



PUBLIC QUESTION TIME POLICY

POLICY TYPE	DOCUMENT CONTROLLER	RESPONSIBLE MANAGER	POLICY ADOPTED	REVIEW DUE
Council	Executive Coordinator	Chief Executive Officer*	27 October 2025	October 2027
PURPOSE	To provide an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions about Council activities or matters of interest, at each ordinary Council Meeting, or special Council Meeting in accordance with Regulations 36,37 and 38 of the <i>Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2025</i> .			
SCOPE	This Policy applies to: a) all members of the public; and b) all formal Council meetings (including special meetings) held by Devonport City Council.			
POLICY	<p>1. Public Question Time In accordance with Regulation 36(3) of the <i>Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2025</i>, Council has determined that a period of thirty (30) minutes be set aside for members of the community to ask questions relating to Council activities.</p> <p>Public question time provides an opportunity for people to ask questions about Council's activities but is not an opportunity to make statements.</p> <p>Public Question Time is live streamed and recorded as part of the Council Meeting live streaming and recording.</p> <p>2. Questions On Notice A member of the public may give written notice to the Chief Executive Officer at least 7 days (excluding day of notice and day of meeting) before an ordinary Council meeting of a question to be asked at that meeting. A maximum of three questions on notice per person per meeting is permitted. If more than three questions on notice are submitted, additional questions will be treated as correspondence and a written response will be provided in line with Council's Customer Service Charter.</p> <p>Multi-part questions intentionally constructed to evade the limit of three questions per person will be treated as individual questions. When submitting questions, the first three questions submitted in the correspondence will be taken as those for answering as part of the Public Question Time process, with subsequent questions being considered and treated as general correspondence.</p> <p>The question and a proposed response, if appropriate, will be included on the agenda for the scheduled meeting. If more time is</p>			

required to respond to complex questions, the questions will be acknowledged in the Agenda of the next ordinary Council Meeting, with the date of the later ordinary Council Meeting at which response/s will be published.

Questions can be lodged by:

- Completing the online Questions on Notice Form – at [Online Public Questions on Notice Form](#)
- Email: council@devonport.tas.gov.au
- Mail: PO Box 604, Devonport 7310
- In person: Level 2, paranaple centre, 137 Rooke Street, Devonport

3. Questions Without Notice

Questions without notice will be dependent on available time at the meeting (with a maximum period of 30 minutes set aside at each meeting).

A member of the public who wishes to ask a question at the meeting is to state their name and address prior to asking their question.

A maximum of 3 questions per person are permitted, and the question must relate to activities of the Council

A maximum period of 5 minutes will be allowed per person.

Questions are to be succinct, clear, are not to be a statement nor contain lengthy preamble.

To allow opportunity, where necessary to research answers and limit questions taken on notice, a copy of any questions without notice, where possible, are to be provided by email or in person to Council by 12 noon on the day of the meeting. Where a copy of the questions without notice are not provided to Council prior to the meeting, it is encouraged that a copy of the questions be provided to Council during or at the conclusion of public question time.

A question by any member of the public and an answer to that question are not to be debated.

Questions without notice and their answers will be recorded in the minutes.

The Chairperson may take a question on notice in cases where the questions raised at the meeting require further research or clarification.

The Chairperson of an ordinary council meeting may require a public question without notice be put on notice in writing and answered at a later ordinary council meeting.

Protections of parliamentary privilege does not apply to local government and any statements or discussion in the Council

Chambers, or any document produced, are subject to the laws of defamation.

4. Refusal of Questions

The Chairperson may refuse to allow a question on notice to be listed or refuse to respond to a question put at a meeting without notice that:

- a) relates to any planning issue or item listed on the agenda for the Council meeting (note: this ground for refusal is in order to avoid any procedural fairness concerns arising in respect to any matter to be determined on the Council meeting agenda);
- b) is unlawful in any way;
- c) contains defamatory remarks, offensive or improper language;
- d) does not relate to activities of the Council;
- e) questions the competency of Council staff or Councillors;
- f) relates to the personal affairs or actions of Council staff or Councillors;
- g) relates to confidential matters, legal advice or actual or possible legal proceedings;
- h) relates to any matter which would normally be discussed in the Closed Section of a Council meeting pursuant to Regulation 17 of the *Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2025*;
- i) is, in the reasonable opinion of the Chairperson, proffered to advance a particular point of view rather than making a genuine enquiry;
- j) is vague in nature or irrelevant to Council activities;
- k) are questions that have been substantively asked (and responded to) at any previous Council meeting.

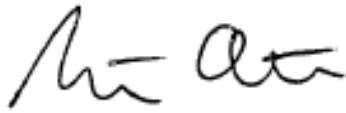
If a Chairperson refuses to accept a question from a member of the public, the Chairperson is to give reasons for doing so. If a public question on notice is refused, the question will not be reproduced in the agenda for that meeting.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Authority is delegated to the Chief Executive Officer and the Chairperson to uphold this Policy.

The Mayor, as Chairperson, is authorised under Regulation 50 of the *Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2025* and section 20 of the *Polices Offences Act 1935*, in respect of Council Meetings, and the conduct of attendees at meetings, including the taking of reasonable steps to remove person/s from a meeting where their behaviour is deemed to be unreasonable.

The Chief Executive Officer, as General Manager, as the person in charge of Council property, is further authorised under section 14B

	of the <i>Police Offences Act 1935</i> in relation to the removal of individuals creating a disturbance at a meeting of Council.			
LEGISLATION AND RELATED DOCUMENTS	<i>Local Government Act 1993</i> <i>Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2025</i> <i>Police Offences Act 1935</i> Disruptive Behaviour by the Public at Council Meetings Guidelines – May 2024 (Office of Local Government) Online Public Questions on Notice Form Digital Recording Policy Devonport City Council Strategic Plan 2009-2030			
ATTACHMENTS (IF APPLICABLE)	N/A			
STRATEGIC REFERENCE	5.3 Council looks to employ best practice governance, risk and financial management			
MINUTE REFERENCE	25/193			
OFFICE USE ONLY	Update Register	Y	Training/Communication	Y
	Advise Document Controller	Y	Advise HR / MCO	Y
	Management Sign Off:  Date: 27 October 2025 * Please note reference to the Chief Executive Officer means the General Manager for the purposes of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> , and all other legislation administered by or concerning the Devonport City Council.			