

REVISED COUNCIL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURE RULE 2.7

THEMED DEBATE

2.7 THEMED DEBATES

Theme

1. The theme for each meeting will be set by the council assembly business panel including the ~~annual state of the borough~~, budget and other themes focused on a cabinet member's portfolio.

~~Themes will have been subject to community engagement activities in such forums as community councils or scrutiny committees.~~

2. No debate shall be allowed at a themed meeting unless it is linked to a council plan, strategy or policy. The plan, strategy or policy should have been clearly signposted to residents and members prior to the meeting so they are able to connect the debate to plans and monitor its implementation.
3. One hour shall be allocated for the themed debate. The Mayor shall have the discretion to vary timings as appropriate.

Community evidence

4. Submissions (written or oral) from experts, community groups or local representatives may be heard or tabled at the meeting. Submissions will be time limited and subject to a programme motion

Order of debate

5. The order of business of the debate will be:
 - Community evidence
 - Cabinet member has ~~10~~ 7 minutes in which to present the theme, plan or strategy
 - Shadow cabinet member has 5 minutes in which to reply (2 minutes of which may be to present an amendment)
 - Debate then open to any member who indicates to speak.
(All recognised groups on the council having had the opportunity to formally propose one amendment. No seconding or formal seconding required for motion or amendments)
 - At the conclusion of the debate (or time limit) the meeting will take a separate vote on the motion and amendment(s).
 - ~~Public pre-submitted questions on the theme of the meeting (maximum of 15 minutes)~~
 - ~~Members' motions on the cabinet theme using present principles to allow sufficient political balance and for political groups to hold cabinet to account.~~

- ~~6. One hour shall be allocated for the themed debate. The Mayor shall have the discretion to vary timings as appropriate.~~

Public involvement and participation

7. The theme of the meeting shall be actively promoted and residents encouraged to participate.

Public evidence on themed debate

8. The Mayor may reject any evidence if it is not relevant to the theme, plan, strategy or policy under discussion.

Scope

9. The Mayor in consultation with the monitoring officer may reject evidence if it
- is a request from a group of people who have alternative means of expressing their views through recognised channels, e.g. employees of the authority or trade unions representing staff employed by the authority
 - is not about a matter for which the council has powers or duties or which affects Southwark
 - is defamatory, frivolous or offensive
 - requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information
 - concerns a planning or licensing application
 - raises a grievance for which there are other established processes for resolution
 - relates to an investigation by (whether completed or not), or ruling of, the standards committee or sub-committee insofar as the deputation relates to the behaviour or conduct of an individual member or members.

Form of request

10. Each request must provide the name and address of the persons/group requesting to be heard and a brief summary of the subject matter of their request.
11. Any written representations shall provide the same information.

Deadlines

12. An application to be considered shall be submitted by a representative of the group in writing to the proper constitutional officer no later than three clear working days before the day of the council assembly meeting. The date and time of receipt of each request will be recorded. Rejected requests will include reasons for rejection.

Agenda

13. Details of relevant request will be included on the agenda papers for the meeting of the council assembly.
14. If the matter is not dealt with by the meeting, the matter shall be referred without debate to the relevant cabinet member who shall, after consideration, respond with an open reply to the sender.
15. The cabinet member may invite relevant groups to actively participate before, during and after a themed meeting.

Public questions on themed debate

- ~~16. The Mayor may reject a question if it is not relevant to the theme, plan, strategy or policy under discussion.~~
- ~~17. The time during which public questions shall be taken at a themed meeting shall not exceed 15 minutes and shall be conducted under the existing rules for public questions. Normal deadlines shall apply for the submission of questions from the public.~~

Members' motions

- ~~18. All motions shall be relevant to the topic under discussion and shall be conducted under the existing rules for members' motions. Normal deadlines shall apply for the submission of members' motions.~~
- ~~19. The order of motions and timings shall be determined by the Mayor.~~