

# GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

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Thursday, 12 October 2017 at 7.00 p.m.

C1, 1st Floor, Town Hall, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, London,  
E14 2BG

## SUPPLEMENTAL AGENDA

**This meeting is open to the public to attend.**

**Contact for further enquiries:**

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agenda:



For further information including the Membership of this body and public information, see the main agenda.

**4. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION**

**5.**

**4.7 Constitution Review – Council Procedure Rules**

**1 - 32**

General Purposes Committee on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2017 agreed to review the Council Procedure Rules. This report presents a revised set of Rules for recommendation to Council.

## Part 4 – Rules of Procedure

### 4.1. COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

#### CONTENTS

Rule	Subject
1	Annual Meeting of Council
2	Budget Meeting(s)
3	Ordinary Meetings
4	Extraordinary Meetings
5	Time Place, Postponements and Cancellations of Meetings
6	Notice of and Summons to Meetings
7	Chair of Meeting
8	Quorum
9	Duration of Meeting
10	Questions by Councillors
11	Motions on Notice
12	Motions and Amendments – Without Notice
13	Rules of Debate
14	Procedural Motions
15	Previous Decisions and Motions
16	Voting
17	Petitions
18	Standards Advisory Committee Reports
19	Exclusion of the Public
20	Councillors' Conduct
21	Disturbance by Public
22	Filming and Recording
23	Suspension and Amendment of Council Procedure Rules
24	Specific Exemptions applying to other meetings/Committees and Sub-Committees
<b>Appendix</b>	
1	Petition Scheme

#### 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:

- (a) elect a person to preside if either the Speaker or the Deputy Speaker are not present;

- (b) elect the Speaker of the Council;
- (c) elect the Deputy Speaker of the Council;
- (d) receive any declarations of interest;
- (e) approve the minutes of the last meeting which will then be signed by the Speaker;
- (f) receive any announcements from the Speaker of the Council and/or the Chief Executive;
- (g) note any appointment of Cabinet Councillors and/or the Deputy Mayor made by the Mayor;
- (h) appoint at least 1 Overview and Scrutiny 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);
- (i) 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);
- (j) approve a programme of Ordinary Meetings of the Council for the year (if not already agreed). In an election year the schedule of meetings may be reviewed at the Annual Meeting if it has already been agreed at Council prior to the first meeting in May;
- (k) the Mayor shall report on any appointments of outside bodies;
- (l) the Mayor shall report on circumstances where the Special Urgency provisions have been used during the year preceding the Annual Meeting;
- (m) receive a report on any changes made to the Council's Constitution since the last Annual Meeting; and
- (n) consider any business set out in the notice convening the meeting including the Annual State of the Borough Debate at 1.3.

## **1.2 Selection of Councillors on Committees**

At the Annual Meeting, the Council will:

- (a) decide which Committees to establish for the municipal year;
- (b) decide the size and terms of reference for those Committees;
- (c) decide the allocation of seats to political groups in accordance with the political proportionality rules;
- (d) receive nominations of Councillors to serve on each Committee; and

- (e) appoint to those Committees except where appointments have been delegated by the Council or are exercisable only by the Mayor or Executive.

but this is without prejudice to the right of the Council at any time to establish or dissolve any non-Executive Committee or to review its size and terms of reference.

**1.3** The Mayor will lead an `Annual State of Borough` debate to provide an opportunity for a discussion on policy matters and issues affecting the Council and the Borough; the following procedure shall apply:

- (a) The debate will last for up to 1 hour;
- (b) The debate will begin with a 15 minute introduction by the Mayor;
- (c) The remaining 45 minutes will be divided proportionally (to the nearest minute) between the political groups on the council. It will be for each group to determine how much time each of their speakers will have subject to a minimum speech length of two minutes. There is no maximum speech length providing that group's overall time limit is not breached;
- (d) Lists of speakers must be provided to the Monitoring Officer before the start of the meeting;
- (e) The 45 Minute Debate will end with the Mayor or the Mayor's appointee;
- (f) The Mayor and the Group Leaders of the other political groups may speak twice should they wish. All other Councillors may speak only once;
- (g) There will be no motions, reports or votes on the debate.

## **2 BUDGET MEETING(S)**

**2.1** A meeting will take place on a date decided by Council or the Chief Executive. The purpose of this meeting will be to determine the Council's budget and set the Council Tax for the following financial year. The Budget Meeting will be conducted in accordance with the provisions of this rule.

**2.2** The order of business at the Budget Meeting will be as follows:-

- (a) As per Rules 1.1(a), (d) and (f);
- (b) to receive any petitions which only relate to the Council's budget or to the setting of the Council Tax in line with the procedures set out in the Council's Petition scheme;
- (c) to consider the report from the Mayor and Executive upon the Council's budget and setting of the Council Tax for the following

year and any associated business; and

**(d)** any other business which by statute or in the opinion of the Chief Executive after consultation with the Speaker of the Council requires to be transacted at the meeting;

- 2.3** Rules 10 and 11 of these Rules shall not apply to the Budget Meeting.
- 2.4** Motions proposing amendments to the proposals shall be submitted in writing to the Monitoring Officer by no later than 9.30 a.m. on the working day prior to the Budget Meeting to enable the preparation of the advice of the Chief Finance Officer and any amendments shall be circulated to the Mayor and Councillors, with any officer comments, at least 24 hours, before the meeting.
- 2.5** Other than amendments notified in advance as above, no further substantial amendment may normally be moved at the budget meeting but the Council may, subject to the advice of the Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Finance Officer and Chief Executive, agree that an amendment without notice can be debated.
- 2.6** The Speaker will remind the Councillors at the start of the meeting of the importance, where possible, of all amendments being moved at the beginning of the debate or as soon as the need for the amendment is identified; and before moving to the 'right of reply' and voting stage of the meeting, the Speaker will give a final invitation for any further amendments. No new amendment may be proposed once the call for the vote has commenced.
- 2.7** When moving the budget proposals of the Mayor and Executive, the Mayor and/or another Executive Councillor may speak for up to 10 minutes.
- 2.8** Once the proposals of the Executive have been moved and seconded the other Political Group Leaders (or their nominee) shall then be invited to speak for up to 5 minutes. The order of speaking shall be commensurate with the number of Councillors in each group from the Leader of the largest group to the Leader of the smallest group. Where groups are of equal size, the order of speaking shall be at the Speaker of the Council's discretion.
- 2.9** During the course of their speeches Group Leaders (or their nominees) shall move any amendments they have notified prior to the deadline.
- 2.10** Once each Group Leader (or their nominee) has been invited to speak the Speaker of the Council shall invite any other Councillor who has notified an amendment prior to the deadline to speak for up to 3 minutes and during the course of their speech that Councillor shall move his/her amendment.

