

SEALAND COMMUNITY COUNCIL

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT COUNCIL MEETINGS PROTOCOL

1. PARTICIPATION IN THE PUBLIC FORUM

Council meetings are normally open to members of the public and representatives of the press, except where the Council is lawfully entitled or required to exclude the public and press from all or part of a meeting.

The Council recognises the importance of community engagement and welcomes members of the public, the press, the police and elected representatives to attend its meetings and, where applicable, make representations.

Please respect that this is a meeting to conduct council business, and interjections during council business are not permitted. If you disrupt business in any way, you may be asked to leave. If you feel for any reason that you do not wish to take part in the public forum or if your problem is complex, you might wish to provide information to the council well in advance of the meeting (at least 7 clear days if possible) using the contact details below.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD

Public participation will normally be for 10 minutes at the beginning and/or end of the meeting, or at the discretion of the Chairperson.

The agenda will indicate when public participation is expected.

Questions and representations may relate to any business to be transacted at the meeting. Members of the public are encouraged, where possible, to relate their representations to matters appearing on the published agenda.

Individual verbal contributions should normally not exceed 2 minutes, although the Chairperson may allow additional time where appropriate.

Each person will normally be allowed only one question or representation on a particular topic. The Chairperson may permit supplementary questions at their discretion.

These arrangements are intended to facilitate the orderly conduct of meetings and will be applied reasonably and proportionately.

3. ADVANCE NOTIFICATION

Members of the public are asked to notify the Clerk of their intention to attend a meeting, where possible. This is for administrative purposes only and is not a requirement for attendance.

Members of the public wishing to make representations are asked, where practicable, to provide the Clerk with details of the matter they wish to raise at least 7 clear days before the meeting.

This is intended to allow the Council and Councillors reasonable opportunity to prepare for matters to be raised.

Failure to provide advance notice will not prevent a member of the public from attending a meeting or making representations, subject to the effective conduct of the meeting.

Where a matter is complex, members of the public are encouraged to provide the Council with information in writing in advance.

4. MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA

The Council will not normally debate or make decisions on matters that have not been included on the published agenda, except where permitted by law.

If a raised matter does not relate to business to be transacted at the meeting, the Chairperson may invite the person to submit it in writing to the Clerk for consideration with the Chairperson at a future meeting or for an appropriate response.

The Council will not normally reconsider a matter within six months unless there is significant new information, a material change in circumstances, or the Chairperson considers reconsideration appropriate.

Nothing in this provision prevents a member of the public from making representations concerning a new or materially different matter.

5. CONDUCT

Members of the public are asked to respect the fact that Council meetings are conducted to enable the Council to carry out its business.

Interjections, interruptions or other disruption of Council business are not permitted.

All questions and representations should be addressed through the Chairperson.

The Chairperson is responsible for maintaining order and may take reasonable steps to ensure the meeting is conducted effectively, including requiring a contribution to conclude or, where necessary, asking a person who is disrupting the meeting to leave.

The Council's Standing Orders relating to the conduct and management of meetings will apply.

6. REMOTE PARTICIPATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

Where Council meetings are conducted using remote or multi-location arrangements, the Council will facilitate public participation where reasonably practicable.

The Council will seek, where reasonably practicable, to make appropriate arrangements to enable members of the public requiring reasonable adjustments to attend and participate in meetings.

Members of the public who require reasonable adjustments are encouraged to contact the Clerk in advance of the meeting where possible.

7. REVIEW

This Protocol will be reviewed at least every four years, or earlier where required by changes in legislation, statutory guidance or Council procedures.

This Protocol was reviewed and approved by Sealand Community Council at its meeting held on: 21st September 2026.

A Griffiths – Clerk of the Council – September 2026