

**REVISED COUNCIL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURE RULE 2.9 – QUESTION BY MEMBERS**

**2.9 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS**

**Which meetings consider questions by members?**

1. Questions from members shall be considered at ordinary meetings of the council but not at the annual, extraordinary or the council tax setting meetings.

**Who can ask questions?**

2. A member of the council may ask one question of:
  - the Mayor
  - a member of the cabinet
  - the chair of any committee or sub-committee or community council
  - each community council may submit one question that has previously been considered and noted by said community council,
3. Composite questions – where a member wishes to raise a number of points in relation to the same subject matter, he/she may do so in a multi-part question provided that up to three parts shall be deemed to be one.

**Scope**

4. A question may be asked on any matter in relation to which the council has powers or duties or which affects Southwark.
5. No question shall be asked on a matter relating to an investigation by (whether completed or not), or ruling of, the standards committee or sub-committee insofar as the question relates to the behaviour or conduct of an individual member or members.
6. No question shall be asked on a matter concerning a planning or licensing application.

**Time period for question time**

*This rule cannot be suspended.*

7. The time during which councillor's questions may be taken shall be 30 minutes.
8. Questions to any individual cabinet member or chair shall not exceed 15 minutes. It shall not be in order to move an extension of these time limits. Questions shall be taken in the following order: the leader, followed by questions from community council councillors, followed by other cabinet members (the order to be rotated by the proper constitutional officer at every meeting) and chairs of committees, sub-committees and community

councils. At the expiry of members' question time, all questions not reached shall be deemed as noted.

**Deadline for submission of questions**

9. Questions must be received by the proper constitutional officer no later than midnight, nine clear working days prior to the day of the council meeting. Questions to the leader and cabinet members will either be listed in the order received or, if notified, listed by whip prioritisation and rotation by the political groups/independent members (see council assembly procedure rules 2.9(12) and (13)). All other questions will be listed in the order of receipt.

Questions shall be addressed to the relevant cabinet member or committee chair who shall be responsible for the content of the answer. Cabinet members and committee chairs shall have discretion to refer a question to another cabinet member or committee chair if this is appropriate.

**Circulation of written answers**

10. Copies of all questions and their written answers shall be circulated to all councillors one hour prior to the commencement of the meeting. Copies shall also be made available to the press and public present at the commencement of the meeting.

**Supplementary question**

11. A member asking a question may ask one supplementary question without notice to the member of whom the first question was asked. The supplemental question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.

**Prioritisation and rotation by the political groups/independent members – Questions to the leader and cabinet members**

12. Questions to the leader and cabinet members will either be listed in the order received or listed in the order of whip prioritisation and rotation by the political groups. Four working days before the meeting, each chief whip may list questions from members of their respective groups in an order of priority to be taken at the meeting. All remaining questions will be taken in the order of receipt.

13. Questions to the leader: Questions to the leader will be rotated so that one is taken from each political group's list of priorities (and any independent councillors) for so long as there are questions remaining. For the first meeting following municipal elections or from the commencement of these arrangements, the Mayor will invite a representative of each political group (and any independent councillors) to draw lots to determine the order at the first meeting. At subsequent meetings, the order will be rotated.

Note: Questions will be rotated on a ratio of 1:1:1:1 for majority group, majority opposition group, minority opposition groups and independent members. ~~Liberal Democrat, Labour, Conservative and independent members.~~

14. Questions to cabinet members: Questions will be rotated so that questions are taken from each political group's list of priorities (and any

independent councillors) for so long as there are questions remaining. At subsequent meetings, the order will be rotated.

Note: Questions will be rotated on a ratio of 3:2:1:1 for majority group, majority opposition group, minority opposition groups and independent members.

**Written answers to questions naming an individual member**

15. In the event that a member of the council is named in a response to another member's question, the proper constitutional officer shall make the written response available to the individual member concerned prior to the day of the council assembly meeting. The individual member shall make any representations to the monitoring officer.