

## **PUBLIC DISCUSSION BEFORE THE COUNCIL MEETING**

### **GUIDANCE FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

1. From 19 May 2011, Runnymede Borough Council will give members of the public an opportunity to raise questions and matters for discussion with the Council before meetings of the full Council. This will apply to all meetings of the full Council except the Annual Meeting, the meeting at which the budget is considered, and special or extraordinary Council meetings.
2. Any person who lives in the borough of Runnymede, who works in the borough of Runnymede, who owns land or premises in the borough of Runnymede, or who attends an educational establishment in the borough of Runnymede may raise questions or matters for discussion on any aspect of the Council's business.
3. If a question is to be asked, the member of the public must lodge it in writing with the Corporate Head of Governance and Assets by 12 noon of the Monday immediately before the Council meeting. If the member of the public does not wish to ask a question, but address the Council, he or she must notify the Corporate Head of Governance and Assets of the topic area by the same deadline. Contact details are set out in para 9.
4. The public discussion session will be chaired by the Leader of the Council and with as little formality as is necessary. Questions or requests to address the Council will be taken in the order in which they are submitted.
5. The Leader of the Council will call the member of the public, who will ask his or her question or address the Council. The Leader may call upon an appropriate Member of the Council to respond. Following the response the member of the public may ask a supplementary question or make an additional comment. After he or she has done this the Leader of the Council may open the matter to more general discussion and debate, and may call other Members of the Council and other members of the public present to contribute if they signal a wish to do so. When the Leader of the Council judges that the matter has received a sufficient airing, or that it is necessary to end the discussion in the interests of time management, he or she will terminate the discussion.

6. The conduct of the discussion will be in the hands of the Leader of the Council and his or her directions shall be followed by all members of the Council and public present. The Leader of the Council is under no obligation to apply the same rules to one question or topic as to another.
  
7. Subject to the discretion of the Leader of the Council to override this guidance, the following general principles will apply:
  - a) The member of the public will have a maximum of 3 minutes to make his or her address, or ask his or her question.
  
  - b) No subsequent contribution from Members of the Council or of the public should exceed 3 minutes.
  
  - c) Members of the Council or members of the public shall not speak more than once on a particular question or topic except with the permission of the Leader of the Council.
  
  - d) If there is more than one question or topic for consideration, the Leader of the Council will seek to limit the time taken for each question or topic to a suitable length.
  
  - e) The session will last for half an hour before the commencement of the formal Council meeting. When the time is reached to start the Council meeting, the speaker than contributing shall be allowed a brief but reasonable period to finish, and the session will be concluded.
  
  - f) The member of the public who initiated the discussion shall, if practicable, be allowed 1 minute to make final comment at the conclusion of the discussion on their question or topic.
  
8. If the Leader of the Council is not available or is unable to carry out his or her functions under this procedure, his or her role shall be filled in proceedings prior to the meeting by the Mayor or

Deputy Mayor as available, and in proceedings at the meeting by any Committee Chairman, or the Mayor, as the Members of the Council present shall appoint by majority vote.

9. Your written request should be sent to:

Corporate Head of Governance and Assets

Runnymede Borough Council

Civic Centre

Station Road

Addlestone

Surrey KT15 2AH Email : [Mario.leo@runnymede.gov.uk](mailto:Mario.leo@runnymede.gov.uk)

10. A Calendar of Council Meetings can be viewed on the 'Committees' webpage at [www.runnymede.gov.uk](http://www.runnymede.gov.uk)