

Review of the Application for Questions and Motions at each Annual and Ordinary Council Meeting

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This paper reviews other Lincolnshire District Councils, Lincolnshire County Council's standing orders, and their constitutions to understand where West Lindsey District Council stands with our neighbouring and county authorities. It aims to look at how they manage each council meeting's questions and motions and whether there are any restrictions. The findings below are made in a comparison matrix. Overall, West Lindsey stands on a similar path. Still, there is precedent from other nearby local authorities for other actions, such as long periods required to submit a question for a Council meeting and the restrictions of questions and motions at other council meetings. The scope of extraordinary/urgent meetings of full council is not in consideration in this review.

The comparison matrix of other Lincolnshire Local Authorities

The Local Authorities	Are there any limits on the <u>number</u> of questions, and motions?	Are there any limits on the <u>type</u> of questions, and motions? (other than it has to pertain to responsibilities of the local authority, it not be defamatory or offensive)	Are there meetings where questions and motions are <u>not</u> allowed? e.g. Budgets, annual council	Anything else of note? e.g. Submission deadlines, time limits on question sessions.
West Lindsey District Council (WLDC) (as the constitution currently stands)	Public – No more than 6 per year. Member – For questions and motions, as many as they so wish (as long as the Member follows the Rules of Procedure)	No questions can be asked at council meetings that are already items on the agenda. Also includes offensive questions, if put during formal Purdah period and is politically motivated, names an individual member or Group. Also public questions have to related to WLDC, or things that affect the district. Motions will be rejected if 'out of order, illegal, irregular, or improper'. Motions "must be about matters for which the Council has a responsibility or which affect the district."	Annual Council – No questions can be asked, nor any motions be moved, as there is no provision in the Rules of Procedure for them.	Questions (for both public and Member) need to be asked three clear working days before the day of the meeting. Motions need at least one-member signing, and received by Close of play seven clear working days to the meeting.
East Lindsey District Council (ELDC)	Public – No more than one question at any one meeting.	Matters for motions have to affect the district, or something that ELDC has the power to do. Cannot be a specific planning, nor licensing matter,	Annual Council – No questions can be asked, nor any motions be moved,	Members and Public -Questions have to have 4 working days' notice (writing or email), and has to identify the office-holder, along

	Member – No specific limit, can be to Chairman, Executive councillor, leader, chairman of any committee.	complaint being considered by ELDC, or an Officer.	as there is no provision in the Rules of Procedure for them.	with name and address of questioner. 15-minute limit to Question Time. Motions have to be delivered no later than on the 9 th working day before the date of the meeting.
Lincoln City Council (L. City)	Public – One question per person each meeting to Leader, Executive Member or Chair of a committee. Member – Member of executive, or Chairman of any committee. As many motions as a Member wants to sign.	Public – Questions can be rejected if L. City has no responsibility, it is an individual grievance, offensive, substantially the same as question in last six months, and requires disclosure of confidential information. Member – “a question on any matter within his or her [Executive Member/Chairman) competence in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the area”. Motions – Has to be something in L. City responsibility or affects the city.	Annual Council – No questions can be asked, nor any motions be moved, as there is no provision in the Rules of Procedure for them.	Notice of Qs from public is no later than noon 7 working days before meeting. Members questions have to be submitted in writing 10 AM two clear working days before meeting. Length of public questions time limited to 20 minutes. Motions have to give notice no less than 7 working days than before the meeting, and has to have at least two members (proposer and seconder).
North Kesteven District Council (NKDC)	Public – One question per person at any one meeting Member – May ask a question to Leader, Executive Member or Chair of a committee.	Motions have to be something which NKDC is responsible for, or something that affects the area. Questions can be rejected if it's not NKDC responsibility/doesn't affect the district, are individual grievance, substantially same question in last six months, related to planning/licensing yet to be determined and disclosure of confidential information.	Annual council allows for questions from the public, but makes no reference to motions (so presumably motions are not allowed).	Limit of 20 minutes for public questions, 5 minutes per speech. Notice of questions for Member is seven clear working days. Motions need to be delivered no later than seven working days before date of meeting, signed by a councillor.
South Kesteven District Council (SKDC)	Public – No more than two questions/speak on two items at any one item. No more than six questions/speeches at	Public Questions – can't be asked if a substantially same question has already been put to Council in past six months. Member Questions – Addressed to Leader, Cabinet Members, Chairman	“Open questions at Council will not be allowed at the Council budget meeting”.	30-minute limit period at any ordinary meeting. At least 3 working days' notice before date of meeting. If no answer due to limit/time, will be a written answer.