- 2.11** The Council will then debate the matters before it for consideration. The order of speakers shall be at the discretion of the Speaker of the Council. Subject to Rules 2.12 and 2.13 below, a Councillor may speak only once during the debate and in the course of his/her speech may address the proposals of the Executive and/or any amendment(s) that may be moved. All speeches shall be limited to a maximum of 3 minutes.
- 2.12** At the discretion of the Speaker of the Council a Group Leader (or their nominee) who has previously spoken in accordance with Rule 2.8 of these Procedure Rules may speak again during the general debate and any such further speech by a Group Leader (or their nominee) or any other Councillor shall be in accordance with the time limits and procedural requirements of Rule 13 of these Rules.
- 2.13** At the conclusion of the general debate the Mayor or on his behalf any other Executive Councillor who may have moved the proposals of the Executive may exercise a right of reply for up to 3 minutes.
- 2.14** The Council will then vote on any amendments that have been moved and seconded and not withdrawn, in the order in which they were moved. Each amendment shall be disposed of in turn and in its entirety.
- 2.15** Following the voting on all amendments Council shall make its determination. Pursuant to the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules if the Council adopts the proposals of the Executive without amendment the decision shall become effective immediately.
- 2.16** If Council wishes to make any objection or amendment to the Executive's proposals, it shall require the Mayor and Executive to re-consider in the light of those objections or amendments.
- 2.17** At the Budget Meeting Rules 12.1(k)(iii) (Motion without notice to suspend a Procedure Rule) and 23 (Suspension and amendment of Council Procedure Rules) of these Procedure Rules shall not apply.

### **3. ORDINARY MEETINGS**

- 3.1** Ordinary meetings of the Council will take place in accordance with the programme below:

#### **Introductions, Minutes, Declarations, Announcements:**

- (a)** As per Rules 1.1(a), (d), (e) and (f);

#### **Mayor's Report**

- (b)** receive the Mayor's report, who may speak for up to 6 minutes on the item;

- (c) the Speaker shall invite the other Political Group leaders to respond for up to 2 minutes each;

#### **Public Petitions**

- (d) this is limited to up to 4 Petitions and the Petition Scheme Procedures apply;
- (e) the relevant Councillor shall report the Council's response to Petitions received;
- (f) all other petitions that have been submitted will be noted and the Speaker will announce where the Petitions will be sent for a detailed response;

#### **Administration Motion Debate**

- (g) consider an Administration Motion in accordance with Rules 11 and 13;

#### **Opposition Motion Debate**

- (h) consider a Motion from an Opposition Group in accordance with Rules 11 and 13;

#### **Reports**

- (i) receive reports from the Executive and the Council's Committees requiring a decision and receive questions and answers on any of those reports as required by law or specifically referred by those bodies;
- (j) to receive other reports as required; and

#### **Questions by Councillors on Notice**

- (k) to receive questions from Councillors; and

#### **Motions**

- (l) consider motions as set out in Rule 11.

### **4. EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS**

**4.1** Those listed below may request the Chief Executive to call extraordinary Council or Committee meetings in addition to ordinary meetings:

- (a) Council by resolution;
- (b) the Speaker;
- (c) The Monitoring Officer; or
- (d) any 5 Councillors of Council or a relevant Committee if they have signed a requisition that has been presented to the Speaker of the



Council and s/he has refused to call a meeting or has failed to call a meeting within 7 days of such.

**4.2** When requested, the Monitoring Officer will in consultation with the Chief Executive shall call a meeting of the Council or Committee unless the Chief Executive is of the opinion that holding such a meeting would not be an efficient use of resources and the subject matter of the business can conveniently wait until the next Ordinary Meeting of the Council or Committee.

**4.3** Only the business specified in the resolution, request or requisition which led to the calling of the Extraordinary Meeting can be conducted at this meeting.

## **5. TIME, PLACE, POSTPONEMENT AND CANCELLATIONS OF MEETINGS**

**5.1** All Council meetings will commence at 7.00pm and take place at the Town Hall unless the Speaker or the Chair of the relevant Committee/Sub-Committee decides otherwise. This will be in consultation with the Monitoring Officer.

**5.2** The Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chief Executive is authorised to either cancel or postpone a meeting of Council or any meeting of Cabinet or a Committee/Sub-Committee if it is deemed that there is insufficient business to transact or some other appropriate reason warranting its cancellation/postponement.

**5.3** The Monitoring Officer is authorised to vary the time, date and place of any meeting where there is good justification in consultation with the Chief Executive, the Speaker, the Mayor, Chair of the Committee/Sub-Committee and other Political Group Leaders as appropriate.

## **6. NOTICE OF AND SUMMONS TO MEETINGS**

**6.1** The Monitoring Officer will give notice to the public of the time and place of any meeting of Council, Cabinet or Committee/Sub-Committee in accordance with the Access to Information Procedure Rules at Part 4.2 of the Constitution.

