

# CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

## Governance and Constitution Committee

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**Date of Meeting:** 19 November 2009  
**Report of:** Democratic Services Manager  
**Subject/Title:** Questions at Council

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### **1.0 Report Summary**

- 1.1 At the request of the Chairman, this report will enable the Committee to consider the current rules relating to questions at Council.

### **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That consideration be given to the current rules relating to questions at Council.

### **3.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1 In order to comply with the request of the Chairman of the Committee

### **4.0 Wards Affected**

- 4.1 N/A

### **5.0 Local Ward Members**

- 5.1 N/A

### **6.0 Policy Implications**

- 6.1 This report deals with the Council's rules relating to questions at Council.

### **7.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs**

- 7.1 There are no such implications.

### **8.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond**

- 8.1 There are no such implications.

### **9.0 Legal Implications**

- 9.1 The existing rules are contained within the Council's Constitution. Any recommended changes to the Constitution must be agreed by Council before they can take effect.

## **10.0 Risk Management**

- 10.1 No risks can be identified which arise from the consideration of this report.

## **11.0 Background and Options**

- 11.1 As provided for in the Council Procedure Rules, a Member may request that an item of business be included on the agenda of a Committee meeting.
- 11.2 The Chairman of the Committee has asked that, after nearly eight months of operation of the Council Procedure Rules relating to the asking of questions at Council meetings, and three meetings of Council during which these Rules have been put into practice, the Committee give consideration to whether they are working effectively or whether they are in need of change.
- 11.3 The current rules provide for Members to ask questions at Council of the Mayor, the appropriate Cabinet Member, or the Chairman of a Committee, about a matter which the Council, the Cabinet or the Committee has powers, duties or responsibilities (Council Procedure Rule 11.1).
- 11.4 Questions must be provided in writing at least three clear working days before the meeting (Council Procedure Rule 11.3).
- 11.5 Questions are to be asked and answered without discussion. In replying, the Member responding is to use reasonable endeavours to address the matter raised in the question. The Member responding may: decline to answer the question, reply direct, reply by reference to a publication, reply by written answer, or refer the question to an appropriate committee/the Cabinet (Council Procedure Rule 11.5).
- 11.6 The Rules provide for the questioner to ask a supplementary question which relates to the initial answer. A reply may not be given if the question is: not related to the initial answer; is unduly lengthy; or is inappropriate. The Member answering the supplementary question will decide whether or not to reply (Council Procedure Rule 11.6).
- 11.7 The Committee is asked to consider the current rules in the light of the experience of the last eight months and three Council meetings.

## **12.0 Access to Information**

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

Name: Brian Reed  
Designation: Democratic Services Manager  
Tel No: 01270 686670  
Email:  
[brian.reed@cheshire.gov.uk](mailto:brian.reed@cheshire.gov.uk)