7.4 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

Submitting Councillor: Cr Fergeus

MOTION

That Council resolves that:

1. Standing Orders be suspended such that the formalities of Council’s meeting procedures are temporarily disposed of.

2. During the time that standing orders are suspended, the Mayor:

A. retains discretion to accept or reject such questions. In exercising that discretion, the Mayor will consider whether a question:
   i) relates to a matter beyond the power of Council;
   ii) is defamatory, malicious, abusive or objectionable in language or substance;
   iii) relates to the personal views or actions of an individual Councillor or officer;
   iv) relates to a matter which would prejudice the Council or any person;
   v) is repetitive of a question already answered at the Meeting or the previous Ordinary Meeting of Council;
   vi) is in the nature of a statement, comment or opinion; or
   vii) relates to any matter which would otherwise be considered by Council in a meeting that is closed to the public under Section 89(2) of the Local Government Act 1989.

B. Where such an opportunity is provided, the Mayor shall:
   i) call on members of the public gallery who have submitted an accepted question to ask their question verbally, if they wish;
   ii) allow a maximum of two questions from any person;
   iii) only allow a second question from any person should time permit;
   iv) allow, at her or his discretion, a questioner to seek clarification on any point/s made in the answer provided;
   v) give priority to questions relating to matters on the Meeting agenda and to questions in the order in which they were received;
   vi) allow a maximum of three questions on a particular topic, grouping questions together and responding collectively as appropriate;
   vii) nominate the appropriate Councillor or Council officer to answer the question or elect to answer it herself/himself;
   viii) advise the Meeting where questions have been submitted to the Meeting and rejected;
   ix) distribute rejected questions to all Councillors by the end of the next working day;
   x) nominate an appropriate time period of no less than 15 minutes.

C. The text of each question asked and a summary response will be recorded in the minutes of the Meeting.

D. All questions not dealt with due to time constraints shall be responded to within seven working days. If a response cannot be provided in this time, Council Officers will advise the questioner of the expected timeframe for a response to be provided. Where an email address is supplied, this response will be provided via email.