

## **Policy for Public Questions to the Accountability Board**

### **1.1 General**

The SELEP welcomes public interest in its business. Its formal meetings are open to the public, unless confidential business is being discussed, and the papers are published on the SELEP website, as well as the Accountable Body's (Essex County Council) website.

The SELEP welcomes public engagement and has therefore adopted the following procedure for public speaking at Accountability Board meetings.

At the start of every Ordinary meeting of the Accountability Board there shall be a period of up to 15 minutes to enable members of the public to make representations.

### **1.2 Notice of questions**

A question may be asked under this procedure only if it has been sent to the Managing Director of the South East LEP by email at: [adam.bryan@essex.gov.uk](mailto:adam.bryan@essex.gov.uk) by no later than 10.30am seven days before the meeting.

A question may be given by post if you do not have access to e mail by writing to the Managing Director of the South East LEP at P O Box 11, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 1LX.

Written statements and documents including photographs may not be circulated at the meeting.

### **1.3 Number of questions**

Only one speaker will be permitted to speak on behalf of an organisation. No person may ask more than one question at any meeting and there will be no opportunity for asking a supplementary question.

### **1.4 Order of questions**

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

Any question must be asked within a 3-minute time limit.

### **1.5 Scope of questions**

The Chairman may reject a question if it:

- (i) is not about a matter for which the Accountable Body has powers or duties;

- (ii) is defamatory, frivolous, vexatious or offensive;
- (iii) is substantially the same as a question put to a meeting in the previous six months;
- (iv) will require the disclosure of confidential or exempt information; or
- (v) is already subject to separate appeal, adjudication, litigation, mediation or dispute resolution.

The Chairman may disallow or terminate any public participation which discloses confidential or exempt information or is inappropriate, abusive, indecent, discriminatory, frivolous, irrelevant or otherwise unacceptable.

#### **1.6 Notification of rejected questions**

Notification of rejected questions will be given at the earliest opportunity in the written form in which they were received and include reasons for rejection in accordance with 1.5 above.

#### **1.7 Question paper**

The Secretariat shall circulate prior to the meeting a copy of the question(s) submitted by members of the public to those present.

## **1.8 Asking a question at the meeting**

On arrival and before the start of the meeting speakers should register with the member of staff collecting names specifying the agenda item they wish to speak on and the nature of their interest in the matter. The member of staff will explain what will happen and show speakers to the public seating area.

The member of staff will supply a list of speakers and suggested order of speaking to the Chairman at the start of the meeting.

The Chairman will call speakers by name and invite them to formally put the question to the meeting.

If the questioner requires someone to read their question for them, the Chairman will ask the question on their behalf but they must be present at the meeting.

## **1.9 Response**

Responses will be given as part of the consideration of the relevant Agenda item. The response will usually be given by the relevant Accountability Board Member or the Chairman of the meeting.

There will be no opportunity for asking a supplementary question.

## **1.10 Withdrawal of question**

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

## **1.11 Questions not dealt with in the time allotted**

Any question of which proper notice has been given but which is not dealt with in the allotted time of 15 minutes will not be held over to the next meeting: after the meeting a written response will be given in the form in which the question was received.