Oakham Town Council

Councillor Submission Guide for Meeting Papers

Supporting clarity, collaboration & effective governance

Document Control	
Adopted	**September 2025**
Last reviewed	**10 September 2025**
Next Review	**10 September 2032**

1. Purpose

This document sets out how councillors may request items for inclusion on council meeting agendas. It ensures that all requests are handled fairly, within legal parameters, and with respect for council priorities and procedures.

a) Who Can Request Agenda Items?

- Councillors: May propose items for decision, discussion, or information.

- Chair: May advise on priorities and meeting flow, in consultation with the Clerk.

- Clerk: Has final responsibility for compiling and signing the agenda, as the council's Proper Officer.

- Members of the Public: Cannot directly add items, but may raise issues via correspondence or public participation. Councillors may choose to sponsor these for future agendas.

2. Inclusion Criteria

The Clerk will include agenda items that:

- Are clearly worded and relevant to council business
- Fall within the council's legal powers and responsibilities
- Are timely and appropriate for the meeting's scope
- Have sufficient supporting information to enable informed discussion

3. Submission Timeline

Task	Deadline (Working Days Before Meeting)
Submit papers or proposals to the Clerk	6 days before
Agenda and papers finalised	5 days before
Internal review or Chair sign-off	4 days before
Circulation to councillors & public	3 clear days before

Late submissions may be accepted at the Clerk's discretion but must be clearly marked.

4. Councillors' Contributions

Councillors are encouraged to help shape council meetings through:

- Proposing agenda items with rationale and desired outcome

- Submitting motions or briefing papers

- Providing background analysis and recommendations

- Drafting committee reports with Clerk support
- Drafting an agenda item, with Clerk Support, that has been previously proposed and minuted.

5. Standard Agenda Item Format

Limit to 1–2 pages plus supporting documents. Use plain English, clear headings, and bullet points. Be neutral, balanced, and community-focused.

With Reference to: Appendix A – Template for Agenda Item

- Meeting Type: [Type of meeting, e.g. Full Council]

- Agenda Item: [Agenda item number, completed by Clerk]

- Date of Meeting: [Date the meeting will be held]

- Report Author: [Name and role]

- Purpose: [Decision / Discussion / Update]

- Background: [Relevant context]

- Proposal: [Preferred option]

The proposer should consult with the Responsible Finance Officer to assess any forecast expenditure and determine whether the proposal is budgeted.

6. Submission Instructions

- Email papers to the Clerk in Word or plain text
- State whether it's a new item or linked to an existing agenda point
- Include contributor info and relevant consultation if applicable
- Highlight sensitive or confidential material

7. Deferring an Agenda Item

To guide decisions when deferring an agenda item or paper, ensuring clarity, fairness, and consistency across council meetings.

a) Grounds for Deferral

A paper may be deferred when:

- Information is incomplete (e.g. awaiting financial or legal input).

- Further consultation is required (e.g. with residents or committees).

- Presenter unavailability or other scheduling conflicts.

- Legal or procedural concerns require review.

- Agenda overload, where time constraints risk undermining discussion quality or extending the meeting beyond reasonable limits.

Deferral should never be used to suppress challenging content or avoid discomfort. Councillor contributions must be respected.

b) Process

- Clerk consults Chair before deferral decision.

- Sponsoring councillor notified promptly, with clear rationale and expected timeline.

- Deferral recorded in minutes or agenda pack:

   o Example: "Item X deferred due to time constraints. Expected return: September meeting."

c) Good Practice

- Agenda Planning: Clerk reviews upcoming items monthly with Chair, identifying lower-priority items for potential rescheduling.

- Communicate Early: If agenda is lengthy, flag potential deferrals before final publication.

- Transparency at Meeting: Chair or Clerk explains deferrals during opening remarks or in the Clerk's report.

- Rescheduling Commitment: Deferred items should be prioritised in next agenda unless further justified.

Appendix A – Template for Agenda Item

Meeting Type:	Agenda Item:
Date of Meeting:	

OAKHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Report Author:	Purpose: Decision / Discussion / Update *delete as appropriate*
Title:	
Background:	
Proposal:	

For completion by the office

Budget Header:					
Proposed Expenditure		*Initial Budget*		*Unbilled Expenditure*	
Budget Remaining		*Time Sensitive (Y/N)*		*Expiry Date*	

Appendix B – Visual Guide

Step 1: Councillor Idea or Proposal
- Identify item for potential agenda inclusion
- Draft brief rationale or motion
- Optional: Prepare supporting paper or notes

Step 2: Submit to Clerk
- Email Clerk at least **7 working days** before meeting
- Include: title, purpose, desired outcome, and background
- Specify if it's a new item or linked to previous business

Step 3: Agenda Drafting
- Clerk compiles agenda as Proper Officer
- Consults Chair on priorities and timing
- Evaluates submissions for clarity, legality, relevance

Step 4: Supporting Paper Finalisation
- Councillor papers due **6 working days** before meeting
- Clerk edits for tone, format, compliance
- May consult contributor for clarification

Step 5: Internal Sign-Off
- Agenda and papers reviewed (Chair or senior team)
- Sensitive items flagged or redacted if needed

Step 6: Circulation & Publication
- Papers and agenda circulated to councillors
- Posted publicly **3 clear days** before meeting
- Residents may access materials (with applicable redactions)

Step 7: Meeting Day
- Papers guide discussions and decisions
- Clerk records minutes and agreed actions
- Late items or verbal updates noted separately