

St Edmundsbury Borough Council (Extract from) Council Procedure Rules

(Proposed new Section 6 – amended wording is set out in ***bold, underline and italics*** below)

6. Public question time

General

6.1 At each ordinary meeting of the Council, members of the public who live or work in the Borough may put questions about the work of the Council to members of the Cabinet or any Committee. 30 minutes will be set aside for this. 30 minutes will also be set aside for questions at extraordinary meetings of the Council, but must be limited to the business to be transacted at that meeting.

6.2 A person who wishes to speak must register at least fifteen minutes before the time the meeting is scheduled to start. This can be done online by sending the request to democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk or telephoning 01284 757120/01638 719363 or in person by telling the committee administrator present at the meeting.

6.3 Written questions, detailing the full question to be asked, may be submitted by members of the public to the Service Manager (Democratic Services and Elections) no later than 10.00 am on the previous working day to the meeting of the Council.

Order of questions

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

Time limits

6.5 Each person may ask one question only. A total of five minutes will be allowed for the question to be put and answered. One supplementary question will be allowed provided that it arises directly from the reply and the overall time limit of five minutes is not exceeded. The member to whom the question is directed may refer it to another member or may choose to give a written response. A written response will be provided if the member to whom the question was directed is not present at the meeting and it cannot be answered by another member.

6.6 If no questions are received or all the questions are dealt with in less than 30 minutes, the Council will move immediately to the next business.

Scope of Questions

6.7 The Service Manager (Democratic Services and Elections), in respect of any question notified before the meeting, or the Mayor, in respect of any question notified at the meeting, may reject a question if it:-

- (a) is not about a matter for which the Council 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 six months; or
- (d) requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

Record of Questions and answers

6.8 All questions and answers under Public Question Time will be summarised in the minutes of the meeting. The summary for rejected questions will include the reasons for rejection.

Written Answers

6.9 As well as being sent to the person asking the question, written answers will be distributed to all councillors and published on the Council's website.