

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Planning Protocol Sub-Committee

Date of Meeting: 7th March 2011
Report of: Democratic Services Manager
Subject/Title: Public Speaking Protocol

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 This report summarises a number of issues raised by Members at the previous meeting in relation to the Protocol on Public Speaking Rights at meetings of the Strategic Planning Board and Planning Committees. The Protocol is attached as an Appendix for reference purposes.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Sub-Committee review the Protocol on Public Speaking Rights at meetings of the Strategic Planning Board and Planning Committees and decide whether it wishes to recommend any changes to the Protocol.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The Constitution Committee has extended the terms of reference of the Sub-Committee to include a review of the arrangements for public speaking at meetings of the Council's planning committees.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 N/A

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 N/A

6.0 Policy Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct policy implications arising from the proposals contained in this report.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 None can be identified.

8.0 Legal Implications (authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

8.1 None identified.

9.0 Risk Management

9.1 None identified.

10.0 Background and Options

10.1 The Constitution Committee, at its meeting on 27th January 2011, resolved that the Planning Protocol Sub-Committee be asked to review the arrangements for public speaking at meetings of the Council's planning committees and the Sub-Committee's terms of reference be extended accordingly.

10.2 The Sub-Committee held an initial discussion at its last meeting and Members identified a number of issues for further consideration as follows:

- All speakers, whether councillors or individuals speaking in another capacity (such as members of the public), should be allocated the same amount of time (eg 4 minutes).
- In relation to a particular ward, the time allocated for ward members not on the committee should either be apportioned among those ward members wishing to speak or be allocated separately to each ward Member (ie either a single period of 4 minutes is apportioned among ward members or a period of 4 minutes is allocated to each ward member wishing to speak) (there were different views expressed about this).
- The Committee should be allowed to question councillors who have spoken.
- A councillor may be allowed to speak on behalf of another person but must make it clear that this is what they are doing so that they cannot use the time allocation as a means of extending their own speaking time.

10.3 Members are invited to consider these issues further and decide whether they wish to propose any amendments to the public speaking protocol.

10.4 As the public speaking protocol was originally developed and approved by the Strategic Planning Board, any proposed amendments would be reported back to the Board for consideration before being submitted to the Constitution Committee. The Board's views would then be included in the report back to the Constitution Committee which would take those views into consideration alongside the Sub-Committee's when formulating any recommendations to Council.

11.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer.

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