

Public Access to Meetings of the Fire Authority

Who may speak at the public access slot on the agenda?

Any person who is a resident of the City and County of Bristol or of any of the Districts of Bath and North East Somerset, South Gloucestershire or North Somerset and/or a representative of a business or voluntary organisation operating in the above areas who is affected by decisions to be taken by the Fire Authority may address the Authority to present a petition, make a statement, or as leader of a deputation.

How do I make a request?

You must give prior written notice of their wish to address the Authority.

You can e mail the Clerk at the.clerk@avonfire.gov.uk or write to the Clerk at Fire Service HQ, Temple Back, Bristol, BS1 6EU. If you require assistance with submitting a request please email or come to HQ and assistance will be provided.

How much notice must I give?

You must give **at least two clear working days** in advance of the meeting. This means that there must be 2 days from Monday to Friday (excluding bank Holidays) in between the day you give notice and the day of the meeting. Here are some examples of how this work:

1. If the meeting is on a Friday you must give notice by midnight on the Tuesday before (Wednesday and Thursday are the 2 clear working days).
2. If the meeting is on a Tuesday you have to give notice by midnight on Thursday with Friday and Monday being the clear days.

What do I need to tell you in my request?

You must provide your full name and your address together with a copy of any petition and the full text of your comments you intend to make in support of your petition, statement or deputation. At the meeting you will only be able to speak on the subject matter contained in the text you have supplied.

This is subject to any reasonable adjustments you require arising from any disability that you have in submitting the full text which should be agreed with the Clerk prior to the deadline for receipt of notice.

Are there any constraints on what I can speak about?

The Chair of the meeting has the final say who can speak.

The following are not allowed in respect of any matters that:

- a) are outside the responsibility of the Authority.
- b) are subject to court proceedings.
- c) are defamatory, frivolous or offensive.

- d) requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.
- e) are about a matter which has already been lodged with the Authority or with another statutory body as a formal complaint (regardless of whether or not that complaint has been dealt with).
- f) are matters from employees or former employees connected with their employment or former employment.
- g) contain an allegation against, or comments about, the conduct of individual Members or Officers.

Public access does not extend to those who have received or are about to be served with a notice under the Fire Safety (Regulatory Reform) Order 2005.

How long can I speak for?

The total amount of time allocated at each Authority meeting for public access will be no more than 30 minutes, and each speaker will speak for no more than 5 minutes. The Chair shall have discretion to extend these time limits.

If you cannot attend the meeting you may nominate a Member of the Authority to speak about the petition.

A petition, statement or deputation not presented because of the time limit shall be accepted without formal presentation.

What happens after I have spoken?

The Authority has a number of options. It may:

- a) refer the matter without debate to the relevant Officer for investigation and to report back to the Authority or to one of its Committees;
- b) take it into consideration if it relates to an item on a current or forthcoming agenda (at the time that item is to be considered); or
- c) take no further action.