

# **SHILDON TOWN COUNCIL**

## **PROCEDURE FOR PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

1. **General** – Members of the Public may ask questions of elected Members at Ordinary Meetings of the Council.
2. **Time** – 15 minutes will be made available for questions at the commencement of Ordinary Meetings of the Council.
3. **Order of Questions** – Questions will be asked in the order notice of them was received, except that the Chairman may group together similar questions.
4. **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 Town Clerk not later than midday 7 working days before the day of the meeting. The name and address of the questioner must be provided.
5. **Number of Questions** – At any one meeting, no person may submit more than one question and not more than one such question may be asked on behalf of one organisation
6. **Scope of Questions** – Questions will be rejected by the Town Clerk if they :
  - Are not about a matter for which the Council has a responsibility or which affects the Town;
  - Are defamatory, frivolous or offensive;
  - Are substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months; or
  - Require the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.
7. **Record of Questions** – The Town Clerk will record each question to be retained for public inspection and will immediately provide the Member to whom the question is to be put with a copy. If a specific Member is not named the question will be deemed to be addressed to the Chairman. Rejected questions will include reasons for rejection. Copies of questions will be circulated to all Members with the agenda for the meeting and will be made available to the public attending the meeting.

8. **Asking the Question at the Meeting** – The Chairman will invite the questioner to put the question to the Member named in the notice. If a questioner who has submitted a written question is unable to be present, they may ask the Chairman to put the question on their behalf. The Chairman may ask the question on behalf of the questioner, indicate that a written reply will be given or decide, in the absence of the questioner, that the question will not be dealt with.
9. **Supplemental Question** – A questioner who has put a question in person may also put one supplementary question without notice following the reply from the named Member. A supplementary question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply. The Chairman may reject a supplementary question on the grounds referred to above.
10. **Written Answers** – Any question which cannot be dealt with during public question time due to lack of time or due to the absence of the named Member will be dealt with by a written answer to the questioner within 5 working days of the meeting.