**6.2** At least 5 clear working days before a meeting not including the day the notice is given and the day of the meeting, the Monitoring Officer will send a summons to the Mayor and Councillors giving the date, time and place of the meeting, specify the business to be transacted, and will be accompanied by any available reports. If necessary addendum reports to the reports on the agenda will be permitted within the preceding five days to the meeting or at the meeting subject to the report setting out 'reasons for urgency'.

## **7. CHAIR OF MEETING**

- 7.1** Participation in a Cabinet, Committee, Panel or other formal meeting by a Councillor or other person who is not an appointed Councillor or substitute Councillor of the meeting shall be at the discretion of the person chairing the meeting.

## **8. QUORUM**

- 8.1** Subject to any specific quorum requirements set out in the terms of reference of a particular body, the quorum of a meeting will be one quarter of the whole number of Councillors or 3 voting Councillors, whichever is the greater.
- 8.2** Subject to any exceptions in Rule 25 if a quorum is not reached 15 minutes after the appointed start time of the meeting, the meeting will stand adjourned.
- 8.3** During any meeting if the Chair counts the number of Councillors present and declares there is not a quorum, then the meeting will adjourn immediately. Remaining business will be considered at a time, date and place fixed by the Speaker, Chair or Monitoring Officer. If a date is not fixed, the remaining business will be considered at the next ordinary meeting.

## **9. DURATION OF MEETING**

- 9.1** Subject to any exceptions in Rule 26, all Council Meetings will end after a period of 3 hours but an extension may be agreed by resolution to extend the meeting for an additional period of up to 30 minutes.
- 9.2** If the business of a Council meeting has not been concluded after it has convened for 3 hours or 3½ hours (if the extension in rule 9.1 is applied), when the Councillor speaking has concluded their speech, the Chair will draw the attention of the meeting to this rule. If a matter is being debated, the debate shall immediately be concluded as if the motion, 'That the question be now put' had been moved and carried.
- 9.3** Any matters, (other than motions on notice) on the agenda that have not been dealt with by the end of the meeting shall be deemed formally moved and seconded together with amendments notified in writing to the Monitoring Officer by noon on the day of the meeting. They will be put to the meeting without any further discussion. A recorded vote under rule 16.4 will be taken, if called for and the requirements of that rule are met, on matters dealt with under this guillotine. During the process in this rule the only other matters which may be raised are points of order. When all matters have been dealt

with, the Chair will declare the meeting closed. Any motions on notice under Rule 12 not dealt with before the guillotine is applied shall be deemed to have fallen with the exception of the motions for 'Administration and Opposition Motion Debates' which will be voted on along with any amendments received by noon on the day of the meeting.

## **10. QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS**

**10.1** A Councillor may ask the Mayor or the Chair of a Committee/Sub-Committee questions without notice about an item in a report of the Executive or of that Committee/Sub-Committee when it is being considered.

**10.2** Subject to rule 10.4, at an Ordinary meeting of Council a Councillor may ask the Speaker or the Mayor, a question about any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the Borough. Questions can also be put to the Chair of any Committee/Sub-Committee in relation to any matters that is within the Committee/Sub-Committee's remit.

**10.3** Questions at an Extraordinary Council meeting must relate to a matter on that agenda only.

**10.4** Questions relating to Executive functions and decisions taken by the Mayor will be put to and should be answered by the person responsible for those decisions, namely the Mayor, unless he delegates such a decision to a Councillor who will therefore be responsible for answering the question. In the absence of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor will answer questions directed to the Mayor.

**10.4** A Councillor may only ask a question under Rule 10.2 above if either:

- (a)** notice in writing of the question has been given by noon at least 9 clear working days before the meeting not including the day that notice is given and the day of the meeting to the Monitoring Officer; or
- (b)** the question relates to an urgent matter; they have the consent of the Councillor to whom the question is to be put; and the content of the question is given to The Monitoring Officer by noon on the day of the meeting; or
- (c)** at an Extraordinary Council meeting notice in writing has been given by noon at least 2 clear working days before the meeting to The Monitoring Officer.

- 10.5** The Monitoring Officer may reject a question if it:
- (a) is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the Borough;
  - (b) is defamatory, frivolous or offensive; is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of Council in the past 6 months;
  - (c) requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information; and/or
  - (d) seeks to pursue or further a complaint against the Council, where other channels already exist for the determination of complaints.
- 10.6** If a question is rejected, the Councillor who submitted it will be notified in writing before the meeting and given an explanation for the rejection.
- 10.7** An answer may take the form of:
- (a) a written answer circulated to the questioner;
  - (b) where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication; or
  - (c) where the reply cannot conveniently be given in writing, a direct oral answer.
- 10.8** A Councillor asking a question under Rule 10.2 may ask one supplementary question without notice, but the supplementary question must arise directly out of the original question or reply. The Speaker may reject a supplementary question on any of the grounds in Rule 10.5 above or if the question takes the form of a speech.
- 10.9** The provisions of 10.2 above also apply to questions about the business of a joint authority of which the Council is a partner or questions about the activities of a company or external organisation to which the Council nominates and in these cases the question is put to the Councillor who has been appointed as the Council's representative.
- 10.10** Questions are limited to 1 per Councillor per meeting, plus 1 supplementary question unless the Councillor has indicated that only a written reply is required and in these circumstances a supplementary question is not permitted. A question that requires an answer in respect of 2 or more points (a multi-question) is not deemed to be 1 question.

- 10.11** Written responses will be published after the meeting. Where a question is put at the meeting, a time limit of 1 minute shall be applied to the question and to the oral response. Supplementary questions and responses will also be time-limited to 1 minute each.
- 10.12** Subject to time available at the Meeting, there will be a maximum time-limit of 30 minutes on Councillors' questions with no extension of time, and questions not dealt with in this time will be dealt with by written responses and which are to be provided within 28 days of the Meeting. Unless the Speaker decides otherwise, the order of Councillors' question shall alternate between the administration and one of the other Political Groups, with the questions from other Political Groups drawn in turn, starting with the largest Group. The Speaker shall have discretion, within the 30 minutes allocated for Questions, to vary the printed order of questions to allow an 'ungrouped' Councillor to put his/her question or to ensure that at least 1 Councillor from each Political Group has the opportunity to put a question.
- 10.13** Councillors will confine their contributions to questions and answers and must not make statements or attempt to debate. The Speaker will decide whether a Councillor is contravening this rule and if so will stop the Councillor concerned and move on to the next question if necessary. The Speaker's ruling is final.

