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1. Annual meeting of the Council

1.1 Timing and business

In a year when there is an ordinary election of councillors, the annual meeting will take place within 21 days of the retirement of the outgoing councillors. In any other year, the annual meeting will take place in March, April or May.

The annual meeting will:

- (i) elect a person to preside if the Mayor is not present;
- (ii) elect the Mayor of the Borough;
- (iii) elect the Deputy Mayor of the Borough;

- (iv) approve the minutes of the last meeting;
- (v) receive any announcements from the Mayor and/or head of the paid service;
- (vi) elect the Leader of the Council;
- (vii) appoint at least one overview and scrutiny Committee, a Standards Committee and such other Committees as the Council considers appropriate to deal with matters which are neither reserved to the Council nor are executive functions (as set out in Part 3 of this Constitution) and to appoint the chairmen of those Committees unless it would be more convenient to leave those appointments to the first meeting of the respective Committee;
- (viii) agree the scheme of delegation or such part of it as the Constitution determines it is for the Council to agree (as set out in Part 3 of this Constitution);
- (ix) approve a programme of ordinary meetings of the Council for the year; and
- (x) consider any business set out in the notice convening the meeting.

1.2 Selection of Councillors on Committees and Outside Bodies

At the annual meeting, the council will:

- (i) decide which Committees to establish for the municipal year;
- (ii) decide the size and terms of reference for those Committees;
- (iii) decide the allocation of seats to political groups in accordance with the political balance rules;
- (iv) receive nominations of councillors to serve on each Committee and outside body; and
- (v) appoint to those Committees and outside bodies except where appointment to those bodies has been delegated by the Council or is exercisable only by the Cabinet.

2. Ordinary meetings

Ordinary meetings of the Council will take place 3 times each year in accordance with a programme decided at the Council's annual meeting. Ordinary meetings will:

- (i) elect a person to preside if the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are not present;
- (ii) approve the minutes of the last meeting;
- (iii) receive any declarations of interests from members;
- (iv) receive any announcements from the Mayor, Leader or members of the Cabinet;

- (v) receive questions from, and provide answers to, the public in accordance with standing order 10 below in relation to matters which in the opinion of the Mayor are relevant to the business of the meeting (time limit of 10 minutes);
- (vi) receive petitions in accordance with the Council's petitions scheme;
- (vii) receive questions from members under standing order 11 below (time limit 10 minutes);
- (viii) deal with any unfinished business from the last Council meeting;
- (ix) receive written reports from the Cabinet and the Council's Committees and receive questions and answers on the recommended items of those reports (Cabinet with written report from the Leader time limit 30 minutes, scrutiny time limit 20 minutes and other Committees time limit 10 minutes);
- (x) receive written reports about and receive questions and answers on the business of joint arrangements and external organisations (time limit 10 minutes);
- (xi) receive written reports from member champions and to receive questions to and answers from member champions (time limit 10 minutes)
- (xii) consider motions (time limit 30 minutes).
- (xiii) consider any other business specified in the summons to the meeting agreed by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition.

2A Budget setting meeting

2A.1 Timing and Business

In February of each year or another date in accordance with statutory requirements there will be a Budget and Council Tax setting meeting of the Council. The meeting will:

- (i) elect a person to preside if the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are not present;
- (ii) receive any declarations of interest from members;
- (iii) receive and debate reports from the Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee with regard to budget and tax setting and the policy framework.
- (iv) set the tax and any other matters required by statute
- (v) approve the budget and policy framework including any variations and in-year changes that may be made by the Cabinet.

3. Extraordinary meetings

3.1 Calling extraordinary meetings.

Those listed below may request the proper officer to call Council meetings in addition to ordinary meetings:

- (i) the Council by resolution;
- (ii) the Mayor;
- (iii) any five members of the Council if they have signed a requisition presented to the Mayor and he/she has refused to call a meeting or has failed to call a meeting within seven days of the presentation of the requisition.

