

COUNCIL MEETINGS

CHECKLIST OF PROCEDURE

N.B. A RULING BY THE MAYOR ON WHETHER A RULE APPLIES OR ON WHAT IT MEANS CANNOT BE CHALLENGED AT THE MEETING

CE – Chief Executive

Section 151 officer – Head of Finance

HLDS – Head of Legal and Democratic Services

DSM – Democratic Services Manager

LSBM – Legal Services Business Manager

Procedure	Note	Rule number
Briefing the Mayor	The Mayor has a book with a script; Officers prepare this based on their knowledge of what is on the agenda; It is often added to at the Mayor's briefing; The Mayor is briefed at her convenience; The briefing includes any issue that has arisen since the summons went out and the procedure to be followed at the meeting.	Council Procedure Rules in part 4 of the Constitution on intranet or web – hard copy on request
Just before the meeting	Members and officers assemble in the Council Chamber; At 7.15pm the Mayor's attendant announces her arrival, members stand and the Mayor, her attendant, CE, HLDS and DSM enter the room; Mayor greets everyone and all sit when she does.	
Which members are present?	HLDS and DSM check those present against a list; Mayor has a seating plan in front of her;	

	Numbers are important for quorum, voting and recorded voting (see later).	
Is there a quorum?	11 present and voting (i.e. not ruled out because of a prejudicial interest).	3
Agenda	There is a prescribed running order but Mayor can re-arrange if it helps the business of the meeting.	4
Apologies	Members call out from the floor – officers may also have been notified before the meeting.	4
Declarations of interests	Glance through the interests section of the Code of Conduct/Guidance from the Standards Board before each meeting; If you need advice ring the Monitoring Officer (HLDS) or her Deputy(LSBM)	4
Mayor's announcements	Any item relevant to council business requested by or agreed with the Mayor	4
Moving a proposal	Mayor introduces agenda item; Proposer is usually the relevant portfolio holder so Mayor will call on them unless told otherwise before the meeting; If not an Exec decision it will be the Chair of the Committee e.g. A&R; If it's Standards the Chair is non-elected so it will be an elected member of the Committee. If present the Chair should be allowed to speak if they wish; Secunder – Mayor will not usually know until the night unless group notifies her or DSM before the meeting. No proposal motion can be discussed until it has been proposed and seconded.	9
Rules of Debate	After a proposal has been moved and seconded members may	9

	<p>start the debate; Although there is no specific reference to the asking of questions, good practice suggests they should be allowed if they are genuinely intended to find out information that will inform the debate; A member who has asked a genuine question, and is not just using it as an opportunity to have two turns in the debate, should be allowed to speak again in the debate Members can speak only once in the debate unless;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they have a right of reply (see later); • want to raise a point of order (need to specify the rule); • want to explain something about themselves that may have been misunderstood; • are proposing a closure motion (see later); <p>unless the mayor agrees to them having a second go; Members catch the Mayor's eye and are invited to speak in turn; Each member has 5 minutes; Members should stand and address the Mayor; If a closure motion is put (e.g.that the matter be put to the vote) the proposer of the motion under debate has a right of reply at that point; Both the proposer and seconder have a right of reply at the close of debate on the motion or on an amendment to it.</p>	
Amendments	<p>Must be relevant to the motion, not negate it or be a negative of it; Must be moved and seconded; Only one can be moved at a time;</p>	9

	<p>Once moved and seconded it can be debated; The proposer and seconder of the original motion have a right of reply; The proposer and seconder of the amendment have no right of reply on the amendment; Once the debate has finished (Mayor has final say on this) a vote is taken on the amendment; If lost, the meeting returns to debate the original motion; If successful the original motion is lost.</p>	
Specific Items on the Agenda		
Minutes	<p>Leader generally proposes and deputy leader seconds; No discussion except on accuracy i.e. can't revisit the decisions; Mayor initials each page and signs the minutes at the end.</p>	4
Notices of Motion	<p>Could also be called Motions on Notice; A principle of local democracy that allows any member to raise an issue of concern to do with something the Council has responsibility for or which affects the area; One allowed per member and two for the leader; Notice must be given in writing by 5pm 10 clear working days before the meeting so it can be included on the summons; Useful if political groups can discuss it between themselves and arrive at a consensus before the meeting to avoid confusing amendments; If amendments are to be made then they should be written with sufficient copies for the Mayor, each group leader, any independent members, the CE, HLDS and DSM</p>	5

<p>Councillor Questions</p>	<p>To hold those with special responsibility to account or to obtain information; Must be received 5 clear working days before the meeting; Responses prepared by councillor with officer assistance on request; Question and answer is put round table at Council meeting and copies made available to the public; Mayor announces there has been a question; On request person questioned may read it out together with their response; Questioner can ask a supplementary on the night provided it relates to the question or the reply; The person questioned may answer or undertake to give an answer to all members within a reasonable period of time (depends on question); There is no debate on either the written or supplementary question.</p>	<p>7</p>
<p>Questions from the Public (on the electoral register for High Peak)</p>	<p>To hold the executive to account as can only question executive members; Same notice period; Mayor invites questioner to ask question if present; Depending on the circumstances, the Mayor may read out the question, reject it or say a written response will be given; Executive member answers question verbally if at all possible; No discussion on the question (unless Mayor agrees); Mayor must allow one supplementary if it arises out of the question or the answer; Best to answer supplementary if possible but can agree to</p>	<p>8</p>

	<p>send one in writing to questioner and all members; Any member may move that any issue raised by the question be referred to the Executive, a Committee or sub; Maximum of 15 minutes for public question time (unless Mayor agrees to extend); Any questions not dealt with in that time will be answered in writing after the meeting.</p>	
Closure motions	<p>Any member can propose at the end of any speech that the question be put or the meeting adjourned; Mayor has to decide whether the debate should continue or whether to put the closure motion to a vote; If the debate is closed in this way the proposer of the motion can exercise their right of reply.</p>	10
Budget motions	<p>Any motion or amendment that proposes a precept must have enough detail to justify it; Mayor must decide whether to accept it after;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • taking the advice of the s151 officer, the CE and the HLDS • taking into account the impact of the proposal on service estimates and government grants. 	10
Voting	<p>For, against, any abstentions; Show of hands; Recorded on request of one quarter of members present and voting – they must stand to request it; Any member can ask that their vote be recorded; Mayor has a second or casting vote if an equal number for and against;</p>	11

	Note: by convention the Mayor does not usually vote as they are politically neutral during their mayoral year; Where 3 or more are nominated for a position the one with the least votes drops out and a fresh vote is taken until there is a majority in favour.	
Disorderly conduct by members	Mayor or any member can propose another member be not heard (seconder required) in which case a vote is taken without discussion; If conduct persists, the Mayor can propose the member be excluded and, if seconded, the motion is put to a vote without discussion.	12
Disorderly conduct by the public	Mayor can order them to leave, adjourn or suspend the meeting. By implication, the mayor can also adjourn or suspend the meeting if the conduct is by a member.	12
Changing the rules at the meeting	Can be proposed and seconded provided at least half the members are present; Any permanent change has to be deferred for consideration at the next Council meeting.	14