

Norfolk Police and Crime Panel

Public Question Time – Guidance Note

In July 2014 the Panel agreed that it wished to introduce a Public Question Time at each ordinary meeting, to enable the public to engage with the Panel and pose questions relating to its remit and functions.

It is not a platform for the public to put questions to the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk or the Chief Constable, both of whom have separate arrangements for dialogue with the public.

Anyone wishing to put a question to the Panel is asked to adhere to the following criteria:

1. Any member of the public who lives, works or studies in Norfolk can submit one question at each ordinary Panel meeting, limited to a maximum of 110 words.
2. Notice of the question must be submitted in writing to Norfolk County Council's Assistant Director of Governance (Democratic & Regulatory Services) at the following postal or email addresses, at least 5 working days before the meeting:

Norfolk County Council,
Democratic Services,
County Hall,
Martineau Lane,
Norwich, NR1 2DH

Email committees@norfolk.gov.uk

The questioner must provide their name, address and contact telephone number.

3. Questions must:
 - a) relate to the Panel's role and responsibilities, and not be questions that:
 - i. should more appropriately be addressed to another party or organisation,
 - ii. relate to a police operational matter
 - iii. relate to matters covered by legal or other proceedings,
 - iv. cover matters relating to the employees of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk.
 - b) not be substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting in the past 6 months;
 - c) not be defamatory, frivolous, vexatious or offensive;
 - d) not require the disclosure of confidential or exempt information; and
 - e) not refer to any matter of a personal nature.
4. The Assistant Director of Governance (Democratic & Regulatory Services), in consultation with the Panel's Chair and Vice-Chair, will review each question to ensure that it meets the criteria for public questions set out in the Rules of

Procedure. Questions that do not meet the criteria will be disallowed, but where appropriate, the questioner will be advised of the correct place to direct their question. Confirmation of receipt of the question and whether it has been allowed will be provided, together with advice about attending the meeting. The final decision as to whether a question will be allowed is for the Assistant Director of Governance (Democratic & Regulatory Services) in consultation with the Chair of the Panel.

5. Questioners must ordinarily attend the meeting to put their question and receive their answer. However, in circumstances where a questioner is unable to attend personally, either:
 - a) with the prior consent of the Chair, a representative of the questioner may attend the Panel meeting and put the question on behalf of the questioner, or
 - b) the answer will be forwarded in writing to the questioner.

At the meeting

The Agenda item will ordinarily allow no more than 30 minutes for this item, although the Chair of the Panel may reduce or extend this at his discretion.

Where the questioner or their representative attends the Panel meeting in person, the questioner (or representative) may ask a supplementary question to follow-up the same subject matter as their original question (subject to time constraints).

Questions will normally be answered at the meeting, but in some cases this might not be practicable and a written answer will be provided within 14 days of the meeting.

Every question (and supplementary) shall be put and answered without discussion.

Role and functions of the Norfolk Police and Crime Panel

The Panel has been established to maintain a 'check and balance' on the performance of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk ("the Commissioner").

The Panel must support and challenge the Commissioner in the exercise of his functions. Its main responsibilities are to:

- review the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan, or any proposed variations;
- review the Commissioner's annual report;
- carry out confirmation hearings to review any senior staff appointments proposed by the Commissioner;
- carry out confirmation hearings to review any Chief Constable appointments proposed by the Commissioner;
- review the Commissioner's proposed precept (the amount he wants to raise from Council Tax) for the forthcoming financial year;
- deal with complaints relating to the conduct of the Commissioner or his Deputy; and
- review or scrutinise any decisions made, or other action taken, by the Commissioner.