4. Appointment of substitute members of Committees and Sub-Committees

Each Group on the Council may appoint a member of the Group as a substitute to take the place of any member of that Group on a Committee where that member will be absent for the whole of the meeting. The appointed substitute will be advised to the Chief Executive or Head of Support Services by the appropriate Group leader (or a nominated representative) prior to or at the commencement of the meeting. The appointed substitute will assume voting rights throughout the duration of the meeting. The composition of a group is as described in regulations issued under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

4.2 Powers and duties

Substitute members will have all the powers and duties of any ordinary member of the Committee but will not be able to exercise any special powers or duties exercisable by the person they are substituting.

4.3 Substitution

Substitute members may attend meetings in that capacity only:

- (i) to take the place of the ordinary member for whom they are the designated substitute;
- (ii) where the ordinary member will be absent for the whole of the meeting; and
- (iii) after notifying the Chief Executive or his representative before the start of the meeting of the intended substitution.

5. Time and place of meetings

The time and place of meetings will be determined by the Chief Executive and notified in the summons.

6. Notice of and summons to meetings

The proper officer will give notice to the public of the time and place of any meeting in

accordance with the Access to Information Rules. At least five clear days before a meeting, the proper officer will send a summons signed by him or her by post to every member of the Council or leave it at their usual place of residence. The summons will give the date, time and place of each meeting and specify the business to be transacted, and will be accompanied by such reports as are available.

7. Chair of meeting

The person presiding at the meeting may exercise any power or duty of the Mayor. Where these rules apply to Committee and Sub-Committee meetings, references to the Chairman also include the Chairman of Committees and Sub-Committees. If the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Committees or Sub-Committees are unable to attend a meeting the members of the Committee or Sub-Committee shall appoint a member to preside at the meeting.

8. Quorum

The quorum of a meeting will be one quarter of the whole number of members. During any meeting if the Chairman counts the number of members present and declares there is not a quorum present, then the meeting will adjourn immediately. Remaining business will be considered at a time and date fixed by the Chairman. If he/she does not fix a date, the remaining business will be considered at the next ordinary meeting.

9. Duration of meeting

Unless the majority of members present vote for the meeting to continue, any meeting that has lasted for 2 hours will adjourn immediately. Remaining business will be considered at a time and date fixed by the Mayor. If he/she does not fix a date, the remaining business will be considered at the next ordinary meeting.

10. Questions by the public and petitions

10.1 General

Members of the public may ask questions of members of the Cabinet or chairmen of Committees at ordinary meetings of the Council.

10.2 Order of questions

Questions will be asked in the order notice of them was received, except that the Mayor may group together similar questions. A maximum of 3 questions will be heard at a meeting. After 3 questions have been received the Chief Executive Officer will ask those who submit questions if they wish to resubmit to a later meeting or receive a written answer.

10.3 Notice of questions

A question may only be asked if notice has been given by delivering it in writing or by electronic mail to the Chief Executive no later than noon, seven working days before the meeting. Each question must give the name and address of the questioner and must name the Member of the Council to whom it is to be put.

10.4 Number of questions

At any one meeting no person or organisation may submit more than 1 question.

10.5 Scope of questions

The Chief Executive may reject a question if it:

- is not about a matter for which the Council has a responsibility or which affects the district;
- is defamatory, frivolous or offensive;
- is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months; or
- requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

10.6 Record of questions

The Chief Executive will enter each question in a book open to public inspection and will immediately send a copy of the question to the member to whom it is to be put. Rejected questions will include reasons for rejection.

Copies of all questions will be circulated to all members and will be made available to the public attending the meeting.

10.7 Asking the question at the meeting

The Mayor will invite the questioner to put the question to the member named in the notice. If a questioner who has submitted a written question is unable to be present, or if they so elect, they may ask the Mayor to put the question on their behalf. The Mayor may ask the question on the questioner's behalf, indicate that a written reply will be given or decide, in the absence of the questioner, that the question will not be dealt with.

10.8 Supplemental question

A questioner who has put a question in person may also put one supplementary question without notice to the member who has replied to his or her original question. A supplementary question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply. The Chairman may reject a supplementary question on any of the grounds in Rule 10.5 above.

