

Procedure for public participation at Western Gateway Partnership Board Meetings

Can a member of the public attend a meeting of the Western Gateway (WG) Partnership Board?

Yes. Formal meetings of the WG Partnership Board are open to the public who may attend to observe and may participate in accordance with section 2 that follows below. Public attendance is subject to the Local Government Access to Information rules, which permit the board, when considering an item of business on the agenda, to exclude the press and public in circumstances where there is the likelihood of the release of exempt information (e.g. commercially sensitive information) as defined under the Local Government Act 1972.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Automated Systems and Recording of Proceedings

The use of AI tools, bots or other automated systems to attend, participate in, or otherwise engage with meetings on behalf of an individual is strictly prohibited unless prior explicit approval has been granted by the Board.

Members of the public may film, record, or otherwise capture all or part of the proceedings, except in circumstances where the press and public have been formally excluded from that portion of the meeting, or where there is a justified and lawful reason to restrict such activity.

As a matter of courtesy and transparency, any individual wishing to film or record proceedings must inform the WG officers in advance of doing so. This is to ensure that all persons present are made aware that recording is taking place.

Members of the public will be treated with respect and courtesy when attending meetings of the WG Partnership Board. They will be listened to and everyone who has registered will be able to be present/speak without interruption or intimidation.

It is expected that members of the public listen to the proceedings and respect the views and experiences of other people contributing.

Public Statements / Questions

Members of the public who wish to make a statement / question at the Partnership Board are required to submit a written statement / question in advance of the Partnership Board meeting. This **must** relate to the remit of WG STB.

Are there any restrictions on the statement that can be made or the question that can be asked?

The only restrictions are:

The statement / question must not be frivolous or defamatory and must not concern a confidential issue which would normally be considered in private. The Board's Chair has discretion to refuse statements / questions which fail this requirement.

A member of the public may only submit a single statement and / or ask one question at any meeting of the Western Gateway Partnership Board. If more than one statement / question is received or a single question contains a number of component questions, then only the first statement / question will be accepted. You may ask one 'supplementary' question at the meeting arising from the answer given to your original question.

How does a member of the public submit a statement / question?

Formal statements / questions must be submitted in writing (by letter or email) **before 12 noon** on the **fifth working day** before the date of the meeting (i.e. if the meeting is on a Friday then the submission must be made by the preceding Friday, taking into account any Bank Holidays). The contact details for WG are available online (<https://westerngatewaystb.org.uk/>).

Western Gateway Sub-national Transport Body (STB) will publish the papers for the meeting five working days in advance of the meeting. These will be available on the website.

Where a member of the public submits a statement / question relating to a report on an agenda for a meeting and that report is not available by this time you may nonetheless be entitled to make a statement / ask a question in certain circumstances.

WG officers will respond to the member of the public at least three working days in advance of the relevant meeting to confirm that:

- a) The representation is appropriate for discussion by the board.
- b) There is sufficient time available at the board meeting for the representation to be heard by the board.

Where representations are received, but are not considered to be relevant to the board the relevant Local Authority officer shall be identified by WG and the representation forwarded to the relevant authority to respond

All statements / questions will be listed in the order received and will be circulated to everyone at the meeting together with written responses to questions and publish on the website.

When a statement / question is submitted it would be a benefit if a telephone number could also be supplied. This will enable officers to make contact with the member of the public should any clarification regarding the statement / question be necessary or if for some reason no reply can be given to a question.

Can a member of the public speak at the meeting?

A member of the public who has submitted a statement / question will be allowed to make oral representations at the meeting to introduce their statement / question. Such representations will be limited to 3 minutes. While your views and comments may be acknowledged by the Chair of the meeting, you will not receive detailed 'answers' to any points included in your statement / question.

The Chair will invite the speaker formally to put the statement to the meeting.

If a member of the public interrupts a meeting or otherwise behaves irregularly, improperly or offensively, the Chair may request that they leave the room or order that they are removed from a Microsoft Teams meeting. In the event of a general disturbance, the Chair may suspend the meeting or direct that the public be excluded from it. No one so removed or excluded will be permitted to return to the meeting.

How much time is allowed for public participation?

A maximum of 10 minutes in total is allowed at each meeting for public participation. If more than one member of the public has submitted a statement / question and wishes to speak, the statements / question will be presented in the order of when the statement was received by the secretariat.

If your statement / question cannot be dealt with in that time then you will be sent a more detailed response by letter or email after the board meeting.

The Chair has the discretion to extend the period allowed for public participation in exceptional circumstances.

If a member of the public submits a statement / question, do they have to attend the meeting?

No, a member of the public does not have to attend the meeting if they submit a question / statement. If a member of the public cannot attend the meeting, their statement / question and the response will be published online at <https://westerngatewaystb.org.uk/> with the minutes of the meeting together with your name.

Is there a limit on the length of any statement / question?

No, there is no limit on the length of any statement / question, but it is best to keep your statement/question concise to avoid any misunderstanding. If a lengthy statement / question is submitted, the Chair may require it to be shortened before it is accepted for circulation.

How will I know what is on the agenda for a meeting?

Agendas are normally published one week in advance of the meeting and are available online at <https://westerngatewaystb.org.uk/about/board-meetings-and-minutes/>