## **11. MOTIONS – ON NOTICE**

- 11.1** Except for motions which can be moved without notice under Rules 12 and 14, written notice of every motion, signed by the Councillor proposing the motion and a seconder, must be delivered to the Monitoring Officer no later than noon 9 clear working days before the meeting not including the day of delivery of the notice and the day of the meeting. The notice shall specify the Council meeting for which it is submitted. For any meeting, no Councillor may propose more than 1 motion by way of written notice.
- 11.2** A Councillor who wishes to move the suspension of this Rule to enable a motion to be debated where prior notice has not been given as above must state the reason for urgency before the proposal to suspend this Rule is put to the meeting. If the Speaker does not accept the reason for urgency then the Motion will not be accepted
- 11.3** Motions will be included on the agenda in order with the Administration Motion for debate first, followed by the Opposition Motion for debate. Any remaining motions shall be placed on the agenda to alternate between the administration and the other Political Groups, with the Opposition Group motions starting with the largest

Political Group not to have that meeting's Opposition Motion Debate slot.

**11.3** A motion must be about a matter for which the Council has a responsibility or which affect the area. The Monitoring Officer may reject a motion if it:

- (a) is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility either directly or with its partners;
- (b) is defamatory, frivolous or offensive or otherwise suitable;
- (c) is substantially the same as a motion which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past 6 months and does not meet the requirements of Rule 13.2;
- (d) requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information or a case which is currently under judicial scrutiny; and/or
- (e) seeks to pursue or further a complaint against the Council, where other channels already exist for the determination of complaints.

**11.4** If a motion is rejected the person who submitted it will be notified in writing before the meeting and given the reasons for the rejection. The Speaker of the Council may also, on the advice of the Chief Executive, refuse any motion which contravenes these requirements.

**11.5** At each ordinary meeting of Council there will be specific time set aside for one Administration and one Opposition Motion debate. The following rules will apply:

- (a) The debates will be on the first administration and opposition motions set out in the Motions report included in the agenda.
- (b) Motions tabled without notice may not take the place of either of these motions.
- (c) Notice in writing of any amendment must be given to the Monitoring Officer by noon the day before the meeting.
- (d) The opposition motion debate will alternate in sequence between the opposition groups starting at the first ordinary meeting following the local elections with the largest opposition group and then going in sequence until the next local elections. Should there be changes to the number of political groups this sequence will be adjusted as necessary.
- (e) Both the administration and opposition motion debates will be for a maximum of 30 minutes each.
- (f) Standard procedures for a motion debate will apply to the debate itself (including on length of speeches and tabling amendments).

- (g) If the guillotine falls during or before the debate the motions and any amendments already tabled will be voted on along with any other amendments received by Noon on the day of the meeting.

## **12. MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS – WITHOUT NOTICE**

**12.1** Subject to Rule 11.2 the following motions and amendments may be moved without notice provided they do not contravene the requirements of Rule 11.3 above. Once such a motion or amendment has been moved, seconded and has been accepted by the Speaker it shall unless the Speaker decides otherwise be put and voted on without debate:-

- (a) to appoint a Chair 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 in circumstances where the Speaker is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances to permit such change. In addition, the Councillor seeking to change the order must address such exceptional circumstances;
- (d) to refer something to an appropriate body or individual;
- (e) to appoint a Committee or Councillor arising from an item on the summons for the meeting;
- (f) to receive reports and recommendations of Committees or officers and to make any decisions necessarily arising;
- (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) to extend the meeting under Rule 9;
- (n) to suspend a Procedure Rule to which Rule 23 applies;
- (o) to exclude the public in accordance with the Access to Information Procedure Rules;
- (p) not to hear a Councillor further because of misconduct (as set out in rule 22.2);
- (q) to require a Councillor to leave the meeting for continued improper behaviour (as set out in rule 22.3); and

(r) to give the consent of Council where its consent is required by this Constitution.

### **13. RULES OF DEBATE**

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

**13.2** Unless notice of the motion has already been given in writing, the Speaker shall require any motion or amendment to a motion to be presented with enough copies for circulation to all Councillors. The Speaker can request the motion be handed to her/him so that it can be read out to Councillors before it is discussed.

**13.3** When seconding a motion or amendment, a Councillor may reserve her/his speech until later in the debate.

**13.4** No speech may exceed 3 minutes without the consent of the Speaker except for the proposer of any motion who shall be allowed up to 4 minutes.

**13.5** Subject to these procedure rules, the order of speakers shall be determined by the Speaker. The Mayor or a Councillor who wishes to speak shall indicate and shall wait until called by the Speaker. In determining the order of speakers the Speaker may take into consideration whether previous speakers have supported or opposed the motion under debate; the particular concerns of any ward councillors; and/or any notification by a political group of Councillors of their group who wish to speak on the matter.

**13.6** An amendment to a motion must be relevant to the motion and may:-

(a) refer the motion to an appropriate body or individual for consideration or re-consideration;

(b) leave out words;

(c) leave out words and insert or add others; and/or

(d) insert or add words;

as long as the effect is not to completely re-write or negate the motion.

**13.7** 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.

**13.8** After an amendment has been carried, the Speaker may choose to read out the amended motion before putting it to the vote.



