

## **What are Public Questions?**

The public question session is an opportunity at the beginning of each Council, Cabinet, or Overview & Scrutiny meeting for any person registered as a local government elector for the Borough of Cheltenham to put questions about the Council. It is a key part of the Borough Council's commitment to openness and accessibility. You may either attend in person to present your question, submit a written question, or ask another person or a Councillor to read your question on your behalf.

## **How do I ask a Question?**

A question must be submitted in writing by 10 am on the 5<sup>th</sup> working day before the meeting (excluding the day of the meeting). This is to give the necessary time to prepare a response to your question.

Questions must be sent to the Democratic Services Manager, Municipal Offices, Promenade, Cheltenham, GL52 5SA or by email to [democratic.services@cheltenham.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@cheltenham.gov.uk). When submitting the question, you should give your name and address and, if possible a contact telephone number or e-mail address (please note that contact details will not be disclosed without your permission).

## **What can I ask?**

Questions must be relevant to some matter in which the Council has powers or duties.

Questions will be disallowed if they are a) defamatory, frivolous or offensive b) substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the previous six months or c) requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

No member of the public may submit more than two written questions to any one meeting.

Your question should avoid detailed individual service issues (such as why a particular refuse bin has not been collected). There are other ways of raising this kind of issue.

Questions relating to specific planning or licensing applications will not be accepted.

Democratic Services staff will provide every assistance to any individual wishing to ask a question. For further information email [democratic.services@cheltenham.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@cheltenham.gov.uk) or telephone 01242 774937.

## **Who will respond to my Question?**

Your question will be answered by the most relevant Portfolio Holder (that is the Cabinet member who has special responsibility for the service or topic to which the question relates) or Committee Chair. The Democratic Services section of the Council will co-ordinate this process and ensure that the relevant Councillor is informed of the question being posed to him or her.

Copies of all questions and written answers to them will be circulated to all Members at the start of the meeting and will be made available to the public attending the meeting.

## **Procedure at the Meeting**

The Chair will invite the questioner to put the question. The question need not be read out if the questioner so agrees and will not be read out if the questioner is unable to be present at the meeting unless the questioner has asked the Chair to put the question on their behalf.

Answers will be given, without comment, normally by a direct verbal answer and a written copy of the answer will also be given to the questioner if he/she is present or sent to him/her if she/he is unable to attend.

A questioner who has put a question in person may also put one supplementary question without notice to the Leader or Cabinet Members. Answers to supplementary questions will be given verbally but a written question will be provided if the verbal answer cannot conveniently be given.