

From: Tatlow, David
Sent: 13 May 2019 15:18
To: Cohen, Cllr Melvin; Thomas, Cllr Daniel
Cc: Charlwood, Andrew; Green, Clair
Subject: FW: Constitution & General Purposes Committee, Public Participation

Leader Elect and Chairman

This draft report and attached research documents were sent to you both by the Head of Governance last week.

Following requests from you both received today my brief summary is as follows:

Context

- The raising of questions and comments by residents at council committees has become resource intensive and savings need to be considered.
- Questions are being raised at Committees by residents at the average rate of 120 per month.
- The annual cost of handling this level of questions and comments is estimated at between £40,000 and £50,000 per year.
- Research shows that 79% of questions are raised by 10 residents.

Law and Practice

- There is no legal right for residents to raise questions or comments at council committees.
- In practice residents are allowed to raise questions at committees by some councils but only on a limited controlled basis.
- Officers have not found a council which permits comments to be made at committees by residents.
- If 'comments' are to continue then the Monitoring Officer advises that these be amalgamated with 'questions' so that the council has notice of all relevant matters before the start of the committee meeting.

Recommendations

- Respect and continue the right of residents to raise questions and make comments at committee meetings but control the number in order to (a) allow time for a wider group of residents to be involved and (b) reduce the resource intensiveness upon officers and promote a degree of financial savings.
- Amalgamate comments with questions but limit to 100 words – continue present procedure as for questions but amend so that all questions are answered at committee by the Chairman (please note that Chairman could be briefed with responses to questions before the meeting as might be helpful).
- Residents may raise one question per committee meeting.
- Limit of two questions from residents on any one agenda item – tabled in the order received from residents by the Governance Team.

You now have 1) the above summary 2) the draft report attached 3) two research documents attached covering questions raised and costs. Please note the document detailing questions raised identifies named residents and is confidential – names are data protected and must not be published outside the council.

Please advise from the above what you like me to send to the Conservative Group of Councillors.

David.

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