	<p>any one meeting holistically. Member – No Member shall have more than two notices of motion on the agenda for any meeting. First come, first served basis. Memeber Limited to one question per meeting.</p>	<p>or Vice-chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committees, opposition Leaders. Motions - must be about matters for which the Council has a responsibility or which affect the area, has to be one single subject matter.</p>	<p>Annual Council has no allotted space or specific mention in SKDC Constitution.</p>	<p>45 minutes maximum for questions.</p>
<p>Boston Borough Council (BBC)</p>	<p>Public – No more than one question at any one meeting. Member – Can ask questions to Mayor, Leader, Cabinet Member, or any Chairman. No limit on motions by Members.</p>	<p>Public Questions – No questions that are individual grievance, offensive, requires disclosing confidential information, and a substantially same question has been put at a meeting of the Council in last six months. Member Question – Has to be something BBC has power over, or a matter that affects the Borough. Motions have to be something that affects the Borough, or something which BBC has responsibility in.</p>	<p>Annual Council has no specific mention of Questions and Motions in BBC Constitution.</p>	<p>Public question session shall not exceed 20 minutes, has to identify office holder, and has to be delivered by no later than 5 PM two clear working days before date of meeting. Member questions have to be in two working days before the meeting. Motions have to be signed by at least five Members, and delivered no later than seven working days.</p>
<p>South Holland District Council (SHDC)</p>	<p>Public – No mention of public participation for SHDC meetings. Member – No limit. Can ask Questions to Chairman, Cabinet Member, and Chairman of a committee</p>	<p>Can ask a question to Chairman of Council, Leader, Cabinet Member, Chairman of any committee “on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the district.” Motions have to be relevant to some matter in relation to which SHDC has power/duties, or which affects the District.</p>	<p>No restrictions of questions or motions at any council meetings.</p>	<p>9 clear working days for motions. Questions from members have to be in no later 9 AM three clear working days before meeting. Standing Order No. 7 – Member can ask Leader/Cabinet Member any question without notice within that Leader/Cabinet Member’s area of responsibility – limited to 30 minutes each meeting.</p>
<p>Lincolnshire County Council (LCC)</p>	<p>Public – No mention of public participation for LCC meetings Member – No specified limit. May ask any</p>	<p>Public – No mention of public participation for LCC meetings Member questions – It has to relate “to some question over which the</p>	<p>Questions - “the meeting to consider the Council’s annual revenue budget and capital programme”</p>	<p>“Written notice of every motion, must be delivered to the Monitoring Officer (and a copy to the Democratic Services Manager) no</p>

	question to Chairman of Council, Leader/Executive, Chairman of any committee, Fire authority about their responsibilities.	Council has power or which affects the County". Motions – “No motion or question shall be put unless it relates to some question over which the Council has power or which affects the County.”	LCC allows questions and motions at annual council meetings.	later than noon on the third working day before the meeting”
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The Findings

We can see that WLDC stands as somewhat more in line with nearby local authorities regarding questions and motions regarding council meetings. There is some precedent for no questions and motions at other meetings beyond Annual Council. Lincolnshire County Council and South Kesteven prohibit any questions in their budgetary meetings.

Regarding annual council meetings, West Lindsey District Council follows a few of the county's non-metropolitan district/borough councils. It does not allow for questions and motions at annual council meetings. LCC and SHDC are the major exceptions, where it provides for questions and motions at any council meetings, including annual council meetings. However, these two local authorities are also ones where public speaking at full council meetings is restricted (consistent with what both of their Planning Committees were when it came to public participation/speaking).

Regarding the procedure for questions, West Lindsey District Council has quite relaxed timescales compared to other local authorities, allowing for questions quite close to the meeting. The scope of the questions is more or less aligned with other local authorities, just with a few extra minor addendums, including the politically motivated questions in the pre-election sensitivity period (commonly known as 'Purdah'). Despite initial research and assumptions regarding the processes for motions, there are no rules of procedure that state in any of the Lincolnshire local authorities that can prohibit motions at specific ordinary council meetings.