

EXTRACT FROM GOVERNANCE AND CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE MINUTES 30 SEPTEMBER 2009

PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS AT MEETINGS

The Committee considered a report setting out the recommendations of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet with regard to public and Member questions and statements at meetings.

At its meeting on 16 April 2009, the Committee had reviewed the arrangements for public and Member questions and statements at meetings following proposals to disapply those provisions of the Constitution from the meetings of planning, licensing and scrutiny bodies. The Committee had decided to seek the views of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet. The matter was subsequently considered by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 12 June and the Cabinet on 14 July. The Cabinet had concurred with the recommendations of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee and the recommendations of both bodies to the Governance and Constitution Committee were considered.

RESOLVED

That Council be recommended that

- (1) the recommendations of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet in relation to public and Member questions and statements at meetings be approved as follows:**
 - (a) That the existing Planning and Licensing Protocols which override the member and public speaking and questioning provisions that apply to other committees, should be retained;**
 - (b) That the facility to allow questions by Members of the Public at meetings of Overview and Scrutiny Committees should be removed, but a period of 15 minutes be provided at the beginning of meetings to allow members of the Public to make a statement(s) on any matter that falls within the remit of the relevant committee, subject to individual speakers being restricted to 5 minutes each;**
 - (c) That whilst acknowledging that Planning and Licensing Committees have separate arrangements in place for public involvement, in all other cases, members of the Public should provide 3 clear working days notice, in writing, if they wish to ask a question at any other decision making meeting, in order for an informed answer to be given, but they should not be required to give notice of intention to make use of public speaking provision (although as a matter of courtesy, a period of 24 hours notice should be encouraged);**

(d) That members of the Council should, in accordance with the current rules, be required to provide 3 clear working days notice in writing if they wish to ask a question at a full Council meeting or Cabinet in order for an informed answer to be given;

(e) That the existing provisions of the constitution relating to the way in which questions may be answered be preserved.

the relevant provisions of the Constitution be amended accordingly