

Devon and Cornwall Police Authority
Protocol for Questions from the Public at Full Authority Meetings
(Agreed by the Police Authority 24.06.11)

If you have a specific requirement such as having this protocol in a different format or language or you would like assistance to make your request in writing please contact us to discuss how we can help you.

1. A member of the public who lives in Devon, Cornwall or the Isles of Scilly may submit a written question to the Authority Chair which will be answered at the full authority meeting where there will be a specific agenda item called "Questions from the Public".
2. The Agenda item "Questions from the Public" will generally be taken after the "Chairman's Announcements" and it will be a standing agenda item so if no questions have been received that will be reported.
3. The question must be put in writing (email and fax included) and reach the Chief Executive at least 5 working days before the authority meeting. The questioner must include their name and address on the written request. The notice of the question and the minutes of the meeting will include the person's name and the village /town / city given as their address (not the exact address).
4. The question must be about Police Authority business and related to a strategic issue relevant to the police authority. If a question is related to operational policing the questioners permission will be sought to forward the question to the Constabulary for a response. The question does not need to be about an item on the meeting agenda.
5. The question must be no longer than 100 words and must be framed so as to seek information rather than to make a statement.
6. A member of the public may ask a maximum of 2 different questions in any 12 month period.
7. If the same question has been asked in the previous 12 months the question will not be raised at the authority meeting but the questioner will be sent a written copy of the previous response.
8. If the questioner is present at the Police Authority meeting they will be asked to pose their question, if they are not present the Chairman will read the question to the meeting.
9. The response to the question will be given at the Police Authority meeting.
10. At the Police Authority meeting there will be no discussion allowed on either the question or the answer.
11. A maximum of 30 minutes will be allowed at the Authority meeting for asking the questions and giving the responses. The questions and responses will be taken in the order in which the questions were received. If for any reason, including insufficient time for all questions to be posed and answered, a response cannot be given at the meeting a written answer will be sent to the questioner within 7 working days of the meeting and a copy sent to all Authority Members.

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12. The person who submitted the question may, upon hearing the response at the meeting, ask one supplementary question and receive a further answer.

13. If questions are unsuitable in form, frivolous defamatory, derogatory otherwise offensive or relate to a matter the Authority would be likely to consider in the absence of the press and public, the Authority Chair has the right to rule the question out of order and that it shall not be responded to within the public part of the meeting or at all.