

Guide to Full Council Meetings

Full Council is made up of 54 Councillors and meets five or six times a year. The law requires the Full Council to agree the budget, key policies and strategies. The public may submit questions to each meeting and Councillors debate options on important issues concerning the Borough.

Meetings are held in public with the press attending. Filming, photography and recording are permitted but please do not film or photograph the public gallery.

Mobile phones must be switched off, or be on silent.

Who's Who?

Name plates are displayed at the meeting, but you may find the following information useful:

The Mayor – Councillor Arnold England. The Mayor is the Chair of the Council Meeting. He will commence the meeting and then hand over to the Speaker to manage the Agenda.

The Speaker – Councillor Paul Davis. The Speaker manages the business of the meeting on behalf of the Mayor. It is his job to interpret the Council Procedure Rules and control the meeting to ensure that proceedings are orderly.

The Monitoring Officer sits next to the Speaker to give legal and procedural advice.

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for managing the Council.

The Democratic Services Officer times the debates and takes the minutes. She will also assist members of the public on the procedure at the beginning of the meeting.

The Members are elected Councillors. They sit in the rows of tables in front of the top table. Each political group sits together, with the Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet on the front rows facing the Mayor and Speaker.

What is being discussed?

To help you follow the discussions, the papers are available for inspection at Reception in Addenbrooke House; via the Council website (www.telford.gov.uk/meetings) or a limited number of copies will be available at the Council meeting.

The conduct of the meeting is governed by a set of procedures and rules of debate called Council Procedure Rules, which have been agreed by the Council, and by legal requirements. These are set out in the Council's Constitution which can be viewed online at www.telford.gov.uk/constitution

A typical agenda is described overleaf.

The Mayor brings the meeting to order and hands the business to the Speaker.

Prayers	A member of the local community, often representing a religious faith, will lead the Council in prayers and reflections
Apologies for Absence	The Democratic Services Officer will read out those apologies received prior to the meeting and Members may submit further apologies from the floor.
Declarations of Interest	Members have to say publicly if they have a financial interest in any of the items on the agenda. This is called 'declaring an interest' and, when the relevant item is reached, the Member must normally leave the room while it is being discussed.
Minutes of the Council	Members are asked to confirm the minutes of the previous meeting as a true record.
Leader's Report & Announcements	The Leader gives a speech of up to 5 minutes on any matters of significance to the Borough or on the Cabinet reports.
Mayor's Announcements	The Mayor speaks for up to 5 minutes about his engagements. Sometimes, the Mayor may also have awards to present.
Public Questions	Members of the public have the opportunity to ask questions. All questions must be received 7 clear working days before the meeting. The protocol can be viewed at www.telford.gov.uk/meetings
Cabinet Decisions Made since the Last Meeting of the Council	Members may ask questions on a point of clarification only about key decisions covered in the Cabinet report
Recommendations from Cabinet	The report is presented by the Lead Cabinet Member. It must be seconded and debated. At the conclusion of the debate a vote is taken.
Reports to Council	A Member will present the report and propose the recommendations, it must be seconded and debated. At the conclusion of the debate a vote is taken.
Recommendations from Boards and Committees	The Chairman of the Committee presents the report and proposes the recommendations. It must be seconded and debated. At the conclusion of the debate a vote is taken.
Questions	Members are allowed to ask questions on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties which affect the Borough.
Motions	Motions are single issues of importance which are debated when two or more Councillors give notice of a topic relating to matters for which the Council has responsibility or which affect the Borough. They are proposed, seconded and debated in the same way as other business on the Agenda.

Although the whole Council meeting may continue until 9.00pm, you are free to come and go or just attend those matters of interest to you.

Voting is usually by a show of hands but voting may be made by roll call. Voting sometimes seems a bit confusing because amendments have to be voted on separately. If an amendment is passed the amended motion then becomes the 'substantive' motion (or motion to be considered) and must be voted on again. If it is supported it becomes the resolution. The Speaker usually explains what is happening so that everyone knows exactly what is being voted on.