

## AGENDA ITEM 8

Essex Health and Well Being Board	<b>HWB/001/13</b>
Date: 22 May 2013	

### **Proposed Public Question Time Procedure**

Report by Secretary to the Board

---

Enquiries to Colin Ismay 01245 430396 colin.ismay@essex.gov.uk

### **Purpose of report**

It was agreed at the last meeting that proposals be produced for introducing a public question time session at meetings of the Board based on the procedures in use in Essex Councils. Having done a trawl through a sample of the Essex schemes the attached composite as set out in the Annex to this report has been produced.

### **Recommended:**

That the procedure set out in the Annex to this report be approved.

## **Questions by Members of the Public**

### **(a) General**

At every meeting of the Panel there shall be a period of not more than 15 minutes to enable members of the public to ask questions of the Chairman of the Board. Written statements and documents including photographs may not be circulated at the meeting by a member of the public asking a question.

### **(b) Notice of questions**

- (i) A question may only be asked if notice has been given in writing including by e mail to the Secretary to the Board by no later than 10.30 am on the third working day before the day of the meeting. Each question must give the name and address of the questioner.
- (ii) The Chairman may exercise his discretion and allow an urgent question to be raised and asked, provided that written notice of the question is delivered to the Secretary to the Board by 17:00 on the day before the meeting. The notice shall contain a request for the Chairman to exercise his discretion and specify the grounds upon which the matter is urgent.
- (iii) Any question received after the deadline at (i) above or in the event of the Chairman declining to exercise his discretion to allow an urgent question at (ii) above will be held over until the next meeting.

### **(c) Number of questions**

At any one meeting no person may submit more than two questions and no more than two questions may be asked on behalf of the same organisation. Where in the opinion of the Chairman two or more questions are in similar terms, they will be grouped together.

### **(d) Order of questions**

Questions will be dealt with in the order in which notice of them is received, except that the Chairman may group together similar questions.

### **(e) Scope of questions**

A question may be rejected if it:

- (i) is not about a matter for which the Board has a responsibility or which does not affect the area covered by the Health and Wellbeing Board;
- (ii) relates directly to a Health operational matter;
- (iii) is defamatory, frivolous or offensive;
- (iv) is substantially the same as a question asked at a meeting in the past six months;
- (v) will require the disclosure of confidential or exempt information; or

(vi) would be more appropriately dealt with by another organisation or an individual partner of the Board.

(f) Notification of rejected questions

Notification of rejected questions will be given at the earliest opportunity in the written form in which the question was received. Rejected questions will include reasons for rejection in accordance with (e) above.

(g) The Secretary to the meeting will maintain a record of each question which will be open to public inspection as soon as the first question is received and will immediately send a copy to the Chairman.

(h) Question paper

- (i) The Secretary to the meeting shall set out in the order paper for the meeting the questions submitted, including urgent questions where the Chairman has exercised his discretion to allow the question to be put, in the order received. This shall be circulated to Members, the public and the press at the meeting.
- (ii) Only those questions appearing on the order paper and supplementary questions asked under (k) shall be dealt with at the meeting.

(i) Asking the question at the meeting

The Chairman will invite the questioner formally to put the question to the meeting. If the questioner is unable to be present a written answer will be provided in the written form in which the question was received within 10 working days of the closure of the meeting.

(j) Response

An answer may take the form of:

- (i) A direct oral response;
- (ii) where the desired information is in a published form, a reference to that publication; or
- (iii) a written response.

Where the question cannot be dealt with during the period allocated for question time because of lack of time it will be dealt with by a written answer.

Save for the Member replying to the question, no other Member shall be permitted to speak to the questioner, unless the question is such that it has to be answered by more than one member of the board.

(k) Supplementary Questions

A member of the public who has put a question in person may without notice ask a supplementary question. The supplementary question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply. The Chairman may reject the supplementary question on any of the grounds in (e) above.

(l) Withdrawal of question

Any question may be withdrawn by the person submitting it at any time before the question is answered.