

We want to make it as easy as possible for you to participate in decision-making and this leaflet tells you how you can take part.

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council operates an 'open door' policy for local residents to ask questions and present petitions.



Welwyn Hatfield Council,
Campus East,
The Campus,
Welwyn Garden City,
AL8 6AE



Open Door to Democracy

www.welhat.gov.uk



www.welhat.gov.uk



Question Time

You have the opportunity to ask a question in person at a Council, Cabinet, Committee or Panel meeting. If you are unable to attend the meeting, you can name someone else to read the questions on your behalf. However, there are some meetings that either have special arrangements (explained further in this leaflet) or cannot accept questions because of the nature of their business. These are:

- **Licensing Sub-Committee**
- **Hackney Carriage Committee**
- **Standards Committee**

Up to 30 minutes is made available for questions at the beginning of full Council meetings and 15 minutes at other meetings.

Questions can be about almost any matter of Council business or local concern.

To ask a question, fill out and return the form on the back of this leaflet or email democracy@welhat.gov.uk. Only one question per person or organisation is allowed at each meeting.

Questions are dealt with on a first come, first served basis, so it is better to let the Council have your question in advance – ideally 48 hours before the meeting, to allow time to prepare a comprehensive answer. The deadline for receipt of questions is 2pm on the day of the meeting.

On the night

A member of the Committee Team will meet you on the night of the meeting to explain procedures and answer any questions.

Each questioner is allowed two minutes in which to pose the question. If Councillors or officers cannot answer the question at the meeting then you will be sent a written reply within ten working days of the meeting.

As there are already opportunities for public consultation on applications, questions cannot be presented to the Planning Control Committee about individual planning applications. Only questions on general planning matters are permitted.

Petitions

Petitions containing 50 or more signatures, together with the names and addresses of those signing, may be presented at full Council, Cabinet, Committee or Panel meetings with the exception of the Licensing Sub-Committee, Hackney Carriage Committee and the Standards Committee.

You can present a petition to the Council about almost any matter of Council business or local concern. Petitions concerning current planning applications should be sent direct to the Chief Planning and Environmental Health Officer.

To present a petition is easy. Fill in and return the form on the back of this leaflet or email democracy@welhat.gov.uk at least seven days before the meeting.

It's best to let us know this early as there will only be time for three petitions to be presented at each full Council or Committee meeting unless the Chairman decides otherwise, and it will be done on a first come, first served basis.

On the night

A member of the Committee Team will meet you on the night of the meeting to explain procedures and answer any questions.

At the start of the meeting you will hand the petition to the Chairman of the Council or Committee and you may address the meeting in person for up to three minutes. If you wish, a councillor, or someone authorised by you, can present the petition on your behalf.

Public Participation in Overview and Scrutiny Committees

There are three Overview and Scrutiny Committees:

- **Environment**
- **Resources**
- **Social**

You can help the Council with the work being carried out by its Overview and Scrutiny Committees. These three Committees develop and review policy and hold the Council's Cabinet to account for the decisions it takes.

The Committees are one of the prime public faces of the Council and members of the public are encouraged to attend and contribute.

The Council believes that public involvement can strengthen the effectiveness, impact and profile of the overview and scrutiny process.

Dates of meetings

The dates, times and venue of the Council meetings are given on our website www.welhat.gov.uk, in the local press or you can find these out by contacting the Council on 01707 357000.

The Cabinet

The Council is administered by the Cabinet consisting of seven members of the majority group. The Cabinet draw up major plans, strategies and budget proposals, which are submitted to the whole council for approval.

Contact details are available online or in the A-Z of services leaflet available from all Council receptions.

Discussing your issue face to face with a councillor

Meet Your Councillor sessions take place on most Saturday mornings throughout the year in locations across the district. You do not need to make an appointment to see a councillor, if you wish to discuss an issue you can turn up on the day.

A Meet Your Councillor leaflet lists the times, dates and venues and can be picked up from all Council reception points, online at www.welhat.gov.uk or by phone on **01707 357419**.

If you wish to know more about asking a question presenting a petition at a meeting, please contact a member of the Committee Team on **01707 357444**, **01707 357443**, **01707 357349** and **01707 357467**.

Public speaking at Planning Control Committee

There is an opportunity to present your case for or against a planning application that is being discussed at committee. The applicant or agent, a member of the local parish council or someone who has objected to the application can address the meeting for three minutes. Only one representative in each category may speak.

Speakers must register by 5pm the day before the meeting. There is a separate guidance note explaining the procedures for speaking at Planning Control Committee. To request a copy, please contact the Committee team.

Open Door Form

Name:

Address:

Telephone (Home):

Telephone (Business):

Email:

Question Time

(Specify meeting)

Your question:

Petition

I intend to submit a petition to (specify meeting)

The subject matter of my petition is:

**Please complete and return to:
Committee Services, Welwyn Hatfield
Borough Council, Council Offices,
Welwyn Garden City, AL8 6AE**

Tel 01707 357000

Fax 01707 357257

Email democracy@welhat.gov.uk www.welhat.gov.uk

**WELWYN
HATFIELD**
BOROUGH COUNCIL