- 13.9** A Councillor may alter a motion of which s/he has given notice with the consent of the meeting. The meeting's consent will be signified without discussion. This amendment can be at the suggestion of another Councillor at the meeting and is often referred to as a 'friendly amendment'.
- 13.10** A Councillor may alter a motion which s/he has moved without notice with the consent of both the meeting and the seconder. The meeting's consent will be signified without discussion.
- 13.11** Only alterations which could be made as an amendment may be made under this rule.
- 13.12** A Councillor may withdraw a motion which s/he has moved with the consent of both the meeting and the seconder. Consent will be signified without discussion. No Councillor may speak on the motion after the mover has asked permission to withdraw it unless permission is refused.
- 13.13** The mover of a motion has a right to reply at the close of the debate on the motion, immediately before it is put to the vote.
- 13.14** If an amendment is moved, the mover of the original motion also has a right of reply at the close of debate on the amendment, but may not otherwise speak on the amendment.

#### **14 PROCEDURAL MOTIONS**

- 14.1** When a motion is under debate, no other motion may be moved except the following:
- (a)** to withdraw the motion
  - (b)** to amend the 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 for a further 30 minutes;
  - (h)** to exclude the press and public; and
  - (i)** that a Councillor be not further heard or to exclude the Councillor from the meeting.

**14.2** At the end of a speech by another Councillor, a Councillor may move without comment the following motions:

- (a) to proceed to next business;
- (b) that the question be now put;
- (c) to adjourn a debate; or
- (d) to adjourn a meeting.

**14.3** If a motion to proceed to next business is seconded and the Speaker thinks the item under discussion has been sufficiently discussed, s/he will give the mover of the original motion a right of reply and then put the procedural motion to the vote.

**14.4** If a motion that the question be now put is seconded and the Speaker thinks the item has been sufficiently discussed, s/he will put the procedural motion to the vote. If it is passed, s/he will give the mover of the original motion a right of reply before putting her/his motion to the vote.

**14.5** If the Speaker considers that the item has not been sufficiently discussed and cannot reasonably be discussed on that occasion, s/he will adjourn the debate or adjourn the meeting without giving the mover of the original motion the right of reply.

**14.6** A Councillor may raise a point of order at any time and the Speaker will hear them immediately. A point of order may only relate to the alleged breach of these Council Procedure Rules or the law. The Councillor must indicate the rule or law which must be specified at the outset and the way in which the Councillor considers it has been broken. The ruling of the Speaker on the matter is final.

**14.7** A Councillor may make a personal explanation at any time. A personal explanation may only relate to some material part of an earlier speech by the Councillor which may appear to have been misunderstood in the present debate. The ruling of the Speaker on the admissibility of a personal explanation is final.

## **15. PREVIOUS DECISIONS AND MOTIONS**

**15.1** A motion to rescind a decision arising from a motion moved and adopted at a Council meeting within the past 6 months cannot be moved unless the notice of motion is signed by at least twenty Councillors.

**15.2** A motion or amendment in similar terms to one which has been rejected at a Council meeting within the past six months cannot be

moved unless notice of motion or amendment is given signed by at least twenty Councillors .

**15.3** Once a motion or amendment to which this Rule applies has been dealt with, no Councillor can propose a similar motion or amendment within the next four months.

**16. VOTING**

**15.1** The Mayor and all Councillors are entitled to vote unless exempted.

**16.1** Unless this Constitution (or the law) provides otherwise, any matter will be decided by simple majority of the Mayor and Councillors present.

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

**16.3** Unless a recorded vote is demanded the Speaker will take the vote by a show of hands, or any other of voting method that has been introduced. If there is no dissent this can be by simple affirmation of the meeting. A recorded vote must be requested before a vote is taken.

**16.4** If 20 Councillors present at the meeting request 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.

**16.5** In relation to any debate at a Budget Council Meeting on the authority's budget and level of the Council Tax to be levied for each financial year, a recorded vote shall take place on any amendment that is put to the vote during that debate and on the substantive motion. Such votes to be undertaken in accordance with Procedure Rule 15.4

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

**16.7** If more nominations are made than there are positions available, the meeting will vote in turn on each nomination separately, in the order in which they were nominated, until the vacant position(s) are filled. Before any vote is taken the Speaker of the Council or person presiding shall establish that each candidate nominated, if present, is willing to stand.

**17. PETITIONS**

**17.1** The Council has adopted a Petition Scheme and which is attached at Appendix 1. All Petitions are considered in accordance with that Scheme.

**18. STANDARDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**18.1** The Chair of the Standards Advisory Committee and the Independent Person shall both be entitled to address Council on any report referred to them by the Standards Advisory Committee.

**19. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**19.1** Members of the public and press may only be excluded either in accordance with the Access to Information Procedure Rules in Part 4.2 of this Constitution or Rule 24 (disturbance by the public).

**20. COUNCILLORS' CONDUCT**

**20.1** When the Speaker of the Council stands during a debate any Councillor(s) then standing must sit down and the Council must be silent.

**20.2** If a Councillor persistently disregards the ruling of the Speaker, or behaves inappropriately, offensively, or is deliberately obstructing business, the Councillor will be provided with a warning by the Speaker. If the Councillor continues to behave in any such manner, the Speaker, in consultation with the Chief Executive and the Monitoring Officer, has the authority to order the Councillor in question to leave the meeting.

**21. DISTURBANCE BY PUBLIC**

**21.1** If a member of the Public interrupts proceedings or is otherwise causing an annoyance, the Speaker of the Council will warn the person concerned and, if the interruption continues, will order the person's leave the Council Chamber. This includes behaviour during filming or otherwise recording the Meeting.

**21.2** If there is a general disturbance in any part of the Council Chamber open to the public the Speaker of the Council shall order that part to be cleared.

