

Item No:
Date: 30 March 2010

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
JOINT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
JOINT STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Public Participation – Proposed Amendments to Supplementary Procedure Rules
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REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES (SNC)

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. To amend the JSPC's public participation procedures to clarify and agree that:-
- in relation to the right to speak in relation to a specific agenda item at a meeting it is made clear that the speaker's contribution is duly listened to and minuted but that, as with petitions and questions, no debate ensues;
 - public participation rights are extended to all members of the public and not just electors for the West Northamptonshire area; and
 - a standing agenda item called "Public Participation (if any)" is included for future meetings of the JSPC to make clear that there is a clear separation between public participation and the JSPC's consideration and debate of substantive agenda items.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That rule 2 of the JSPC's Supplementary Procedure Rules be amended as shown in the Appendix, with immediate effect.
- 2.2 That any public participation at future meetings of the JSPC pursuant to rule 2 of the Supplementary Procedure Rules (appended to this report) is dealt with as a specific agenda item prior to the substantive agenda items.

3. Relevant Information

- 3.1 At its meeting in October 2008 the JSPC adopted Supplementary Procedure Rules to augment those contained in the West Northamptonshire Joint Committee Order 2008. Included among these were public participation

provisions relating to petitions, questions and the right to speak in relation to a specific agenda item at a particular meeting.

- 3.2 While petitions and questions lend themselves to the giving of notice of their details prior to the relevant JSPC meeting, this is not so with the right to speak on a specific agenda item. The deadline for submitting such a request is noon on the day of the meeting.
- 3.3 In the light of experience with public participation requests to date it is recommended that rule 2 of the Supplementary Procedure Rules is amended as shown in the Appendix to make clear that, while the speaker in relation to an agenda item is heard by the JSPC, his/her comments minuted and any questions of clarification dealt with, there is no debate on the speaker's contribution at that stage and there is no right for the speaker to participate in the debate on the relevant agenda item itself.
- 3.4 It is further recommended that the right of public participation is extended to members of the public generally and not just electors for the West Northamptonshire area. This is at the suggestion of the Business Sub Group and will maximise the scope for democratic engagement with the JSPC via the public participation route as well as recognising that the voices of those other than electors (e.g. business owners) have an equal right to be heard.
- 3.5 It is also proposed that JSPC agendas have a specific standing item called "Public Participation (if any)" near the commencement of the meeting when all requests for public participation, be they petitions, questions or representations relating to an agenda item, are dealt with. This will reinforce the clear separation between public participation rights and the substantive JSPC business in respect of which members of the public have no right to participate.

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Background Papers: None