



Public Question Time

Policy Owner: Office of the Chief Executive Officer
Person Responsible: Chief Executive Officer
Date of Origin: 18 November 2015

Approved:

Amended:

Version Control 1

OBJECTIVE

To provide a channel for members of the public to seek information from the Council about issues affecting the Shire and for the Council to identify issues of importance to the community.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to all Ordinary Meetings, Special Meetings of the Council and the meetings of any Committee that the Council may appoint from time to time and to which a power or duty has been delegated.

BACKGROUND

Local Government Act 1995 – Section 5.24

Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996 – Part 2

POLICY STATEMENT

1.0 “Public Question Time” will be limited to 15 minutes. The Council may exercise a discretion to extend the time by resolution if required. If there are questions remaining unasked at the expiration of the time allotted members of the public will be asked to submit their questions in writing to the Chief Executive Officer who will provide a written reply with the response placed in the Agenda of the next Ordinary Meeting of the Council.

** A minimum of 15 minutes is provided by Regulation 6(1) of the Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996 (S.5.24 of the Local Government Act 1995)*

- 2.0 Questions may be asked at the Ordinary Council Meeting and any Committee meeting on any matter affecting the Council and the Shire's operations. Questions submitted to Special Meetings of the Council will be restricted to the subject matter of the meeting.
- 3.0 Each questioner will be limited to two (2) questions. Statements or long preamble are not permitted.
- 4.0 People wishing to ask questions will be encouraged to put their questions in writing or in a prescribed form and submit them to the Chief Executive Officer prior to 10 am on the day of the meeting. This allows for an informed response to be given at the meeting. Oral questions are permitted.
- 5.0 Priority will be given to questions about matters on the agenda for the meeting and which are submitted in accordance with 4.0 above.
- 6.0 Every person who wishes to ask a question must identify themselves and register with a Council Officer immediately prior to the meeting. Subject to 5.0 above questions will be taken in the order in which people register.
- 7.0 Questions containing offensive remarks, reference to the personal affairs or actions of Elected Members or staff, or which relate to confidential matters or legal action will not be accepted. Questions that the Presiding Member considers have been answered by earlier questions at the meeting or earlier meetings may not be accepted.
- 8.0 On receipt of a question the Presiding Member may answer the question or direct it to the Chief Executive Officer to answer. If the question is of a technical nature the Chief Executive Officer may direct the question to a senior technical officer present. If the question requires research it will be taken on notice.
- 9.0 There will be no debate on the answers to questions.
- 10.0 A summary of the question and the answer will be recorded in the minutes of the Council meeting at which the question was asked.
- 11.0 Public Question Time guidelines incorporating this policy are to be prepared and include information on the other methods of enquiry that are available to members of the public to obtain information from the Shire.

CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Elected members and members of the mentor panel were consulted in the preparation of this policy.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

The Policy is intended to streamline the question process which will facilitate the more timely production of minutes and responses to questions.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

In the normal course of events there should be minimal financial impact of conducting Public Question Time.

COMMUNICATIONS IMPLICATIONS

Public Question Time conducted in accordance with this Policy should enhance the communication between the Council and the community and facilitate the free flow of information.

IMPLEMENTATION PROVISIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Council and Chief Executive Officer will be responsible for ensuring that this Policy is adhered to.

EVALUATION AND REVIEW PROVISIONS

This Policy should be reviewed annually by the Chief Executive Officer.

LINKED POLICIES, PROCEDURES, DELEGATIONS AND OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

Policies on deputations, petitions and the wide range of other forms of community engagement are currently being considered.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

In the event that disputes arise at any meeting the Presiding Member will rule on the application of the Policy.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Not Applicable