

REPORT TO:		Full Council	
DATE:		01 July 2026	
PORTFOLIO:		Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP - Leader of the Council	
REPORT AUTHOR:		Jane Ellis – Executive Director (Legal & Democratic Services)	
TITLE OF REPORT:		New arrangements for Question Time at Council meetings	
EXEMPT REPORT (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A)	No	Not applicable	
KEY DECISION:			
	No	If yes, date of publication:	

1. **Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To agree changes to the Council Procedure Rules in respect of the arrangements for Question Time at ordinary council meetings.

2. **Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Council approve the amended Council Procedure Rules attached as an appendix to this report and, in particular, the new Procedure Rule A8 which relates to the arrangements for holding a Question Time at ordinary council meetings; and
- 2.2 That Council agree to review the success of the new arrangements for Question Time in 6 months time.

3. **Reasons for Recommendations and Background**

- 3.1 A recent meeting of the Leaders Policy Development Board reviewed the operation of the “Question Time” session held at ordinary council meetings and, in particular, the arrangements for the submission of questions by members of the public. Following discussion the following was agreed:

- that members of the public would be permitted to submit questions directly to the Council, rather than doing so via a councillor as currently;

- that members of the public would be permitted to read out their questions, but could ask the Mayor to read out their question on their behalf;
- that members of the public would be able to ask a supplementary question provided the Mayor agreed to this (for example because the reply to the initial question was unclear or incomplete);
- that public questions would be limited to 150 words.

3.2 The proposed list of excluded questions is the same as that used by Lancashire County Council in respect of their public question time at council meetings.

3.3 The Leaders Policy Development Board also suggested that it would be sensible for the Council to review the operation of the new arrangement in 6 months to determine whether they have been successful.

3.4 The revised Council Procedure Rules are attached to this report, with a new Rule 8 which sets out the proposed new arrangements for Question Time.

4. Alternative Options considered and Reasons for Rejection

4.1 The Council is not required to have a public question time at council meetings and the arrangements for Question Time are a matter for the Council to decide at its discretion. The current arrangements could remain as they are if Council would prefer this. However, this is not recommended as there was a broad consensus in favour of the proposed new arrangements when these were discussed by the four group leaders of the Leaders Policy Development Board.

5. Consultations

5.1 The Leaders Policy Development Board has been consulted about the proposed changes and the Board's recommendations are included in this report. The revised wording for Rule A8 has been shared with the political group leaders.

6. Implications

Financial implications (including any future financial commitments for the Council)	None.
Legal and human rights implications	<p>The Council is required by law to have a written constitution. The Council's written constitution is reviewed regularly as a matter of good governance, and a copy of the constitution is available on the Council's website.</p> <p>The Council Procedure Rules form part of the Council's written constitution and, as a matter of law, any changes to the Rules therefore require approval by full council.</p>

Assessment of risk	None
Equality and diversity implications <i>A Customer First Analysis should be completed in relation to policy decisions and should be attached as an appendix to the report.</i>	None.

**7. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985:
List of Background Papers**

7.1 There are none.

8. Freedom of Information

8.1 The report does not contain exempt information under the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A and all information can be disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.