10.9 Written answers

Any question which cannot be dealt with during public question time, either because of lack of time or because of the non-attendance of the member to whom it was to be put, will be dealt with by a written answer.

10.10 Reference of question to the Cabinet or a Committee

Unless the Chairman decides otherwise, no discussion will take place on any question, but any Member may move that a matter raised by a question be referred to the executive or the appropriate Committee or Sub-Committee. Once seconded, such a motion will be voted on without discussion.

10.11 Petitions

The Council operates a petitions scheme. A document submitted by a Member or members of the public shall be identified as a petition where it is indicated to be so by the person or persons submitting it. Petitions may be submitted in paper form or online. The Council's petition scheme is at appendix 'A'

11. Questions by members

Any questions under this rule must be to hold the Cabinet to account or clarify any issue raised. Questions shall be single questions, brief and to the point rather than statements and the Mayor shall have discretion to call the questioner under rule 11.1 again to follow up if he considers that conducive to the over riding objective of holding the Cabinet to account or clarifying any issue referred by the Cabinet or Committee.

11.1 On reports of the Cabinet or Committees

A member of the Council may ask the Leader or the Chairman of a Committee any question without notice upon an item of the report of the Cabinet or a Committee referring an item to the Council when that item is under consideration by the Council. Unless the meeting decides otherwise the time for considering the report of the Cabinet shall be limited to 30 minutes, the report of the scrutiny Committee to 20 minutes and other Committees 10 minutes in total. The objective of the questions is to hold the Cabinet to account or clarify matters raised by Cabinet or the Committee and not to make a statement.

11.2 Questions on notice at full Council

Subject to Rule 11.4, a member of the Council may ask:

- a member of the Cabinet; or
- the Chairman of any Committee or Sub-Committee

a question on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the Borough.

11.3 Questions on notice at Committees and Sub-Committees

Subject to Rule 10.4, a member of a Committee or Sub-Committee may ask the Chairman of it a question on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affect the Borough and which falls within the terms of reference of that Committee or Sub-Committee.

11.4 Notice of questions

A member may ask only one question under Rule 11.2 or 11.3 if either:

- (a) he or she has given at least 5 working days notice in writing of the question to the proper officer; or
- (b) the question relates to urgent matters, they have the consent of the Mayor.

11.5 Scope of Questions

Questions shall be edited, if necessary, by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Mayor both to bring them into proper form and to secure reasonable brevity. Any which he considers are not relevant to the powers or duties of the Council or affect the Borough or are frivolous or derogatory to the dignity of the Council shall be disallowed by him. If in the view of the Chief Executive a question is addressed to the Chairman of an inappropriate Committee, he shall, with the consent of the questioner, redirect the question.

11.6 Response

The content of any answer shall be in the discretion of the person responding. All questions and replies shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

11.7 Procedure

A copy of all questions asked and, in the case of those calling for it, a written reply will be circulated at the meeting. No discussion of the questions or replies shall be permitted at the meeting. A supplemental question may be asked by the member asking the original question but not more than one such question shall be put except with the consent of the Mayor. Any supplementary question shall again be a single question, brief and to the point and shall not be a statement. All questions and the replies (other than supplemental questions and replies) shall be printed in the minutes of the meeting.

12. Motions on notice

12.1 Notice

Except for motions which can be moved without notice under Rule 13, written notice of every motion must be delivered to the proper officer not later than 4pm 7 working days before the date of the meeting. These will be entered in a book open to public inspection.

12.2 Motion set out in agenda

Motions for which notice has been given will be listed on the agenda in the order in which notice was received, unless the member giving notice states, in writing, that they propose to move it to a later meeting or withdraw it.

12.3 Scope

Motions must be about matters for which the Council has a responsibility or which affect the Borough.

12.4 Motion Not Moved

If a motion set out in the agenda is not moved either by the member giving notice or some other member on his behalf it shall, unless postponed by the consent of the Council, be treated as withdrawn and shall not be moved without fresh notice.

12.5 Automatic Reference to Committee or Cabinet

If the subject of any motion under this standing order comes within the remit of any Committee or the Cabinet it shall, upon being moved and seconded, stand referred without discussion to that Committee or the Cabinet for consideration. Provided that the Mayor may if he considers it convenient and conducive to the despatch of business allow the motion to be dealt with at the meeting.

12.6 Time Limit

The time spent on debating any individual motion shall be limited to 15 minutes and the time spent debating all motions shall not exceed 30 minutes except where in the opinion of the Mayor the matters under debate or to be debated are of such importance or urgency that immediate consideration at the meeting is essential either in the public interest or for the proper conduct of the Council's affairs.

12.7 Number and order of motions

If there is more than one motion to be considered, the Council shall first decide on the order of consideration and no more than 2 motions will be considered.

12.8 Amendment to motion

Any amendment to a motion in the agenda must be provided in writing to the Chief Executive at least 2 days prior to the commencement of the meeting or at such time as it arises if it is not practicable to provide it earlier and the proposed amendment will be provided to the mover of the original motion so it can be considered and discussion can take place between the respective members.

13. Motions without notice

The following motions may be moved without notice:

- (a) to appoint a Chairman of the meeting at which the motion is moved;
- (b) in relation to the accuracy of the minutes;
- (c) to change the order of business in the agenda;
- (d) to refer something to an appropriate body or individual;

- (e) to appoint a Committee or member arising from an item on the summons for the meeting;
- (f) to receive reports or adoption of recommendations of Cabinet or Committees or officers and any resolutions following from them;
- (g) to withdraw a motion;
- (h) to amend a motion;
- (i) to proceed to the next business;
- (j) that the question be now put;
- (k) to adjourn a debate;
- (l) to adjourn a meeting;
- (m) that the meeting continue beyond 2 hours in duration
- (n) to suspend a particular council procedure rule;
- (o) to exclude the public and press in accordance with the Access to Information Rules;
- (p) to not hear further a member named under Rule 21.3 or to exclude them from the meeting under Rule 21.4; and
- (q) to give the consent of the Council where its consent is required by this Constitution.

14. Rules of debate

14.1 No speeches until motion seconded

No speeches may be made after the mover has moved a proposal and explained the purpose of it until the motion has been seconded.

14.2 Right to require motion in writing

Unless notice of the motion has already been given, the Chairman may require it to be written down and handed to him/her before it is discussed.

14.3 Secunder's speech

When seconding a motion or amendment, a member may reserve their speech until later in the debate.

14.4 Content and length of speeches

Speeches must be directed to the issue under discussion or to a personal explanation or point of order. No speech of a mover may exceed 5 minutes and any other member 3 minutes without the consent of the Mayor. This rule shall not apply to the mover and seconder of the main budget debate or to the mover and seconder of the main amendment(s) to the budget speech at the annual Budget Setting meeting set out at rule 2A above where there shall be no time limit on those speakers which may proceed until a motion pursuant to rule 13j is approved by the meeting.

14.5 When a member may speak again

A member who has spoken on a motion may not speak again whilst it is the subject of debate, except:

- (a) to speak once on an amendment moved by another member;
- (b) to move a further amendment if the motion has been amended since he/she last spoke;
- (c) if his/her first speech was on an amendment moved by another member, to speak on the main issue (whether or not the amendment on which he/she spoke was carried);
- (d) in exercise of a right of reply;
- (e) on a point of order; and
- (f) by way of personal explanation.

14.6 Amendments to motions

- (a) An amendment to a motion must be relevant to the motion and will either be:
 - (i) to refer the matter to an appropriate body or individual for consideration or reconsideration;
 - (ii) to leave out words;
 - (iii) to leave out words and insert or add others; or
 - (iv) to insert or add words.

as long as the effect of (ii) to (iv) is not to negate the motion.

- (b) Only one amendment may be moved and discussed at any one time. No further amendment may be moved until the amendment under discussion has been disposed of.
- (c) If an amendment is not carried, other amendments to the original motion may be moved.

- (d) If an amendment is carried, the motion as amended takes the place of the original motion. This becomes the substantive motion to which any further amendments are moved.
- (e) After an amendment has been carried, the Chairman will read out the amended motion before accepting any further amendments, or if there are none, put it to the vote.

