

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Addresses to Council from the Public 10 March 2016

Report of the Democratic Services Manager

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To enable the Committee to consider how the wording of addresses from the public are presented to Members.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the Committee considers the options set out in this report for presenting the wording of addresses from the public to Members.**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been drafted in response to a question from a member of the Committee, Councillor Mace, who has asked whether the names of people giving public addresses and the subject of the address could be included in the agenda papers for Council in future.

2.0 Current Arrangements

- 2.1 Until 2012, the deadline for members of the public to register to speak at a Council meeting was in advance of agenda publication. At the time of registering, they were asked to submit the wording of their address and, once the Chief Executive had confirmed that the address was proper to be presented, Democratic Services published the name of the addresser and their address on the agenda.
- 2.2 However, on 13 September 2012, this Committee resolved "That the deadline for submitting a request to address Council be changed to "no later than midday, three days before the day of the meeting", to match the current deadline for questions from the public." This resolution was made to allow members of the public to see what was on the agenda, before registering to speak.
- 2.3 When the change to the deadline was introduced, people could choose to register and submit their speeches before or after publication of the agenda. Democratic Services ceased including names and texts of addresses with the agenda, because to do so may have seemed unfair to those registering after

the deadline, on the basis that Councillors would have had longer to consider the speeches of those registering before the deadline. It is also possible for a member of the public to register to speak in advance of agenda publication, but not submit the text of their speech until the deadline, which is after agenda publication, or to withdraw their registration after publication of the agenda. So, theoretically, the agenda could contain names and wording of addresses from some members of the public; names of some other members of the public with no wording of their address, and names of other members of the public who subsequently decided to withdraw their request. The meeting itself could include other members of the public whose names do not appear on the agenda at all. This would give the appearance of an incomplete agenda.

- 2.4 Councillor Mace has asked whether addresses received before agenda publication could be included on the agenda because “it would prepare Members for any address they are expected to hear.” In fact, including them on the agenda would only prepare Members for any address they will be expected to hear *that was received before the deadline and accepted by the Chief Executive as proper to be presented*. Option 2, below, is an option which would prepare Members for any address in advance of the Council meeting.
- 2.5 Regarding Member preparation time, it should be noted that it has always been the practice in Democratic Services to notify the relevant Cabinet Member or Committee Chairman who will have the opportunity to respond at the meeting, as soon as it is confirmed that an address will be presented.

3.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Option 1: Status quo: no details of addressers or their addresses on the published agenda.	Option 2: No details of addressers or their addresses on the published agenda. However, Democratic Services to provide names of addressers and copy of their address to all Members by email as soon as received.	Option 3: To put names of addressers and addresses on the agenda.
Advantages	Doesn't discriminate between those who register before and those who register after agenda publication.	Would allow Members the maximum preparation time for all addresses received.	Would allow Members preparation time, but only for addresses received before agenda publication date.
Disadvantages	Members may feel they do not have sufficient preparation time to hear an address.	None identified.	Members may feel they do not have sufficient preparation time to hear an address made after the agenda publication date. An addresser whose name appears on the agenda may withdraw

			<p>their request to speak which may be confusing for Members and attendees at the meeting.</p> <p>Could give the appearance of an incomplete agenda.</p>
Risks	None identified.	None identified.	Members of the public may feel it unfair that some names appear on the agenda but others don't.

3.2 The Officer preferred option is Option 2, which would allow Members to prepare for addresses in advance of the meeting, without causing any confusion on the agenda papers.

4.0 Conclusion

4.1 The Committee is asked to consider the options in this report.

<p>CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)</p> <p>None.</p>
<p>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</p> <p>There are no legal implications as a result of this report.</p>
<p>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</p> <p>There are no financial implications as a result of this report.</p>
<p>OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</p> <p>Human Resources: None.</p> <p>Information Services: None.</p> <p>Property: None.</p> <p>Open Spaces:</p>

None.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Contact Officer: Debbie Chambers

Telephone: 01524 582057

E-mail: dchambers@lancaster.gov.uk

Ref: