

Appendix A – Public Speaking at Meetings Procedure Rules

4j 1 Council meetings

4j 1.1 General

a) Members of the public may ask questions of Members of the Cabinet or Committee Chairmen at ordinary meetings of the Council, **in relation to matters which in the opinion of the Chairman of the Council are relevant to the business of the meeting.**

b) Each speaker will be limited to two minutes in which to ask their question. Subject to the Chairman's discretion, there will be an overall limit of 15 minutes for public questions, or a total of six questions, whichever is the greater.

4j 1.2 Order of questions

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

4j 1.3 Notice of questions

A question may only be asked if notice has been given by delivering it in writing or by electronic mail to the Proper Officer no later than 12.00 noon **three working days before the day of the meeting** (email: committeeservices@horsham.gov.uk). **Each question must give the name and address of the questioner.**

4j 1.4 Number of questions

At any meeting no person may submit more than **one question** and no more than one question may be asked on behalf of an organisation.

4j 1.5 Scope of questions

The Head of Paid Service may reject a question if it:

- a) is not about a matter for which the Council has a responsibility or which affects the District;
- 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.

4j 1.6 Record of questions

The Head of Paid Service will immediately send a copy of the question to the Councillor to whom it is to be put. Rejected questions will include reasons for rejection. Copies of all questions will be circulated to all Councillors and will be made available to the public attending the meeting.

4j 1.7 Asking the question at the meeting

The Chairman will invite the questioner (**who must be present**) to put the question, as submitted, to the Councillor named in the notice.

4j 1.8 Response to the question

The Member responding to a question may speak for no longer than 2 minutes unless the Chairman consents to a longer period.

4j 1.9 Supplementary question

A questioner who has put a question may also put one supplementary question without notice to the Councillor who has replied to his or her original question. A supplementary question must arise

directly out of the original question or the reply. The Chairman may reject a supplementary question on any of the grounds set out in 4j 1.5 above.

4j 1.10 Written answers

Any question which cannot be dealt with during public question time, either because of lack of time or because of the non-attendance of the Councillor to whom it was to be put, will be dealt with by a written answer.

4j 1.11 Reference of question to the Cabinet or a committee

Any Member may move that a matter raised by a question be referred to the Cabinet or the appropriate committee. Once seconded, such a motion will be voted on without discussion.

4j 1.12 Summary for public speaking on agenda items

A maximum time of 15 minutes is to be allowed in the meeting to receive oral questions and answers (**not statements**) which, in the opinion of the person presiding at the meeting, are relevant to the business to be transacted at that meeting. A copy of any such questions must be submitted in writing no later than three working days prior to the relevant meeting.

Questions can only be asked by residents of Horsham District who are identified as such from the voters list, or from anyone who satisfies the Monitoring Officer that they work wholly or in substantial part in Horsham District. As deemed appropriate, in the absolute discretion of the person responding, answers may be given either orally or else in writing within three working days of the relevant meeting.

Source: Horsham District Council Constitution, August 2023, Available at:

<https://horsham.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s24709/Horsham%20District%20Council%20Constitution.pdf>