**QUESTIONS TO NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL AT AREA COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Please return to:

Committee Services

Democratic Services

Corporate Resources

Northumberland County Council

County Hall

MORPETH

Northumberland

NE61 2EF

(Or submit to your local County Councillor or alternatively bring your question to ask at an Area Committee meeting).

● Name, address, email address and telephone number of questioner:

● What is the question you would like to ask? (continue on a separate page if necessary)

**Appendix A – Guidance**

Public question time provides the opportunity to reply to any questions received from members of the public, which may be received in writing in advance of the meeting or asked at the meeting. Questions can be asked about issues for which the Council has a responsibility.

As agreed by the County Council in February 2012, the management of public question time is at the discretion of the chair of the committee. Please note however that a question may possibly be rejected if:

1. it is not about a matter for which the Council has a responsibility or which affects the county; is defamatory, frivolous or offensive;
2. it is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the committee in the past six months;
3. it requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information;
4. the cost of providing an answer is disproportionate;
5. it relates to staffing or industrial relation matters;
6. it relates to planning, licensing and/or other regulatory applications.

If the Chair is of the opinion that a question is one which for whatever reason, cannot properly be asked in an area meeting, he/she will disallow it and inform the resident of his/her decision. The committee can request for written answers to be provided after the meeting if appropriate.

The full guidelines for Area Committee public question times are attached as Appendix B to this form.

For further information about Area Committee public question times at Northumberland County Council please contact Democratic Services on 01670 622616 / democraticservices@northumberland.gov.uk

**Appendix B – Full Guidelines**

AREA COMMITTEES:

PROCEDURE FOR PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

**1. Questions by the public**

**1.1 General**

Members of the public may ask questions of members and members at an Area Committee but such period of questioning shall be restricted to a maximum of 30 minutes except that the Chair shall have discretion to extend the period.

**1.2 Asking questions**

Each questioner must give their name and address.

**1.3 Number of questions**

In order to allow the maximum public participation, at any one meeting no person may submit more than two questions.

**1.4 Scope of questions**

The Chair may reject a question if it:

1. is not about a matter for which the Committee has a responsibility or which affects the area;
2. Is defamatory, frivolous or offensive;
3. is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Committee in the past six months; or
4. requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information; or
5. the cost of providing an answer is disproportionate.
6. relates to staffing or industrial relation matters;

The Council cannot accept any questions in relation to planning, licensing and other regulatory applications.

If the Chair is of the opinion that a question is one which for whatever reason, cannot properly be asked in an area meeting, he or she can refer it to the County Council public question time.

**1.5 Record of questions**

Democratic Services will record each question and answer in the minutes. Rejected questions will include reasons for rejection.

**1.6 Asking the question at the meeting**

The Chair will invite the questioner to put the question. If a questioner who has submitted a written question is unable to be present, they may ask the chairman to put the question on their behalf. The chairman 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.

**1.7 Supplemental question**

1. A questioner who has put a question in person may also put one supplementary question without notice. 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.
2. The Chair may allow a person present at the meeting to submit further supplementary questions for answer at the particular meeting, if the allotted period in Rule 10.1 has not been exceeded and providing no other person is disadvantaged by allowing such extra questions.

**1.8 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 a member or appropriate officer will be dealt with by a written answer. A copy of any written reply will be attached to the minutes of the meeting.