

## **A GUIDE TO FAQS ABOUT PUTTING QUESTIONS AT THE PUBLIC OPEN FORUM SESSION AT FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS**

### **WHERE AND WHEN?**

A Public Open Forum session is held at the start (2p.m.) of all ordinary full Council meetings.

There is no Public Open Forum at either Extraordinary meetings or the Annual Meeting held in April/May each year.

The session starts at 2pm and finishes at 2.30pm, or sooner if all questions have been asked.

### **HOW DO I PUT MY QUESTION AND CAN I PUT MORE THAN ONE?**

Questions must be put in writing, and you must give your name and address. If you would like some help with this, please ask to speak to someone from the Member Services team who will be happy to assist you. You can submit questions by fax (01476 406000) or by e-mail if you prefer. Questions can be sent to the following officers:

Lena Shuttlewood [l.shuttlewood@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:l.shuttlewood@southkesteven.gov.uk)

Viv Wyatt [v.wyatt@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:v.wyatt@southkesteven.gov.uk)

Questions should be directed to members of the Cabinet. Each of the Cabinet members has a list of services for which they are responsible. If you don't know the name or who is the responsible Cabinet member, say for refuse collection for example, you can address your question like this:

*To: The Cabinet Member responsible for refuse collection.*

You can ask up to **TWO** questions. They could be to the same Cabinet member or to different ones.

You are allowed a supplementary (follow-up) question on each main question. Your follow-up question must be about the same subject as your main question or about the answer you are given.

### **IS THERE A DEADLINE?**

The **deadline** for receiving your questions is: **2pm on the Monday before the day of the meeting on the Thursday i.e. 72 hours before.**

### **WILL MY QUESTION DEFINITELY GET ASKED AT THE MEETING?**

Usually, yes – unless we have already received six questions for that meeting (see below).

When we receive your question at the offices, the Chief Executive will decide whether to allow the question. He can reject it if:

- It is about something which this Council does not have a responsibility for or it does not directly affect the district of South Kesteven;
- If your question is objectionable, improper, offensive, or contains defamatory language;
- Is more or less the same as a question which has been put at a previous meeting of the Council in the last six months;
- To answer the question means that confidential information would have to be given out.

## **WHAT HAPPENS AT THE MEETING? CAN I COME AND LISTEN?**

If you have sent in a question, we would welcome you coming to the meeting to put your question in person.

If you can do this, it would help if you could arrive in the Council Chamber for about 1.50p.m. Please identify yourself to the clerk or another member of staff (all staff wear identity badges). You will be asked to come to the front of the Chamber and to read out your question. You will be shown where to sit and to speak into a microphone. This is so everyone in the Chamber can hear you and because we digitally record the meeting through the microphone system. If you need help with any special needs or because of disability, please let a member of the committee staff know before the meeting.

So that the Council can hear the maximum of six questions allowed in the 30 minute open forum session, each question and answer is given a time limit of five minutes. The questions are asked in the order in which we have received them. If we have more than six questions, the last ones received will be held over until the next meeting.

Before the meeting, your question, together with any others, will have been printed up and circulated at the start of the meeting to all the Councillors and other members of the public attending. You will be given a copy of all the questions.

## **WHAT IF I CAN'T COME TO THE MEETING? CAN I SEND SOMEONE ELSE TO ASK MY QUESTION?**

If you can't come to the meeting, our Council rules don't allow for sending someone in your place. The Chairman of the District Council can decide whether to ask the question on your behalf. Only the Chairman can do this - your own ward Councillor is not allowed to ask your question. If you know at the time of sending in your question that you can't come to the meeting, it would help if you told us.

## **WILL I GET A WRITTEN REPLY?**

If you can't be at the meeting, the clerk will send you the written response in the post shortly after the meeting. If the Cabinet member to whom you have put your question is not at the meeting, then you will get a written answer within seven working days of the meeting.

All the questions and any follow-up questions asked at the Public Open forum are recorded word for word in the minutes of the meeting. Those minutes are usually published on the Council's website [www.southkesteven.gov.uk](http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk) via the "Local Democracy"

link about one week after the meeting. If you would like a written copy to be sent to you please ask the clerk at the meeting.