## **22. FILMING AND RECORDING**

**22.1** Members of the public are permitted to film, audio record, take photographs or make use of social media (tweet/blog) at Council and Committee meetings provided that this does not disturb the business of the meeting. If a person wishes to film a particular meeting, please liaise with the Council Officer listed on the front of the Agenda prior to the start of the meeting so that the Speaker or Chair is aware and those attending the meeting can be made aware of any filming taking place

**22.2** Filming is to be limited to the formal meeting area and not extend to those in the public seating area.

**22.3** The filming etc. must be done in such a way that does not cause a breach of health and safety or cause an annoyance. There may also be occasions where those filming may be asked not to film particular individuals where it is considered that there is good reason not to do so and which could allow the meeting to remain open to the press and public. The Speaker/Chair will make the final decision on all matters of dispute in regard to the use of social media audio-recording, photography and filming in the meeting.

## **23. SUSPENSION AND AMENDMENT OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES**

**23.1** Except where these rules provide otherwise, any of the Council Procedure Rules to which this Rule applies may be suspended for all or part of the business of a meeting at which suspension is moved by a motion.

**23.2** Such a motion cannot be moved without notice unless at least ½ of the voting Councillors of the meeting are present.

**23.3** This Rule applies to the Rules 10 to 13.

## **24. SPECIFIC EXEMPTIONS APPLYING TO OTHER MEETINGS/COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES**

### **24.1 General**

**(a)** The person presiding at a meeting of any Committee or Sub-Committee may exercise any power or duty of the Speaker of the Council in relation to the proceedings of that meeting. Where these rules apply to meetings of Committees and Sub-Committees, references to the Speaker of the Council also include the Chairs of Committees and Sub-Committees

**(b)** A petition to any Cabinet, Committee or Sub-Committee meeting must relate to an item of business for decision at that meeting. In relation to Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings this

excludes an item which is listed for Cabinet Agenda pre-decision scrutiny but is not otherwise included on the committee agenda.

- (c) Rules 5 to 9, 13.1 to 13.3, 13.5, 13.6 and 16 to 23 apply to meetings of all Committees and Sub-Committees, except as specifically referred to below.
- (d) As well as allocating seats on Committees and Sub-Committees/Panels, the Council will allocate seats in the same manner for substitute Councillors.
- (e) For each Committee or Sub-Committee/Panel, the Council will appoint up to 3 substitute Councillors, nominated by each relevant Political Group.
- (f) Substitute Councillors will have all the powers and duties of any ordinary Councillor of the Committee but will not be able to exercise any special powers or duties exercisable by the person they are substituting.
- (g) Substitute Councillors may attend meetings in that capacity only:
  - (i) to take the place of the ordinary Councillor for whom they are the designated substitute; and
  - (ii) after notifying the Monitoring Officer (or her/his representative at the meeting) by the time scheduled for the start of the meeting of the intended substitution
- (h) A substitute Councillor may, where necessary, take the place of the ordinary Councillor for part of a meeting or for only (a) specific agenda item(s), subject to prior notification as above and subject to any handover between the Councillors taking place at the beginning of a new agenda item.

**24.2 Appeals Committee/Sub-Committee, Development and Strategic Development Committees, and Licensing Committee/Sub-Committee**

- (a) After sitting for 3 hours, an extension may be agreed for up to a period of up to 1 hour so as to conclude the item/application under consideration, provided that the meeting does not extend beyond 11.30pm in any event.
- (b) Where any items on the agenda that have not been dealt with by the end of the meeting shall be dealt with either at a special meeting of the Committee/Sub-Committee convened to deal with those items or at the next normal meeting of the relevant Committee/Sub-Committee.

**24.3 Licensing Committee**

- (a) There are no substitutes permitted for the Licensing Committee.
- (b) In the case of a Licensing Committee/Sub-Committee being inquorate after 15 minutes the legal adviser to that such has the

authority to agree an extension of up to an additional 30 minutes to proceed.

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# LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

## PETITION SCHEME

### 1. SUBMITTING A PETITION TO THE COUNCIL

Tower Hamlets Council welcomes petitions and recognises that petitions are one way in which people can let us know their concerns. We will treat something as a petition if it is identified as being a petition, or if it seems to us that it is intended to be a petition.

**Paper petitions** are those prepared in the traditional way: a petition organiser creates a paper document that includes a proposed action. Residents physically write their name, address and signature on this document to show their support of the proposed action.

To help you organise paper petition, the Council has prepared a template that is attached as Appendix 3.

Paper petitions can be sent to the Democratic Services Team on the details provided at Section 7 of this Scheme.

**e-Petitions** are created, signed, and submitted entirely online. The petition organiser uses a website to create their petition and residents can electronically add their name via the website to show their support of the action the petition organiser proposes.

It is recommended that e-petitions are created via the Council's e-petition facility [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/petition](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/petition). e-petitions created or submitted through third party websites may be accepted if they comply with the provisions of this scheme.

### 2. GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING A PETITION

Petitions submitted to the Council must include:

- A clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition. This should state what action the petitioners wish the Council to take.
- The names and signatures of each person supporting the petition, together with the full addresses (including postcode) at which they live, work or study in Tower Hamlets.
- Contact details, including an address, for the petition organiser. This is the person we will contact to explain how we will respond to the petition. The contact details of the petition organiser will not be published.
- If the petition does not identify a petition organiser, we will contact the first listed signatory to the petition to agree who should act as the petition organiser.

**Scope of Petition.** The Corporate Director, Governance may reject a petition if it:

1. is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the borough;
2. is defamatory, frivolous; offensive; vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate;
3. is substantially the same as a petition which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past 6 months;
4. requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information; or
5. seeks to pursue or further a complaint against the Council, where other channels already exist for the determination of complaints.

In addition, there are some circumstances where petitions will not be dealt with under this Scheme. These include any matters relating to planning or licensing applications; where a separate consultation process is active; or other circumstances which, in the opinion of the Corporate Director, Governance would mean the petitions would better be dealt with using a different Council procedure.

The Council may seek to verify the authenticity of each entry on a petition by reference to existing information such as (where appropriate) the current electoral register or other relevant records. Entries which cannot be verified may not be counted for the purposes of determining whether a petition has exceeded a threshold set out in this scheme.

