



## **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME GUIDANCE NOTES**

To encourage the involvement of the people of Chippenham in the business of the Town Council, the Council has arranged a public question time at all meetings of the Council which are open to the public. The following procedure applies:-

- a **Meetings shall be open to the public\* unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.**

\*Note: councillors not elected to the committee / subcommittee have no more rights than the public and are also excluded.

- b Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda

Written questions can also be received in advance of the meeting.

Questions at a committee/subcommittee meeting must be within the remit of the committee

- c A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct his comments to the chairman of the meeting.

The Chairman may reject a question if it:

- Is not about a matter for which the Council has a responsibility or which affects the area;
- Is defamatory, frivolous or offensive;
- Requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

- d The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting shall not exceed (30) minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting.

When a Ward Councillor not on the committee wishes to put a question in public forum, that question will be taken before questions from other members of the public.

- e A member of the public is entitled to speak once only on the same issue and shall not speak for more than 3 minutes. Where several people wish to speak on the same issue, the Chairman may direct that a single representative to be appointed.

- f A question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chairman of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.

If you have any questions on public question time at council meetings please contact the Chief Executive at [www.chippenham.gov.uk](http://www.chippenham.gov.uk) or by calling: 01249 446699