

8. Questions by Members

Questions raised following the Leader's update report

The Leader provides an update report to the council for up to five minutes, following which a councillor may ask a question of the Leader. Such questions will be restricted to matters arising from the Leader's report, and the chairman has the discretion to rule a question out of order if it falls outside this scope. Members' questions on the Leader's report and any answers thereto are limited to 15 minutes in total.

To receive a reply to questions arising from the Leader's update report, no notice is required to be given. However, each councillor shall be restricted to one question and no supplemental.

If all councillors who have indicated a wish to ask a question have done so and sufficient time remains within the allocated 15 minutes, councillors may put a second question.

Members' questions to the Leader and to any other Cabinet member

A member may also ask questions of the Leader during the agenda item on questions to the Leader and to any other Cabinet member. Questions to the Leader and to any other Cabinet member and any answers provided under this agenda item are limited to 30 minutes in total. A question may be asked at the meeting without prior notice but in these circumstances there is no guarantee that a full reply will be given at the meeting.

To receive a reply to questions asked during questions to the Leader or any other Cabinet member, councillors must deliver their question in writing or by email to Democratic Services no earlier than four weeks and no later than four working days prior to the start of the meeting. Any written question received during this timeframe will receive a written response and be published.

Scope of questions

The Monitoring Officer will reject a question if it:

- (a) is not related to policy or budget issues
- (b) is not about a matter for which the council has a responsibility, or which affects the Isle of Wight
- (c) is defamatory, frivolous or offensive
- (d) is not a question but a statement
- (e) relates to an individual or the questioner's own particular circumstances
- (f) is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of Full Council, in the past six months
- (g) requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information
- (h) names or identifies individual service users, members of staff or members/staff of partner agencies
- (i) is not submitted within the requisite timeframe

Record of written questions

Democratic Services will give a unique reference number to each written question accepted and enter this number and the question in an electronic file open to public inspection. Rejected written questions will include reasons for rejection.

Copies of all written questions will be circulated to councillors. Following the meeting, the answers will be recorded adjacent to the question in the electronic file. Minutes of the meeting will record who asked a question, the subject matter and the reference number of the question and answer.

For the avoidance of doubt, this rule does not apply to oral questions asked at the meeting.

Asking written questions at the meeting

The chairman will invite the councillor to ask their written question as submitted. The question shall be put and answered by the relevant Cabinet member without debate. The answer to a councillor's question may be given orally or in writing.

Supplemental question

With the exception of questions raised following the Leader's update report, a councillor shall be allowed one supplementary question to the Cabinet member to whom the question was directed, provided it is relevant to the original question and does not introduce a new subject matter.

Written answers

Except in relation to members' questions to the Leader, where a reply cannot be provided at the meeting and a written response is promised, then such a written response should be provided within 15 clear working days. Where a reply cannot be provided to a question submitted for question time to the Leader, these shall be provided within five clear working days. For the avoidance of doubt, this rule does not apply to oral questions or questions raised following the Leader's update report.

Reference of a question to the Cabinet, or any other committee or sub-committee

Unless the chairman decides otherwise, no discussion will take place on any written question, but any councillor may move that a matter raised by a question be referred to the Cabinet or the relevant committee or sub-committee. Once seconded, such a motion will be voted on without discussion.