

Appendix 6 – Public Questions, Statements and Petitions - Meeting Procedure Rules 12 and 28

Public Questions

1. Members of the public may ask questions at meetings of the Full Council, Cabinet, and Committees of the Council. The protocol for questions is as follows:
 - (a) Subject to the requirements of this protocol, a member of the public who lives or works in the area of the Council may submit a written question to the Leader of the Council, a Portfolio Holder or the Chairman of the Council or of a Committee of the Council.
 - (b) A person wishing to ask a question shall submit the question in writing which must be received by the Monitoring Officer or their nominated representative four clear working days before the meeting at which it is to be asked. The person's name and address must be included. In calculating this period the date of the meeting and date of submission are to be excluded.
 - (c) A question at Council shall relate to Council business, shall not normally exceed 100 words in length and shall be so framed as to elicit information rather than make a statement.
 - (d) A question at a Committee or at the Cabinet shall relate to an item on the agenda of the meeting at which the question is asked.
 - (e) At full Council no member of the public may ask more than four questions in any one Municipal year.
 - (f) Questions shall be provided to Councillors electronically prior to the commencement of the meeting and hard copies made available for members of the public attending the meeting. No discussion shall be allowed upon questions or answers.
 - (g) The person asking the question may attend the meeting to read out their question or nominate another person to read out the question on their behalf, and to hear the answer. If someone is unable to attend and fails to nominate someone to attend on their behalf, the question will not be read out, but will be responded to by way of written answer.
 - (h) If questions are unsuitable in form, frivolous, defamatory, derogatory or relate to a matter which the Council would be likely to consider in the absence of the press and public, the Chairman of the Council shall have the right to rule the question out of order.

- (i) In exceptional cases, members of the public who do not live or work in the administrative area of the Council but who are directly affected by a decision or potential decision of the Council can submit a question in accordance with the above protocol. In such cases, the Monitoring Officer will determine the validity or otherwise of the question in consultation with the appropriate Chairman.

Public Statements

- 2. Members of the public may make statements at meetings of the full Council, Cabinet and Committees of the Council. The protocol for statements is as follows:
 - (a) Subject to the requirements of this protocol, a member of the public who lives or works in the area of the Council may submit a written statement to the Council, Cabinet or a Committee of the Council.
 - (b) A person wishing to make a statement under this protocol shall submit the statement in writing which must be received by the Monitoring Officer or their nominated representative by midday the day before the meeting at which it is to be raised. The person's name and address must be included.
 - (c) A statement at Council shall relate to Council business and shall not normally exceed 100 words in length. At full Council no member of the public may submit more than four statements in any one Municipal Year.
 - (d) A statement at Committee or a Cabinet shall relate to an item on the agenda of the meeting at which the question is asked and shall not normally exceed 100 words in length.
 - (e) Statements shall be printed in order of receipt and circulated electronically to Councillors prior to the commencement of the Council meeting and hard copies made available for members of the public attending the meeting. No discussion shall be allowed upon statements.
 - (f) The person making the statement shall normally attend the meeting to read out their statement. However, persons may, if they prefer, ask for an officer of the Council to read out their statement.
 - (g) If statements are unsuitable in form, frivolous, defamatory, derogatory or relate to a matter which the Council would be likely to consider in the absence of the press and public, the Chairman shall have the right to rule the statement out of order.
 - (h) In exceptional cases, members of the public who do not live or work in the administrative area of the Council but who are directly affected by a decision or potential decision of the Council can submit a statement in accordance with the above protocol.

In such cases, the Monitoring Officer will determine the validity or otherwise of the question in consultation with the appropriate Chairman.

Petitions

3. Members of the public may present petitions at meetings of the Council, Cabinet and Committees of the Council in accordance with the Petition Scheme set out in this Constitution.

Procedure rules

4. The time for questions, statements and petitions from members of the public shall normally commence immediately after the item 'Code of Conduct' on the agenda for the meeting and shall be restricted to a total of 15 minutes, although, at the discretion of the Chairman of the Council or the Chairman of the meeting, this time may be extended. Where a question to which an answer is to be given is not reached within the time limit, a written answer shall be provided to the questioner within two working days of the meeting and a copy e-mailed to all Councillors.
5. This procedure does not apply to the Planning Committee, Licensing Committee or Appeals Committee.
6. Separate protocols establish the arrangements for public representations at Planning and Licensing Committees. Such protocol to be published on the website.