

Committee:	Full Council	Date:	Tuesday,
Title:	Council Procedure Rules: time permitted for questions to the executive and Committee Chairs		18 May 2021
Lead Member:	Councillor Edward Oliver, Chair of the Governance, Audit & Performance Committee		
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Summary

1. The Council Procedure Rules stipulate that at every ordinary meeting of Full Council an item is dedicated to the questioning of executive Members and committee Chairs (Rule 2.4: Section 2, Part 4).
2. The time period provided for in the Constitution states that this question time will not exceed 15 minutes.
3. At a Member's request, the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee (GAP) were asked whether a review into the time currently permitted for questions to the executive and committee Chairs at Full Council meetings was warranted.
4. At the GAP meeting held on 4 February 2021, Members established a Task & Finish Group to review the time permitted for questions to the executive and Committee Chairs at Full Council meetings, and to make a recommendation to the Committee in regard to amending Rule 2.4. The Group was comprised of Councillors Driscoll, Barker, Isham, Jones and Khan.
5. The Group met on Friday, 26 February 2021 to consider a number of approaches to questions to the executive and Committee Chairs, with a particular focus on the Essex County Council model.
6. The GAP Committee considered the Group's recommendation on 16 March 2021. In summary, the Group proposed extending the time permitted for questions to 30 minutes and to implement a system whereby written questions and answers are to be submitted and published in advance of a meeting. A question of clarification would be permitted at the meeting itself, but not a supplementary question. Furthermore, it was recommended that questions would not be permitted at Annual Council and budget setting meetings. The report and appendices that informed the recommendation are attached as Appendix 2.
7. The proposal was recommended to Full Council for approval without any additional changes and is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
8. The rules governing questions to the executive and committee Chairs at Full Council meetings form part of the Council's Constitution. Changes to the

Constitution are reserved for Full Council on recommendation of the GAP committee.

9. In the event Council are minded to amend Rule 2.4, the arrangements will be trialled at the Full Council meetings scheduled on 20 July and 5 October.

Recommendations from the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee

10. That Council:

- I. Amends Rule 2.4 of the Council Procedure Rules and adopt the protocol as set out in Appendix 1 to this report, subject to a trial period of two Full Council meetings.

Financial Implication

11. None.

Background Papers

[Uttlesford District Council - Constitution: Section 2, Part 4](#)

Impact

12.

Communication/Consultation	The Task & Finish Group met on 26 February to discuss the options available.
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	Notice of questions will allow for advance consideration of any legal implications.
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	Officers will be required to administer the written questions and answers system. It is anticipated that this will be facilitated within existing resources.

Risk Analysis

13.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That the current Rule provides elected members insufficient time to ask questions of the executive and Committee Chairs.	3	3	To trial the proposed amendments to Rule 2.4

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.