

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

9. Public

9.1 General

- (a) Members of the public who are residents of the Borough may ask questions of Members of the Cabinet, the Chair of a Committee, the Chair of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee or a Leader of a political group on the Council, at meetings of the Council, other than the Annual Meeting and, except at the discretion of the Mayor, Extraordinary meetings.
- (b) The total time allocated for Questions by the Public shall be limited to 30 minutes.

9.2 Order of Questions

Questions will be asked in the order notice of them was received, except that the Mayor may group together similar questions.

9.3 Notice of Questions

A question may only be asked if notice has been given by delivering it in writing or by electronic mail to the Monitoring Officer no later than 15 minutes before the start 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.

9.4 Number of Questions

At any one meeting, no person may submit more than one question.

9.5 Scope of Questions

The Monitoring Officer, or the Mayor, may reject a question if it:

- (a) is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the Borough;
- (b) is defamatory, frivolous or offensive;
- (c) is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past three months;
or

(d) requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

9.6 Record of Questions

Questions, including supplementary questions and the replies to them, whether given orally or in writing, will be recorded in the Minutes of the meeting.

9.7 Asking the Question at the Meeting

The Mayor will invite the questioner to put the question to the Member named in the question. If a questioner who has submitted a written question is unable to be present, he/she may ask the Mayor to put the question on his/her behalf. The Mayor may ask the question on the questioner's behalf, indicate that a written reply will be given, or decide, in the absence of the questioner, that the question will not be dealt with.

9.8 Supplementary Question

A questioner who has put a question in person may also put one supplementary question without notice to the Member who has replied to his or her original question. A supplementary question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply. The Mayor may reject a supplementary question on any of the grounds in Rule 9.5 above.

9.9 Written Answers

Any question which cannot be dealt with during public question time, either because of lack of time or because of the non-attendance of the Member to whom it was to be put, will be dealt with by a written answer. The Member questioned will arrange for a written answer to be provided to the question.

9.10 Reference of Question to the Cabinet, Committee or an Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Unless the Mayor decides otherwise, no discussion will take place on any question, but any Member may move that a matter raised by a question be referred to the Cabinet or the appropriate committee, sub-committee or an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Once seconded, such a motion will be voted on without discussion.

9.11 Right to Speak

With the consent of the Council, a Member of the public may speak on up to two items on any Agenda. The Mayor will ask at the start of each non-procedural item for an indication if any member of the public present wishes to be heard. The Mayor may, at his or her discretion, limit the number of speakers. No speech should exceed 4 minutes. Each member of the public

may only speak once on any one item unless the Mayor agrees otherwise.

9.12 Deputations and Petitions

- (a) A deputation wishing to be received by the Council may send a request in writing and on a form prescribed by the Council to the Monitoring Officer setting out the objects of the deputation. All such requests will be available for inspection by any Member of the Council.
- (b) The request will be signed by at least 20 local government electors, or residents, of the Borough and should be delivered to the Monitoring Officer's office not later than 12 noon seven clear working days before the date of the meeting at which the deputation wishes to be received.
- (c) One or more of the members and/or representative(s) of the deputation may address the appropriate body, but the speeches will not exceed four minutes in total.
- (d) No deputation will be received if a deputation on the same or a very similar matter has already been heard by the Council or other Council Body within the previous three months.
- (e) Where a deputation is heard at a meeting of the Council on the conclusion of the address by the spokesperson(s), the matter will be referred to the appropriate body without further discussion unless there is a recommendation, motion or a report on the matter before the meeting.
- (f) Members of the Council receiving the deputation will be permitted to ask questions of the person(s) speaking on behalf of the deputation, or the person(s) presenting the right of reply, to clarify any of the points raised.
- (g) Whenever a deputation appears before the Council or a reference is made to another Council body, and the objects of the deputation relate to a matter which may, directly or indirectly, affect adversely any person, or that person's property, financial, or other rights, or interests, the Monitoring Officer will also offer to that person, and/or that person's representative(s) an opportunity to reply. The person affected must give notice of intention to exercise the right of reply to the Monitoring Officer, or the Monitoring Officer's representative, in writing, before the start of the meeting. The speech(es) in reply will not exceed four minutes in total.
- (h) A maximum of three deputations will be received at any meeting of the Council. Where more than three requests for deputations are received by the Monitoring Officer, the

first three received will be invited to the meeting. The agenda for the meeting will list any additional requests for deputations received for information. The exercise of the right of reply conferred by this Procedure Rule will not count towards the total number of deputations permitted to appear at any one meeting.

- (i) No deputation will be received if its object is to support the grant of planning permission or a specific licence.
- (j) Petitions may be presented to the Council. The person presenting the petition will be allowed to address the meeting briefly (not exceeding 1 minute) to outline the aims of the petition. The Mayor will refer the matter to another appropriate Council Body within whose terms of reference it falls without discussion unless a relevant item appears elsewhere on the Agenda.

9.13 Development Control, Licensing and Regulatory Committees

Separate arrangements are in place for the public to ask questions and make representations at meetings of the Development Control, Licensing and Regulatory Committees, and are set out in Annexes to the Access to Information Rules.