

13.0 Questions by the Public and Press

13.1 General

Members of the public may ask questions of members of the Cabinet at ordinary meetings of the Council. The total time devoted to questions shall not exceed 30 minutes.

13.2 Order of questions

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

13.3 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 Corporate Programme Manager at least five full working days before the day of the meeting. Each question must give the name and address of the questioner and must name the member of the Council to whom it is to be put.

13.4 Number of questions

At any one meeting no person may submit more than one question, limited to fifty words.

13.5 Scope of questions

The Chief Executive will reject a question if it:

- is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the district;
- is defamatory, frivolous or offensive;
- is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months;
- requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information;
- If the questioner is not a resident of Thanet; or
- If a question relates to an individual planning or licensing application.

13.6 Record of questions

The Corporate Programme Manager will enter each question in a book open to public inspection and will immediately send a copy of the question to the member to whom it is to be put. Rejected questions will include reasons for rejection. Copies of all questions will be circulated to all members and will be made available to the public attending the meeting.

13.7 Asking the question at the meeting

The Chairman will invite the questioner to put the question to the member named in the notice. If the questioner is not present the question shall not be put and shall be answered in writing.

13.8 Absence of Member Named and Written answers

Any question which cannot be dealt with during public question time because of lack of time will be dealt with by a written answer. If the member to whom the question is directed is not present, the question will be answered by the Leader or another Member nominated by the Leader for the purpose unless it is inappropriate for the Leader to give an oral answer or to nominate another Member to give an oral answer, in which case the question will be dealt with by a written answer.