In the period immediately before an election or referendum, when certain legal restrictions apply, we may need to deal with your petition differently – if this is the case we 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. In that case, we will write to you to explain the reasons.

### **3. ACTION BY THE COUNCIL ON RECEIPT OF A PETITION**

An acknowledgement will be sent to the petition organiser within 10 working days of us receiving the petition. This will let them know what we plan to do with the petition and when they can expect to receive a formal response to it. If the petition needs more investigation, we will tell the petition organiser the steps we plan to take.

If we can do what the petition asks for, the acknowledgement may confirm that we have taken the action requested and the petition will be closed.

Petitions will receive a formal response from the relevant Corporate Director within 28 days of receipt. This will usually be the quickest way of addressing the issue.

If however, the petition meets the requirements to be presented/debated at a meeting of Councillors under the provisions of Section 4 of this scheme, the petition will receive a formal response within 28 days from the meeting. If you request this option, the relevant Corporate Director may still write to you. You may choose not to proceed with presentation at a meeting if you feel their response resolves the matter.

The acknowledgment will confirm when and how your response will be sent and tell you when and where the meeting will take place (if applicable and if known at that stage).

To ensure that people know what we are doing in response to the petitions we receive, the details of all petitions submitted to the Council will be published on our website, except in cases where this would be inappropriate. Whenever possible we will also publish all correspondence relating to the petition (all personal details will be removed).

#### **4. PRESENTATION OF A PETITION TO ELECTED COUNCILLORS**

Subject to your petition containing sufficient signatures as set out below, you may request to present the petition to a meeting of Councillors. There are several ways in which this can be done.

##### **(a) Presentation to a meeting of the Council, Cabinet or relevant committee**

If your petition includes the names, addresses and signatures of 30 persons who live, work or study in the borough it can be presented at an ordinary meeting of the Council or to a Council Committee.

The procedure for presenting a petition at full Council or Committee meetings is included in Appendix 1 of this scheme.

Separate to the above provision, the Mayor has agreed a scheme for public engagement at executive meetings (the Cabinet and Cabinet sub-committees), which provides a number of different ways that members of the public can make submissions relating to items on the agenda. The Cabinet public engagement scheme is set out at Appendix 2 of this Scheme.

##### **(b) Debate at a Council Meeting**

If your petition includes the names, addresses and signatures of 2,000 persons who live, work or study in the borough, you may request that a debate be held about the petition at a full Council meeting.

The procedure for debating a petition at full Council meetings is included in Appendix 1 of this scheme.

##### **(c) Officer evidence to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

If your petition includes the names, addresses and signatures of at least 1,000 persons who live, work or study in the borough, you may request that a relevant senior officer give evidence at a public meeting of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee. For example, you may request that a senior officer explain progress on an issue, or the advice given to councillors to enable them to make a particular decision. The senior officers who may be called to give evidence under this procedure include the Head of the Paid Service (Chief Executive) and any of the Council's statutory or non-statutory Chief Officers (Corporate Directors).

You should be aware that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may decide that it would be more appropriate for another officer to give evidence instead of any officer named in the petition – for instance if the named officer has changed jobs. The Committee will also call the relevant Executive Councillor(s) to attend the meeting. Committee members will ask the questions at this meeting, but you will be able to suggest questions to the Chair of the Committee by contacting the Democratic Services team (see Section 7) up to three working days before the meeting.

### **General guidance on requesting your petition be presented or debated**

If you would like your petition to be presented/debated at a meeting, you must submit (1) the petition; (2) a request to present or debate the petition; and (3) any request for additional assistance such as an interpreter, to the Democratic Services Team (see Section 7) by noon, 9 clear working days (not including the day notice is given or the day of the meeting) before the relevant meeting. However, please note that there is likely to be a maximum number of petitions presented at any one meeting and these slots are normally allocated in order of receipt, so early submission is advised.

When determining whether a petition has met or exceeded a threshold set out in this scheme, the Council will only count signatories for which a local connection (i.e. that the signatory either lives, works or studies in Tower Hamlets) can be evidenced from the information supplied. There is a risk that petitions created and/or submitted via third party e-petition websites may not satisfy this criterion so it is strongly recommended that e-petitions are created via the Council's own e-petition facility [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/petition](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/petition)

**Similar petitions:** In the event that 2 or more petitions which are substantially the same are received from different petition organisers, the Corporate Director, Governance may aggregate the number of valid signatures in each petition for the purpose of determining whether the threshold to trigger a Council debate of the matters raised has been reached if that is the wish of the petition organisers.

## **5. PETITIONS ON NON-COUNCIL FUNCTIONS**

If your petition is about something over which the Council has no direct control (for example the local railway or hospital) it is unlikely you will be able to present it to a Council meeting, but we will consider making representations on behalf of the community to the relevant body. The council works with a large number of local partners and where possible may liaise with these partners to respond to your petition. If we are not able to do this for any reason (for example if what the petition calls for conflicts with Council policy), then we will set out the reasons for this to you.

If your petition is about something that a different authority is responsible for we will give consideration to what the best method is for responding to it. This might consist of simply forwarding the petition to the other authority, but could involve other steps. In any event we will notify you of the action we have taken.

You can find more information on the services for which the Council is responsible on our website. [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk)

In all cases we will provide the written response as set out in Section 3.

## **6. IF YOU ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE**

If you feel that we have not dealt with your petition properly, the petition organiser has the right to request that the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee review the steps that the Council has taken in response to your petition.

It is helpful to everyone, and can improve the prospects for a review if the petition organiser gives a short explanation of the reasons why the Council's response is not considered to be adequate.

The Committee will endeavour to consider your request at its next meeting, although on some occasions this may not be possible and consideration will take place at the following meeting. Should the Committee determine the Council has not dealt with your petition adequately, it may use any of its powers to deal with the matter. These powers include instigating an investigation, making recommendations to the Council's Mayor (Executive) or arranging for the matter to be considered at a meeting of the full Council.

