

Appendix A

13.7 Open Questions

13.7.1 Questions and Procedure

- 13.7.1.1 At each ordinary meeting of the Council (excluding the annual or any extraordinary meeting) there shall be a period of no longer than 30 minutes for open questions, which shall be questions of the Leader, Deputy Leader and Executive Members, and the chairman of any committee, subject to the following guidelines:-
- 13.7.1.2 Questions:-
- 13.7.1.2.1 must be relevant to matters for which the Council has powers or duties or matters that affect Central Bedfordshire or its residents;
 - 13.7.1.2.2 must not relate to an item which is included elsewhere on the Council agenda since they can be raised at that point in the meeting;
 - 13.7.1.2.3 must be capable of eliciting a response (ie must not be a statement);
 - 13.7.1.2.4 should not exceed two minutes in length.
- 13.7.1.3 Questions should not:-
- 13.7.1.3.1 be incapable of being adequately answered in three minutes;
 - 13.7.1.3.2 divulge or require to be divulged confidential or exempt information.
- 13.7.1.4 The conduct of open question time shall be regulated by the Chairman of the Council having regard to the above guidelines.
- 13.7.1.5 Any Member wishing to put an open question should put his/her name on the relevant pro forma and place it in the appropriate receptacle not less than 5 minutes before the start of the meeting. Names will be drawn at random by the Chairman during the question time session lasting up to 30 minutes.

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13.7.1.6 Immediately prior to questions being drawn from the receptacle, Opposition Group Leaders may each ask 1 open question, provided that it has been given in writing to the Committee Services Officer clerking the Council meeting by the time that it is put at the meeting.

13.7.2 Response

13.7.2.1 An answer to an open question may take the form of:-

13.7.2.1.1 a direct oral answer of up to a maximum of three minutes duration;

13.7.2.1.2 where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication; or

13.7.2.1.3 where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer will be circulated later to the questioner and made available to all members of the Council and the public.

13.7.3 Supplementary Question

13.7.3.1 A member asking an open question under Rule 13.7.1 may ask one supplementary question, without notice, of the Member to whom the first question was asked. The supplementary question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply and should not exceed two minutes in length.