



## **Public participation at Council meetings**

You may ask questions of the Leader of the council, Cabinet members and committee chairs at ordinary meetings of the council. The total time allocated for questions by the public is normally limited to 20 minutes.

### **Order of questions**

Questions will be asked in the order in which notice of them was received, though the Mayor may group together similar questions. As far as possible the Mayor will ensure that anyone that has asked a question receives an answer.

### **Notice of questions**

A question can only be asked if written notice has been given by delivering it in writing to the Chief Executive no later than noon on Tuesday of the week of the council meeting. The notice must include your name, address and telephone number.

### **Scope of questions**

Questions must relate to matters for which the council has a responsibility or which affect the borough.

The Chief Executive may reject a question if it:

- (i) is defamatory, frivolous, vexatious or offensive
- (ii) is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the council in the past six months
- (iii) requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

### **Record of questions**

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

### **Asking the question at the meeting**

The Mayor will invite you to put your question to the councillor named in the question. Each person asking a question has two minutes in which to ask it. If you have submitted a written question and you or your representative are unable to attend, the Mayor may ask the question on your behalf, invite another councillor to do so, indicate that a written reply will be given or decide, in the absence of a person to ask your question, that it will not be dealt with.

### **Supplementary question**

You (or your representative) may also ask one supplementary question, without notice, to the councillor who replied to your original question. A supplementary question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply. The Mayor may reject a supplementary question if it:

- (i) is defamatory, frivolous, vexatious or offensive
- (ii) is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months
- (iii) requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

### **Written answers**

Every member of the public that asks a question is entitled to an answer. If a question cannot be dealt with during public question time, either because of a lack of time or because the councillor has not attended the meeting, a written answer will be given.

### **Reference of question to the Cabinet or a committee**

Unless the Mayor decides otherwise no discussion will take place on any question, but any councillor may refer a matter raised in a question to the Cabinet or to the appropriate committee or sub-committee. Once seconded, a motion to refer your question will be voted on without discussion.