers who do not submit their speeches as above are not permitted to speak at the meeting (even if present in person).

4. **At the meeting:-**

- (i) Speakers who are **present in person** may read their previously-submitted speeches when called to do so, but may not read any other material;
- (ii) If speakers are **not present in person**, their previously-submitted speeches will be read to the meeting by a competent Officer for and on behalf of the speakers, at the normal times and in the normal order (subject to the Chairman's normal discretion).

**IMPORTANT:**

An Officer reading any speech on behalf of any speaker shall have discretion to omit/edit out any inappropriate language, information or statements.

If any defamation, insult, personal or confidential information, etc. is contained in any speech received from any speaker, and/or is read to the meeting by an Officer, each speaker accepts by submitting the speech to be fully responsible for all consequences thereof and to indemnify the Officer and the Council accordingly.

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<sup>1</sup> Speakers may be asked to wait elsewhere until the item on which they are to speak is called.

<sup>2</sup> The term "Parish Council" includes Town Councils and Community Councils.