

Classification	Item No.
Open / Closed	

Meeting:	Standards Committee
Meeting date:	26 th November 2025
Title of report:	Public Participation
Report by:	Jacqui Dennis, Director Law & Governance
Decision Type:	Members are asked to approve and recommend amended public participation guidance to Council
Ward(s) to which report relates	All

Executive Summary:

As part of the annual review of the constitution Members are asked to consider the public participation guidance which forms part of our constitution. Under Part 5 section 6 of our constitution the guidance sets out the role that public participation plays, it encourages citizens to participate in the Council decision making processes and provides an overview of how they can input in to the wider community.

The current public participation guidance has not been recently update and this report sets out proposals for changes to the current guidance.

Recommendation(s)

Consider the reviewed public participation guidance.

To recommend finalised guidance on public participation to Council

.

Summary

The current public participation guidance is appended to the report at Appendix 1. As set out above the guidance has been updated to provide citizens with further detail of how they can actively participate in the Borough, the revised guidance is set out at Appendix 2 to this report. The revised draft sets out details of how the Council approaches consultation and how it communicates with citizens.

A healthy democracy depends on active citizenship. The Council's Public Participation Guidance sets out how residents can:

- Attend and observe meetings.
- Ask questions at public meetings.
- Submit petitions.
- Engage through consultations and community networks.
- Access information about decisions.
- Participate in planning and scrutiny processes.
- Vote in elections and volunteer locally.

Councillors play a key role in enabling participation, ensuring transparency, and representing community views, the roles of Councillors and Officers is set out in the guidance.

Key Elements of Public Participation

1. Attending Meetings

- Public encouraged to attend Council and committee meetings in person or online.
- Meetings of Council and Cabinet are live-streamed.
- Agendas and papers published at least five working days in advance.
- Social media reporting permitted if it does not disrupt proceedings.
- Filming allowed with prior notice to the Chair or Democratic Services Officer.

2. Asking Questions

- Questions can be asked at Full Council, Cabinet, Health & Wellbeing Board, Licensing & Safety, Scrutiny Committees, and Locality Boards.
- Anyone living, working, or studying in Bury may submit questions.
- Notice required: by midday two working days before the meeting.
- One question per person, plus one supplementary question allowed.
- Responses may be oral or written within 10 working days.

3. Petitions

- Petitions welcomed on matters within Council powers.
- Must include a clear statement, names, and addresses of signatories (minimum 50).
- Online submission preferred.
- Petitions with 2,500+ signatories can be presented at Full Council.

4. Consultation and Engagement

- Consultation ensures community views inform decisions.
- Engagement is ongoing dialogue through neighbourhood teams, thematic forums (e.g., Circles of Influence for young people), and PACT meetings.
- Council uses a Consultation Checklist for statutory and best practice compliance.
- Live consultations published on Council website.

5. Communications Channels

- Website, social media, local media, newsletters, community networks, and face-to-face events.
- Principles: clear, accurate, timely, accessible, and two-way.

6. Other Participation Routes

- **Planning:** Comment on applications; speak at Planning Committee.
- **Scrutiny:** Suggest topics for review; submit evidence.
- **Voting:** Register and vote in local and national elections.
- **Volunteering:** Opportunities include community groups, school governors, befriending schemes (buryvcfa.org.uk). Represent ward and borough interests.

7. Role of the Councillor

- Facilitate community engagement and respond to residents' concerns, by asking questions, speaking at Committees, presenting petitions or motions.
- Be contacted to discuss your problem or ideas to improve the ward or borough
- Help you if you need information or are dissatisfied with a Council service by advising or directing you to someone who can help sort out your problem, and can sometimes progress the case on your behalf as a community leader, put forward proposals to improve the ward they represent which may include bringing together different community groups to develop a case for change
- Work with partners and officers to shape policy and services.

The proposed revised guidance also contains the following amendments which if adopted will require further constitutional changes –

- Ability of citizens to ask questions at the Bee Network forum
- Expansion of those who can ask questions at meeting from residents of Bury to include and those studying in Bury

Report Author and Contact Details:

Jacqui Dennis – Director of Law & Governance

J.dennis@bury.gov.uk

Background papers: