

## **CP5 - PROCEDURE FOR QUESTION TIME AT CABINET AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

### **Code of Practice**

This Code of Practice sets out the procedural rules governing the asking of questions at meetings of the Cabinet, Cabinet Committees, Ordinary and Area Committees and Ward Committees by members of the public. It should be noted that written questions submitted may constitute a request for recorded information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and should be dealt with accordingly.

1. An item "Public Question Time" will be included on the agenda for all meetings of the Cabinet, Cabinet Committees, Ordinary Committees and Area Committees, permitting members of the public to ask questions.
2. The overall period for asking and answering questions and the order in which they are taken shall be determined by the Chair.
3. Questions shall be restricted to matters within the powers and duties of the Cabinet or the particular Committee or Area Committee and related to the activities of the Council.
4. Questions shall not be permitted if the Chair deems that the question
  - relates to quasi-judicial matters e.g. (current or potential legal proceedings, licensing applications, planning applications and appeals, Traffic Regulation Orders where public consultation has been authorised or undertaken);
  - relates to confidential or exempt matters or where the disclosure of this information would be required;
  - is defamatory, frivolous or offensive;
  - is substantially the same as a question which has been put at to the Cabinet, Committee or Area Committee in the past six months; or
  - is directly about party political matters.
5. The Chair will have absolute discretion as to whether to allow any particular question to be asked at the meeting.
6. Questions should be written on the card provided at the meeting and submitted at least 30 minutes prior to the commencement of the meeting to the Committee Manager who can offer assistance. This provision does not apply to Area and Ward Committees where questions may be submitted up to the start of the meeting.
7. Questions shall be put to the Chair, who will decide which questions should be taken first. Questions may be answered by the Chair or, at the Chair's discretion, by any other member or officer present.
8. One supplementary question will be allowed.
9. Where a question cannot be answered at the meeting or requires a detailed or complex answer, the Chair should respond in writing (within 7 days) and a copy of the response should be sent to all members of the Committee.
10. Public speaking, other than by questions, i.e. submission of petitions, representations and general comments, shall not be allowed under this procedure.
11. For the purposes of this Code, a Councillor who is not a member of the Cabinet or, as the case may be, the relevant Committee, shall be treated as a member of the public.

## PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

Question \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_