



How can we increase public involvement in the decision-making process at South Cambridgeshire District Council? We're sure you're well aware of the challenges we face! There will be a number of changes this year – a trial of late afternoon / evening meetings, public speaking at Planning Committee, and the Scrutiny and Overview Committee is planning to meet in different venues around the District.

Could you help us spread the word about taking part? We have contact lists for Parish Councils and Meetings, media, partner organisations, voluntary sector...are we missing someone? Are there local sports, arts, faith, community or other groups in your parish we should be contacting? We would be grateful if you could include our contact details on your Parish Council / Meeting website and in your parish magazine, and if you could post the list of forthcoming public meetings on your village noticeboard.

Have a question?

Questions from the public are a regular feature of Council and of Scrutiny and Overview Committee meetings and public speaking at Planning Committee meetings has been introduced with effect from 1 July 2007 – certain guidelines apply (see the Library section of www.scambs.gov.uk/meetings)

E-mail reminders



We now offer an automatic subscription service on the website, letting you sign up for e-mail notification of new agendas, consultations, publications - or anything concerning your ward which is going to go before a committee or other decision-maker. Go to www.scambs.gov.uk/meetings and select "Subscribe to updates" from the menu on the left.

What's coming up?

Agendas and reports for public meetings, or for any decision to be made by a member of the Council's Executive, ***must be available to the public at least five clear working days*** before a meeting, to give you time to see what is being recommended and to make representations – don't forget that your local District Councillor can make representations on your behalf.

Long before the agenda publication, major decisions are identified through the Council's Forward Plan, available a fortnight before the end of each month. This contains detailed information – who will make the decision and when, available documents, any consultation undertaken, and who to contact if you have questions, concerns or other representations to be made.



If you want to receive automatic e-mail notification of progress towards a decision, visit www.scambs.gov.uk/meetings and click on Forward Plans on the left-hand side menu. Choose the most recent plan from the list and click on "Subscribe to Updates for item...", then follow the on-screen instructions.

Can I ask the Council to investigate a particular issue?

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee invites members of the public to submit items for it to consider. There's an on-line form on the Committee's website, www.scambs.gov.uk/scrutiny, or you can contact Democratic Services. Your suggestions must relate to a service area for which SCDC has responsibility. If you have an issue of particular local interest, the Committee may be able to hold a public meeting in or near your village.



Can decisions be challenged?

Decisions made by the Cabinet (Executive) or by any one of its members who has delegated authority to make decisions, are published on the Council's website within five working days of being taken, and a summary of all decisions taken each week is published in the SCDC Weekly Bulletin. As soon as the decision has been taken and published, it enters the "call-in" period, during which time any five members of the Council, or the Scrutiny and Overview Committee Chairman can challenge the decision on one of the following grounds:

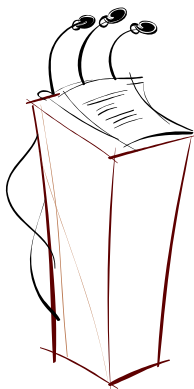
- It is or would be contrary to the policy framework or contrary or not wholly in accordance with the Council's budget; or
- the action taken would not be proportionate to the desired outcome; the decision was made without due consultation and taking of professional advice from officers; the decision-maker failed to consider other available options, etc.

Speak to your local District Councillor if you are concerned about decisions which have been taken, and you have every right to ask your District Councillor to "call-in" the decision for further consideration. If a call-in occurs, the decision cannot be enacted until the Scrutiny and Overview Committee has reviewed the merits of the case. The Committee can either agree with the original decision, in which case it can be implemented immediately, or it can make an alternative recommendation to be considered by Cabinet or Council.

Decisions of the full Council, or of the Planning, Licensing or Standards Committees ("regulatory committees") cannot be called-in.

Contact Us

If you have any questions about how you can get involved or about the democratic process, or if you have any suggestions or advice to help us promote opportunities for public involvement, we'd love to hear from you!



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