

**PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

1. Face-to-face contact at Members' Ward Surgeries

Details of the Ward Surgery Programme are published each week in the local evening paper (the Oldham Chronicle). Posters are displayed at Ward Surgery venues and at Council offices throughout the Borough.

Contact Constitutional Services - 0161 770 4813

2. Messages can be left for Members at the Members' Secretariat at the Civic Centre  
Contact Members Secretariat - 0161 770 4013

3. Information regarding Members' names and addresses and Wards represented is available from Democratic Services

Contact: Staff in Constitutional Services Section - 0161 770 4813

Contact: Staff in Members' Services – 0161 770 4013

4. Corporate Complaints Procedure - this enables members of the public formally to complain about any aspect of the Council's services. All complaints will be investigated and a response given.

Contact Executive Support Officer 0161 770 4195

5. The Commission for Local Administration in England ("the Local Government Ombudsman") - the "Ombudsman" will consider complaints against a local authority where the complainant alleges that he/she has suffered maladministration or injustice.

A complaint can be lodged by a Councillor on the complainant's behalf or, alternatively, directly by the complainant.

The Ombudsman will normally consider whether the local authority has had an opportunity to consider the complaint under its own in-house complaints procedure. If not, then the Ombudsman will usually ask the local authority to endeavour to settle the complaint locally in the first instance. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome the Ombudsman will then decide whether or not to investigate the complaint.

Contact: Commission for Local Administration in England - York (01904) 663200

6. Council Meetings - Public Question Time Forum

At each Council, Cabinet or Committee meeting, a period is set aside to facilitate statements/questions from members of the public in relation to those matters which fall within the purview of the Council. There are a limited number of exceptions in terms of the nature of questions which cannot be asked eg questions pertaining to individual Council employees.

Each individual is allowed up to a maximum of three minutes to make his/her statement or ask a question.

A written copy of the reply given at the Council meeting will be sent to the person asking the question within one week.

Individuals who wish to make a statement/ask a question at a Council meeting MUST give notice, in writing, in accordance with the deadlines specified in Part 4 of this Constitution Contact Head of Constitutional Services - 0161 770 4701

7. Access to Agenda Papers and Rights to Attend Meetings

An individual's rights to access Agenda papers, reports open to public inspection, and to attend meetings of the Council are enshrined in statute.

Part 4 of this Constitution spells out clearly the principles and legislation underpinning public access rights.

Copies of Agenda and reports open to public inspection are available at the Civic Centre, Oldham or at public libraries throughout the Borough at least five clear days before the date of the particular meeting.

Alternatively, the majority of Agenda can be accessed on line at [www.oldham.gov.uk](http://www.oldham.gov.uk) - Oldham Council - decision recording.

Contact Officers: Constitutional Services - 0161 770n 4813

One Stop Shop, Civic Centre, Oldham - 0161 770 4747

Libraries in the Borough - see the Council's entry in the telephone directory

8. Planning Committee - Planning Applications - Public Access

The Planning Committee, in considering and determining planning applications which fall within their purview, provide an opportunity to members of the public to speak in support of, or opposition to, a particular planning application.

Similar to the Public Question Time forum, individuals are allowed a maximum of three minutes to speak. Only one person is allowed to speak in support of, or opposition to, each application.

Requests are dealt with on a "first come first served basis". A formal protocol has been drawn up which clearly illustrates the Council's procedure in this regard; a copy is available from:-

Contact Officer: Constitutional Services – 0161 770 4813.

9. Standards Board of England and Wales

An individual has a right to complain to the Standards Board of England and Wales.

Contact: Director of Legal and Democratic Services - 0161 770 4810