



**South
Cambridgeshire**
District Council

South Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnership Public Events – Public Speaking Protocol

Purpose of the Protocol

This protocol explains how members of the public can ask questions or make statements during meetings of (or organised by) the Community Safety Partnership (CSP).

The goal of the protocol is to:

- Encourage constructive public participation
- Keep the event running smoothly and on time
- Ensure questions are relevant, respectful, and made within the time allocated for public speaking
- Protect the safety and wellbeing of all attendees
- Prevent disruption while allowing genuine community concerns to be heard

The Chair of the event retains discretion to manage speaking arrangements in the interest of fairness, safety, and meeting flow.

Who is allowed to speak

Members of the public may ask a question or make a statement about topics relevant to:

- The work of the Community Safety Partnership for South Cambridgeshire
- Community safety in the area
- Crime prevention in the area
- Anti-social behaviour in the area



**South
Cambridgeshire**
District Council

- Partnership work between the 'Responsible Authorities' and the community of South Cambridgeshire

The Chair of the event may also allow representatives of organisations (e.g. neighbourhood groups, charities, partner agencies) to speak when they have a legitimate interest.

Speaking - time limits

To ensure the event runs to time:

- **Time will be allocated** for public questions and statements and will be managed at the discretion of the Chair.
- Each speaker will have **up to 3 minutes, again with the discretion of the Chair.**
- The Chair may reduce times if many people wish to speak.

If time runs out, answers to questions may be provided in writing within five working days.

Public speaking

Questions will be taken in the order they are received during the meeting. Hands must be raised in person or online to indicate an individual wishes to speak. The Chair will indicate when public question time is open and closed.

The Chair may reorder or group questions to:

- Avoid duplication
- Prioritise safety critical themes
- Maintain meeting flow

When called, the Chair will invite you to ask your question or make your statement.

The Chair may:

- Ask you to stop if your remarks become inappropriate or stray off-topic
- Provide written answers instead of verbal ones to save time
- Move on if behaviour becomes disruptive to the meeting



**South
Cambridgeshire**
District Council

What questions can (and cannot) be covered

A question may be rejected if it:

- Is not relevant to community safety or CSP business
- Is vexatious, defamatory, abusive, discriminatory, repetitive or intentionally disruptive
- Raises issues about specific individuals' performance (staff, councillors, police officers)
- Requires disclosure of confidential or sensitive information
- Relates to ongoing legal matters
- Concerns individual cases or complaints that must follow other processes

Supplementary questions

One supplementary question may be allowed **only if time permits** and if it stays relevant to the original question.

The Chair may decline supplementary questions to maintain order or time control.

Managing disruption

To ensure the safety and fairness of the meeting:

- The Chair has authority to warn, pause, or remove individuals who attempt to disrupt the event.
- Any individual who is given three warnings from the chair will be removed on the third warning.
- Disorderly, aggressive, or abusive behaviour will not be tolerated.
- Security staff may be present to support safe proceedings.
- Recording or filming is permitted only if it does not cause disruption. The Chair reserves the right to request that recording is ended if circumstances require it.



**South
Cambridgeshire**
District Council

After the meeting

If a question could not be answered at the event because of time restrictions, or if more detail is required, a written response will normally be provided within **five working days** by the relevant organisation.

Accessibility Statement

If you need this information in another format (such as large print, easy read, or audio), please contact communitysafety@scambs.gov.uk