

CHAPTER 4 – RULES

PART 1 - COUNCIL RULES (Extract)

8. RULE 8 - QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

8.1 General

Members of the public may ask questions of members of the Cabinet, or of chairpersons of Committees, at ordinary meetings of the Council, in respect of matters which fall under the responsibility of full Council (non-executive functions).

8.2 Notice of questions

A question may be asked if notice has been given in writing, or by electronic mail, to the Chief Executive by midday eight working days before the day of the meeting. Each question must give the name and address of the questioner and must name the member of the Council to whom it is to be put.

8.3 Number of questions

At any one meeting no person or organisation may submit more than one question. Members of the public who have not submitted questions before will be given priority over those who have. Any questions that have not been answered at the meeting within the time limits will be answered in writing after the meeting.

8.4 Scope of questions

The Chief Executive may reject a question if it:

- is not about a matter for which the Council has responsibility or which does not affect the area;
- is frivolous, defamatory, offensive, racist, sexist, homophobic or otherwise improper;
- is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months;
- requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

8.5 Record of questions

The Chief Executive will enter each question in a book open to public inspection and will immediately send a copy of the question to the member to

whom it is put. Rejected questions will include reasons for rejection. If the question has been rejected because it is considered frivolous, defamatory, offensive, racist, sexist, homophobic or otherwise improper then only the fact that a question was received and that it was considered so, will be entered.

Copies of all questions will be circulated to all members and will be made available to the public attending the meeting.

Questions which relate to Cabinet agenda items or Cabinet functions (executive functions) will be referred to the next Cabinet meeting.

8.6 Asking the question at the meeting

The Mayor will invite the questioner to put the question to the member named. The person to whom the question has been put will normally answer the question verbally after the question has been put. The time allowed for answers to each question at Council meetings shall not exceed three minutes.

The questioner is entitled to put one short supplementary question arising from the response at the meeting and have one supplementary reply. The time allowed for the answer to each supplementary question at Council meetings shall not exceed three minutes.

The questioner is entitled to send a representative to read out their question at the meeting or the Mayor will put the question on their behalf if they are unable to attend, noting that only public questioners attending in person will be able to ask supplementary questions.

9. RULE 9 - QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

9.1 Questions on notice

A member of the Council may ask a question with notice in respect of matters which fall under the responsibility of full Council (non-executive functions) to~~on~~matters to do with their Council responsibilities to:

- the Leader;
- a member of the Cabinet;
- the chairperson of any Committee or Sub-Committee.

At any one meeting no Member of the Council may submit more than one question. The time allowed for answers to each question at Council meetings shall not exceed three minutes. If a Member who has submitted a question is unable to be present, the question will be answered in writing. There is no provision for supplementary questions.

9.2 Notice and scope of questions

A member may only ask a question under Rule 9.1 if either:

- (a) notice has been given in writing, or by electronic mail, to the Chief Executive by midday eight working days before the day of the meeting or
- (b) the question relates to urgent matters, they have the consent of the person to whom the question is to be put and the content of the question is given to the Chief Executive by noon on the day of the meeting.

The Chief Executive may reject a question if it:

- is not about a matter for which the Council has responsibility or which does not affect the area;
- is frivolous, defamatory, offensive, racist, sexist, homophobic or otherwise improper;
- is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months.

The reason for rejection of any question shall be recorded and notified to the Member concerned.

Questions which relate to Cabinet agenda items or Cabinet functions (executive functions) will be referred to the next Cabinet meeting

9.3 Response

An answer may take the form of:

- (a) a direct verbal answer;
- (b) where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published source, a reference to that source;
- (c) where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner, including the reason for the inconvenience.