

## STANDING ORDER NO 7

### Questions without notice

(Except for paragraph 7.8 below this Rule **cannot** be suspended.)

- 7.1 A member of the Council may ask the Leader or appropriate portfolio holder any question without notice on any matter within the Leader's or portfolio holder's area of responsibility. When asking the question the member shall state why he/she believes the particular portfolio holder is responsible for answering it.
- 7.2 The Cabinet Member to whom a question is put may, with the consent of the chairman of the meeting, ask that another Cabinet Member answers the question if it is considered that the other Cabinet Member is the appropriate portfolio holder to answer it but reasons must be given.
- 7.3 If the Portfolio Holder to whom the question is put is unable to answer the question a reply may be given by the Leader or in their absence the Deputy Leader.
- 7.4 A member asking a question under this Standing Order may ask one supplementary question, without notice, of the Portfolio Holder who answered the original question. The supplementary question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.
- 7.5 Answers to questions or supplementary questions under this Standing Order shall take the form of:
  - a) a direct oral reply; or
  - b) with the consent of the chairman of the meeting, a written answer where it is of a technical nature. Answers given in writing shall be given within 5 Working Days of the meeting and shall be sent to all members.
- 7.6 Questions and supplementary questions shall be put and answered without discussion.
- 7.7 Members wishing to ask a question under this Standing Order shall indicate such a wish by raising their hand. The chairman of the meeting shall determine the order for asking questions subject to the leader of the opposition group (or in their absence the deputy leader) being afforded the right to ask the first question. Where there is more than one opposition/minority group the leader of each group shall be afforded the right to ask a question at each meeting and the order shall be determined by the size of the group, the leader of largest group being given priority. Subject to (viii) below, there shall be no limit on the number of questions that any member, including the leader of the opposition or minority groups, shall be permitted to ask.
- 7.8 The period for questions under this Standing Order shall be limited to not more than 30 minutes per meeting, subject to the right for the Council to suspend this in accordance with Standing Orders.