14.7 Alteration of motion

- (a) A member may alter a motion of which he/she has given notice with the consent of the meeting. The meeting's consent will be signified without discussion.
- (b) A member may alter a motion which he/she has moved without notice with the consent of both the meeting and the seconder. The meetings consent will be signified without discussion.
- (c) Only alterations which could be made as an amendment may be made.

14.8 Withdrawal of motion

A member may withdraw a motion which he/she has moved with the consent of both the meeting and the seconder. The meetings consent will be signified without discussion. No member may speak on the motion after the mover has asked permission to withdraw it unless permission is refused.

14.9 Right of reply

- (a) The mover of a motion has a right to reply at the end of the debate on the motion, immediately before it is put to the vote. The reply will be limited to 1 minute.
- (b) If an amendment is moved, the mover of the original motion has the right of reply at the close of the debate on the amendment, but may not otherwise speak on it.
- (c) The mover of the amendment has no right of reply to the debate on his or her amendment.

14.10 Motions which may be moved during debate

When a motion is under debate, no other motion may be moved except the following procedural motions:

- (a) to withdraw a motion;
- (b) to amend a motion;
- (c) to proceed to the next business;
- (d) that the question be now put;

- (e) to adjourn a debate;
- (f) to adjourn a meeting;
- (g) that the meeting continue beyond 2 hours in duration;
- (h) to exclude the public and press in accordance with the Access to Information Rules;
and
- (i) to not hear further a member named under Rule 21.3 or to exclude them from the meeting under Rule 21.4.

14.11 Closure motions

- (a) A member may move, without comment, the following motions at the end of a speech of another member:
 - (i) to proceed to the next business;
 - (ii) that the question be now put;
 - (iii) to adjourn a debate; or
 - (iv) to adjourn a meeting.
- (b) If a motion to proceed to next business is seconded and the Mayor thinks the item has been sufficiently discussed, he or she will give the mover of the original motion a right of reply and then put the procedural motion to the vote.
- (c) If a motion that the question be now put is seconded and the Mayor thinks the item has been sufficiently discussed, he/she will put the procedural motion to the vote. If it is passed he/she will give the mover of the original motion a right of reply before putting his/her motion to the vote.
- (d) If a motion to adjourn the debate or to adjourn the meeting is seconded and the Mayor thinks the item has not been sufficiently discussed and cannot reasonably be so discussed on that occasion, he/she will put the procedural motion to the vote without giving the mover of the original motion the right of reply.

14.12 Point of order

A member may raise a point of order at any time. The Mayor will hear them immediately. A point of order may only relate to an alleged breach of these Council Rules of Procedure or the law. The member must indicate the rule or law and the way in which he/she considers it has been broken. The ruling of the Mayor on the matter will be final.

14.13 Personal explanation

A member may make a personal explanation at any time. A personal explanation may only relate to some material part of an earlier speech by the member which may appear to have been misunderstood in the present debate. The ruling of the Mayor on the admissibility of a personal explanation will be final.

15. Previous decisions and motions

15.1 Motion to rescind a previous decision

A motion or amendment to rescind a decision made at a meeting of Council within the past six months cannot be moved unless the notice of motion is signed by at least 7 members.

15.2 Motion similar to one previously rejected

A motion or amendment in similar terms to one that has been rejected at a meeting of Council in the past six months cannot be moved unless the notice of motion or amendment is signed by at least 7 members. Once the motion or amendment is dealt with, no one can propose a similar motion or amendment for six months.

16. Voting

16.1 Majority

Unless this Constitution provides otherwise, any matter will be decided by a simple majority of those members voting and present in the room at the time the question was put.

16.2 Mayor's casting vote

If there are equal numbers of votes for and against, the Mayor will have a second or casting vote. There will be no restriction on how the Mayor chooses to exercise a casting vote.

16.3 Show of hands

Unless a ballot or recorded vote is demanded under Rules 16.4 and 16.5, the Mayor will take the vote by show of hands, or if there is no dissent, by the affirmation of the meeting.

