

Public Question Time Guidelines



1. Policy

- 1.1 At every Ordinary meeting, Council will hold Public Question Time.
- 1.2 Public question time is an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions of Councillors, senior staff members or Council as a whole to clarify any matters that may be under consideration or a previously adopted Council policy or decision.
- 1.3 Question time is not an opportunity for debating a response to a question or to make public statements.
- 1.4 Questions will not preempt debate on a matter listed on the agenda.

2. Procedure

- 2.1 **Questions with notice** can be submitted by **12 noon on the Monday one week** prior to an Ordinary meeting, online or in writing by mail or hand delivery to one of the Council offices.

Questions without notice can be submitted on a Questions Without Notice form which must be handed to the Chairperson before the start of each Ordinary meeting. Copies of the form will be made available at the meeting.
- 2.2 If the person asking the question cannot attend the Ordinary meeting for which their question has been submitted personally, they may nominate another person to ask their question on their behalf.
- 2.3 The person asking the question shall, if able, stand and direct their question to the Chairperson. Prior to asking the question, the person must state their name and address. If necessary they may provide a very brief background to their question (30-40 seconds).
- 2.4 During the allocated time questions will be accepted on topics that need not relate to the agenda.
- 2.5 Details of Public Question Time will be minuted.

3. Rules

- 3.1 Question time shall not exceed 15 minutes.

- 3.2 A person can ask a maximum of three questions on any topic at any one meeting and the presentation of each question shall not exceed two minutes.
- 3.3 The Chairperson may accept or reject a question related to the formal question put to the meeting.
- 3.4 The Chairperson may accept or reject any question or summarise the question before putting it to the meeting.
- 3.5 The Chairperson may disallow a question if it is:
- phrased as a statement, rather than a question;
 - relates to matters outside the duties, functions and powers of Council,;
 - is defamatory, abusive or offensive, or if it deals with a subject matter already answered;
 - is aimed at embarrassing a Councillor or officer.
- 3.6 The Chairperson or Councillor or officer to whom a question is referred may:
- decline to answer the question;
 - have the question put on notice for the next Ordinary meeting;
 - agree to provide the questioner with a written response after the Ordinary meeting.
- 3.7 Answers to questions shall be confined to the substance of the question asked and its relationship to matters of concern to the Council.
- 3.8 A question will not be debated.

Behaviour

- 4.1 Silence must be preserved by visitors in the gallery (other than by a person in the gallery who is invited to address the meeting) at all times during a meeting.
- 4.2 Visitors at a meeting must not interject, jeer, call a point of order, vote or take part in the debate and must behave in a respectful and appropriate manner that allows the meeting to proceed without disruption.