

Procedure for Councillor Questions at Council Meetings

1. The purpose of this procedure note is to provide guidance to Members and officers on how questions at Council meetings shall be dealt with.

It is intended to be read alongside, and to be complementary to, paragraph 17 of Part 4 of the Constitution - Council Procedure Rules. If there is any conflict between the two then the Council Procedure Rules shall take precedence.

2. Members are encouraged to deliver any question as early as possible. Paragraph 17.5 provides that questions on notice should be delivered to the Democratic Governance Manager no later than 5pm nine clear working days before the date of the relevant Council meeting in order to be guaranteed of a written response prior to the council meeting.

Paragraph 17.6 provides that questions received between nine and no later than 5pm four clear working days before a meeting may only receive a verbal response. Any questions received after this deadline will be received at a future meeting.

3. In accordance with Paragraph 17.9.6 where a question submitted relates solely to operational issues the Member will be so informed, and such a question will be forwarded to the appropriate Head of Service or Director for a response. Such a question will only then be submitted if the Member either does not receive a response or has not received a response which the Member considers satisfactory.
4. In accordance with paragraph 17.13, questions will be taken in the order of receipt per member, but a member may not ask a second question until all other first questions from other members have been dealt with. The same principle applies to third and subsequent questions.

For example, if member A submits four questions, and afterwards member B and thereafter member C submit two and one question respectively, the order of presentation at the meeting would be:

Q1 Member A
Q2 Member B
Q3 Member C
Q4 Member A
Q5 Member B
Q6-7 Member A

5. No more than 20 supplementary questions will be answered at the meeting from the list of questions submitted, in accordance with paragraph 17.12. All questions will be recorded in an update received at the meeting, and any question which was given a verbal response will also receive a written response from the appropriate

member no later than 5 clear working days after the meeting and also be attached to the minutes of the meeting.

6. Members should therefore submit their questions listed in priority order in accordance with paragraph 17.8, and should indicate to Democratic Services prior to the meeting if they do not wish to ask a supplementary question. Only questions which members ask a supplementary to will count toward the limit of 20 to be received at any one meeting as detailed in point 5 above.
7. In exceptional circumstances the Chairman may allow questions without the full period of notice having been given where he or she is satisfied there is sufficient justification. In these circumstances, there is no guarantee that a full or written reply will be given at the meeting.
8. In accordance with paragraph 17.4 Member questions shall only be permitted at extraordinary meetings if they relate to the subject(s) under consideration at the extraordinary meeting.