

**LICENSING AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**  
**23 APRIL 2009**

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**PUBLIC SPEAKING AT LICENSING AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**  
**(Chief Officer: Environment and Public Protection)**

**1 PURPOSE OF DECISION**

- 1.1 There have been occasions where members of the public or persons who have a business that might be affected by decisions made by the Committee have requested to speak to members at the Committee meeting. The purpose of this report is to provide a framework within which public speaking can be conducted at the Committee.

**2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **That, with effect from 2 July 2009 for a trial period of one year, public speaking be permitted at the Licensing and Safety Committee;**
- 2.2 **That, in line with the principles set out in paragraphs 4.3.1-4.3.3 of this report, officers in conjunction with the Chairman of the Committee produce and publish a document setting out the procedure for public speaking at the Licensing and Safety Committee; and,**
- 2.3 **That the arrangement be reviewed by the committee in 12 months time.**

**3 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS**

Borough Solicitor

- 3.1 The relevant legal provisions are contained within the main body of the report.

Borough Treasurer

- 3.2 There are no significant financial implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 3.3 The decision to permit and formalise arrangements for public speaking will provide for increased engagement of the community within decision-making. The proposal for a trial will enable the Committee to consider any feedback into how the scheme has operated at this time. The scheme reflects that introduced in respect of the Planning and Highways Committee matters.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 3.4 There are no strategic risk management issues arising from the report.

## 4 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

4.1 The Council Constitution permits public speaking at the Licensing and Safety Committee at the discretion of the Chair of that Committee. As part of the democratic process it can be helpful to have input from residents and businesses upon proposals that may impact upon their lives or neighbourhood. Currently there is no formal arrangement whereby this can be affected.

4.2 In considering a proposal to introduce a scheme it is important to ensure that the right of public speaking at a Committee meeting does not interfere with the normal business of that Committee. As has been evidenced at the Planning and Highways Committee to ensure this it is vital that a framework be in place to regulate and control the process of public speaking. Time is very important and speakers need to be encouraged to make their points clearly, concisely and relevant to the matters under discussion.

4.3 It is suggested that the Committee consider three key areas in the formulation of any scheme, namely;

- When is public speaking to be permitted?
- What is the order of speaking?
- What will be permitted in terms of time and context?

4.3.1 **When is public speaking permitted?** It is recommended that public speaking should only be permitted when:

- (i) A written notification of request to speak at the Committee is received by Democratic Services by 12.00 noon on the Tuesday prior to the meeting and
- (ii) The notification contains details of the key points intended to be made by the speaker (This would give the Committee early indication of the content and enable the Chair to give guidance to any speaker on the relevant of points prior to speaking).
- (iii) The Committee will hear one representative for the motion and one representative against the motion.
- (iii) The speaking rights will be given to the first person registering on the understanding that their details will be passed on to any other party who register a similar interest in the expectation that the parties will liaise and a joint statement will be made.
- (iv) The speakers must attend the meeting and report to the Democratic Services Officer not less than 15 minutes prior to the start of the meeting.

4.3.2 **What is the order of speaking?**

- (i) The Licensing Officer will introduce the report and set out the recommendations.
- (ii) The Chairman will invite firstly the registered speaker for the motion to address the Committee for a maximum of 3 minutes followed by any registered speaker against the motion. This will be strictly enforced. The speaker will not be allowed to ask questions of Councillors, Officers or others.
- (iii) Members of the Committee may ask the speaker for clarification on any of the points raised.
- (iv) The presenting Officer will be invited to comment upon any of the points raised by the speakers before the Committee continues with its deliberations.

#### 4.3.3 What will be permitted?

- (i) A maximum time of 6 minutes public speaking will be permitted per item. .
- (ii) Where a speaker strays into areas which are not relevant to the matter under discussion the Chairman may interrupt them and direct them to restrict their comments to those areas.

4.4 It is proposed that such a scheme be trialled for a 12 month period before being reviewed by the Committee. If agreed the above detail would be incorporated into a flyer that would be made public. The detail in the flyer would be agreed by the Chief Officer: Environment and Public Protection in consultation with the Chairman.

#### Background Papers

None

#### Contact for further information

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