16.4 Recorded vote

- (a) If 7 members present at the meeting demand it, the names for and against the motion or amendment or abstaining from voting will be taken down in writing and entered into the minutes.
- (b) A recorded vote shall take place when a Budget Decision as defined in the relevant Regulations is voted upon for each financial year. Such a vote will be undertaken in accordance with procedure rule 16.4(a) above.

16.5 Right to require individual vote to be recorded

Where any member requests it immediately after the vote is taken, their vote will be so recorded in the minutes to show whether they voted for or against the motion or abstained from voting.

16.6 Voting on appointments

If there are more than two people nominated for any position to be filled and there is not a clear majority of votes in favour of one person, then the name of the person with the least number of votes will be taken off the list and a new vote taken. The process will continue until there is a majority of votes for one person.

17. Minutes

17.1 Signing the minutes

The Mayor will sign the minutes of the proceedings at the next suitable meeting. The Chairman will move that the minutes of the previous meeting be signed as a correct record. The only part of the minutes that can be discussed is their accuracy.

17.2 No requirement to sign minutes of previous meeting at extraordinary meeting

Where in relation to any meeting, the next meeting for the purpose of signing the minutes is a meeting called under paragraph 3 of schedule 12 to the Local Government Act 1972 (an Extraordinary Meeting), then the next following meeting (being a meeting called otherwise than under that paragraph) will be treated as a suitable meeting for the purposes of paragraph 41(1) and (2) of schedule 12 relating to signing of minutes.

17.3 Form of minutes

Minutes will contain all motions and amendments in the exact form and order the Mayor put them.

18. Record of attendance

All members present during the whole or part of a meeting must sign their names on the attendance sheets before the conclusion of every meeting to assist with the record of attendance.

19. Exclusion of public

Members of the public and press may only be excluded either in accordance with the Access to Information Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution or Rule 21 (Disturbance by Public).

20. Members' conduct

20.1 Standing to speak

When a member speaks at full Council they must stand and address the meeting through the Chairman. If more than one member stands, the Chairman will ask one to speak and the others must sit. Other members must remain seated whilst a member is speaking unless they wish to make a point of order or a point of personal explanation.

20.2 Mayor standing

When the Mayor stands during a debate, any member speaking at the time must stop and sit down. The meeting must be silent.

20.3 Member not to be heard further

If a member persistently disregards the ruling of the Chairman by behaving improperly or offensively or deliberately obstructs business, the Chairman may move that the member be not heard further. If seconded, the motion will be voted on without discussion.

20.4 Member to leave the meeting

If the member continues to behave improperly after such a motion is carried, the Chairman may move that either the member leaves the meeting or that the meeting is adjourned for a specified period. If seconded, the motion will be voted on without discussion.

20.5 General disturbance

If there is a general disturbance making orderly business impossible, the Chairman may adjourn the meeting for as long as he/she thinks necessary.

21. Disturbance by public

21.1 Removal of member of the public

If a member of the public interrupts proceedings, the Mayor will warn the person concerned. If they continue to interrupt, the Mayor will order their removal from the meeting room.

21.2 Clearance of part of meeting room

If there is a general disturbance in any part of the meeting room open to the public, the Mayor may call for that part to be cleared.

22. Suspension and amendment of council procedure rules

22.1 Suspension

All of these Council Rules of Procedure except Rule 16.5 and 17.2 may be suspended by motion on notice or without notice if at least one half of the whole number of members of the Council are present. Suspension can only be for the duration of the meeting.

22.2 Amendment

Any motion to add to, vary or revoke these Council Rules of Procedure will, when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

23. Application to Committees and Sub-Committees

All of the Council Rules of Procedure apply to meetings of full Council. None of the rules apply to meetings of the Cabinet. Only Rules 4-8, 12-22 (but not Rules 14.5 and 20.1) apply to meetings of Committees and Sub-Committees.

PETITIONS

The Head of Support Services is the Petitions Officer

(a) Procedure for presenting petitions to full Council

Provision shall be made at ordinary meetings of the Council for the public to present petitions in person and address the meeting.