Once the appeal has been considered the petition organiser will be informed of the outcome within 5 working days. The results of the review will also be published on our website.

## **7. FURTHER INFORMATION**

Should you wish to submit a petition or require any further information, please contact:

Petitions,  
Democratic Services,  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor,  
Town Hall,  
Mulberry Place,  
E14 2BG

020 7364 4651

Email: [committee.services@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:committee.services@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

Website: <http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/committee>

e-petitions website: <http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/petition>

QR code for website:



## PROCEDURE FOR HEARING PETITIONS AT MEETINGS OF THE FULL COUNCIL

**Agenda order:** All petitions received within the deadline (see Section 4 of the Petition Scheme) will be listed on the Council agenda.

The agenda will list 4 petitions as 'to be heard', which will be listed in order of receipt, except that petitions for debate will take precedence. Any petitions listed as 'to be heard' for which the person(s) listed to present are absent, will be noted (see below).

All remaining petitions will be listed as 'to be noted'. These petitions will not be heard and the Speaker will state where they will go for a full response.

### Petition presentation procedure (for petitions of between 30 and 1,999 signatures)

1. Up to 3 seats in the public gallery will be reserved for the person(s) presenting each petition. The person(s) presenting the petition must live, work or study within the borough.
2. The person(s) presenting each petition will be invited to speak for up to 3 minutes in total in support of the petition. Additional time will be allowed if an interpreter is used. In this case the interpreter must not use the additional time to introduce new information.
3. Councillors may then ask the petitioners questions for a further 4 minutes;
4. The speaker will invite the Mayor or (at the Mayor's discretion) the relevant Lead Member or Committee Chair to respond to the matters raised for up to 2 minutes.
5. The petition will be referred to the relevant Corporate Director who will respond in writing within 28 days from the date of the meeting.

### Petition debate procedure (for petitions in excess of 2,000 signatures):

1. Up to 3 seats in the public gallery will be reserved for the person(s) presenting each petition. The person(s) presenting the petition must live, work or study within the borough.
2. The person(s) presenting each petition will be invited to speak for up to 3 minutes in total in support of the petition. Additional time will be allowed if an interpreter is used. In this case the interpreter must not use the additional time to introduce new information.
3. Councillors may then ask the petitioners questions for a further 4 minutes.

4. The petition will then be debated by Councillors for a maximum of 15 minutes. All speeches are limited to a maximum of 3 minutes. During his or her speech, any Councillor may move a motion for the Council's consideration relevant to matters in the petition (this does not require the suspension of the Council Procedure Rules).
5. Following the debate, the speaker will invite the Mayor or (at the Mayor's discretion) the relevant Lead Member or Committee Chair to respond to the matters raised, for up to 3 minutes.
6. Following the petition debate, any motions moved will be put to the vote in the order they were tabled.
7. If no motion is agreed, the petition will stand referred to the relevant Corporate Director for a written response within 28 days of the meeting.

### **General guidance on petition hearings at Council meetings**

**Executive functions:** In relation to executive functions, the Council does not have powers to override any executive decision of the Mayor or substitute its own decision. The Council may however pass a motion expressing a view on the matter or referring the matter to the Mayor, calling on him/her to take some action, or consider or reconsider a decision, with recommendations to inform that consideration. Officers will advise on the constitutional validity of any motion that may be moved.

**Limitation.** An individual or group may submit either a petition or a question to the Council, not both. In addition, an individual or group may not submit a petition to a meeting of the Council if that individual or group has previously submitted a question or a petition to either of the previous 2 Council meetings.

**PROCEDURE FOR HEARING PETITIONS AT MEETINGS OF THE CABINET**

The procedure for hearing petitions at meetings of the Cabinet is contained in the Executive Procedure Rules at Part 4.4 of the Council's Constitution. The relevant provision is replicated below:

**Public Engagement at Cabinet**

Whilst the main focus of Cabinet is as a decision-making body, there is an opportunity for the public to contribute through making submissions that specifically relate to the reports that are set out on the agenda. Members of the public may therefore make written submissions in any form (for example; Petitions, letters, written questions) and which are to be submitted to the Clerk to Cabinet (whose details are on the Cabinet agenda front sheet) by 5 pm the day before the meeting. The consideration of such written submissions will be at the discretion of whosoever presides at the meeting.



## PETITION TEMPLATE

To Democratic Services,  
Tower Hamlets Council  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Town Hall  
Mulberry Place  
London E14 2BG  
[committee.services@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:committee.services@towerhamlets.gov.uk)  
020 7364 4207

### Petition to Tower Hamlets Council

Dear Democratic Services, please find attached a petition relating to...

...for your attention. The petition statement, which explains what action we would like the Council to take, and the names, addresses and signature of each person supporting the petition, can be found on the attached pages.

#### Details of petition organiser

Name:	Address:
Email:	Telephone No:

Tick this box if you are also running a linked petition on the Council's website at [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/petition](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/petition)

I believe this petition contains .....signatures;

<b>Preferred response:</b> I would like (tick 1 ONLY):	
For this petition to be referred to a senior Council officer who will arrange for a response to be sent within 28 days of receipt by the Council;	
To present this petition in person at a future meeting of the Council or a committee <i>[if the petition includes at least 30 valid signatures]</i>	
For this petition to be debated by Councillors at a future meeting of the Council <i>[if the petition includes at least 2,000 valid signatures]</i>	

(note to petition organiser – please complete this cover page in full and print 1 copy. Please complete and then print as many copies of the following signature sheet as you feel necessary. All signature sheets must also include the petition statement. Combine all pages and return to the address above.)

We the undersigned petition the Council to...[Insert your own text]

Please complete each row in full in BLOCK CAPITALS (individuals signing this petition must be persons living, working or studying in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets).		
FULL NAME	ADDRESS INC. POSTCODE	SIGNATURE