

**Information for members of the public on asking questions and speaking at meetings**  
**(Part 4 of the Council's Constitution refers)**

a) **Council meetings**

**Questions by the Public**

**General**

1. 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 Council are relevant to the business of the meeting.**
2. 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.

**Order of questions**

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

**Notice of questions**

4. 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 pm **three working days before the day of the meeting** (email: [committeeservices@horsham.gov.uk](mailto:committeeservices@horsham.gov.uk)). **Each question must give the name and address of the questioner.**

**Number of questions**

5. 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.

**Scope of questions**

6. 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.

### **Record of questions**

7. 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.

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

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

### **Response to the question**

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

### **Supplementary question**

10. 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 6 above.

### **Written answers**

11. 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.

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

12. 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.

### **Public speaking on agenda items**

13. Parish and neighbourhood councils in the District and members of the public may make a statement on any item on the agenda when the matter arises for debate and at the time appointed by the Chairman. Each speaker will be limited to two minutes in which to make representations. Unless the Chairman specifies otherwise, the total time for such representations by members of the public will not exceed 12 minutes in respect of each item.
14. Speakers must give notice by not later than noon **two working days before the date of the meeting** of their intention to speak.
15. Where the item concerns a planning or licensing application parish or neighbourhood councils will be limited to two minutes each, objectors two minutes each subject to an

overall limit of six minutes, applicants and supporters two minutes each subject to an overall limit of six minutes.

## b) **Committee meetings**

### **Public speaking on agenda items**

1. Parish and neighbourhood councils in the District and members of the public may make a statement on any item on the agenda when the matter arises for debate and at the time appointed by the Chairman. Each speaker will be limited to two minutes in which to make representations. Unless the Chairman specifies otherwise, the total time for such representations by members of the public will not exceed 12 minutes in respect of each item.
2. Speakers must give notice by not later than noon **two working days before the date of the meeting** of their intention to speak (email: [committeeservices@horsham.gov.uk](mailto:committeeservices@horsham.gov.uk) or for planning applications see separate guidance).
3. Where the item concerns a planning or licensing application parish or neighbourhood councils will be limited to two minutes each, objectors two minutes each subject to an overall limit of six minutes, applicants and supporters two minutes each subject to an overall limit of six minutes.

## c) **Cabinet meetings**

### **Questions by the Public**

#### **General**

1. Members of the public may ask questions of Members of the Cabinet **in relation to matters which in the opinion of the Leader are relevant to the business of the meeting.**
2. Each speaker will be limited to two minutes in which to ask their question. Subject to the Leader's discretion, there will be an overall limit of 15 minutes for public questions, or a total of six questions, whichever is the greater.

#### **Order of questions**

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

#### **Notice of questions**

4. 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 pm **three working days**

**before the day of the meeting** (email: [committeeservices@horsham.gov.uk](mailto:committeeservices@horsham.gov.uk)). **Each question must give the name and address of the questioner.**

### **Number of questions**

5. 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.

### **Scope of questions**

6. 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.

### **Record of questions**

7. The Head of Paid Service will immediately send a copy of the question to the Cabinet Member to whom it is to be put. Rejected questions will include reasons for rejection. Copies of all questions will be made available to all those attending the meeting.

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

8. The Leader will invite the questioner (**who must be present**) to put the question, as submitted, to the Cabinet Member named in the notice.

### **Supplementary question**

9. A questioner who has put a question may also put one supplementary question without notice to the Cabinet Member who has replied to his or her original question. A supplementary question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply. The Leader may reject a supplementary question on any of the grounds set out in 6 above.

### **Written answers**

11. 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 Cabinet Member to whom it was to be put, will be dealt with by a written answer.