The time allocated to the presentation of each petition will be limited to three minutes. Petitions will be considered by the Council in the order in which they are received and the maximum number of petitions considered at any one meeting will be limited to three.

The presenter of a petition may make a speech and the Leader of the Council or appropriate portfolio holder shall have a right of reply.

Every petition shall without further discussion stand referred to the Cabinet. A petition referred to the Cabinet shall be accompanied by a report by the head of service concerned and the Cabinet shall take such action as it considers appropriate.

Acceptance of Petitions

A petition may be presented on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the Borough, provided it has 50 or more signatures from Borough residents together with the names and addresses of those signing. A petition will not be accepted if it relates to a planning application before the Council for determination, an individual member of the Council or is submitted on behalf of a political party.

Any petition to be presented to the Council shall be notified in writing to the Chief Executive not later than 4 pm seven clear days before the day of the meeting. Any which he considers are not relevant to the powers or duty of the Council or affect the Borough or are frivolous or derogatory to the dignity of the Council shall be disallowed by him.

Any issue the subject of a petition which has been presented to the Council shall not be presented again for at least a period of six months.

(b) Other petitions

The Council welcomes petitions and recognises that petitions are one way in which people can let the Council know their concerns. All petitions sent or presented to the Council will receive an acknowledgement from the Council within 10 working days of receipt. This acknowledgement will set out what the Council intends to do with the petition. The Council will treat something as a petition if it is identified as being a petition, or if it appears that it is intended to be a petition.

Paper petitions can be sent to:

Head of Support Services
Broxbourne Borough Council
Borough Offices
Churchgate
Cheshunt
EN8 9XQ

or can be submitted online.

Petitions submitted to the Council must include:

- a clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition. It should state what action the petitioners wish the Council to take.
- the name and address and signature of any person supporting the petition.

Petitions should be accompanied by contact details, including an address, for the petition organiser. This is the person who will be contacted to explain how the Council will respond to the petition. If the petition does not identify a petition organiser, the Council will contact signatories to the petition to agree who should act as the petition organiser. Petitions which are considered to be vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate will not be accepted. In the period immediately before an election or referendum the Council may need to deal with your petition differently – if this is the case, the Council will explain the reasons and discuss the revised timescale which will apply. If a petition does not follow the guidelines set out above, the Council may decide not to do anything further with it. If this is the case, the Council will write to the petition organiser to explain the reasons.

When the Council receives a petition

An acknowledgement will be sent to the petition organiser within 10 working days of receiving the petition. The acknowledgement will say what will happen to the petition and when the petitioners can expect to hear from the Council again. If the petition needs more investigation, the Council will say what steps it intends to take.

If the petition applies to a planning or licensing application, is a statutory petition (for example requesting a referendum on having an elected mayor), or on a matter where there is already an existing right of appeal, such as council tax banding and non-domestic rates, other procedures apply. Further information on all these procedures and how someone can express their views is available from the Council. To ensure that people know what the Council is doing in response to the petitions it receives, the details of all the petitions submitted will be reported to the Cabinet.

How the Council responds to petitions

The response to a petition may include one or more of the following:

- taking the action requested in the petition
- considering the petition at a Council meeting

- holding an inquiry into the matter
- undertaking research into the matter
- holding a public meeting
- holding a consultation
- holding a meeting with petitioners
- referring the petition for consideration by the Council's Scrutiny Committee*
- calling a referendum
- writing to the petition organiser setting out our views about the request in the petition

* *The Scrutiny Committee is a committee of councillors who are responsible for scrutinising the work of the Council and has the power to hold the Council's decision makers to account. In addition to these steps, the Council will consider all the specific actions it can potentially take on the issues highlighted in a petition.*

If a petition is about something over which the Council has no direct control (for example, railways or hospitals) it will consider making representations on behalf of the community to the relevant body.

If a petition is about something for which a different local authority is responsible, the Council will give consideration to what the best method is for responding to it. In any event, the Council will always notify petitioners of the action it has taken.

E-petitions

The Council welcomes e-petitions which may be created and submitted through various websites. E-petitions must follow the same guidelines as paper petitions.