

Report to:	COUNCIL
Relevant Officer:	Mark Towers, Director of Governance and Partnerships
Date of Meeting	19 September 2018

REVISED MEMBER AND OFFICER PROTOCOL AND REVISIONS TO THE PUBLIC SPEAKING PROCEDURE FOR PLANNING

1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To consider a revised draft Member and Officer Protocol for Planning and amendments to the Public Speaking arrangements as recommended by the Planning Committee at its meeting on the 14 August 2018.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 To approve as part of the Council's constitution the revised Member and Officer Protocol for Planning as attached at Appendix 6(a).
- 2.2 To adopt the revised public speaking arrangements outlined in the report namely that the period for objectors and applicants be increased to seven minutes and the period for ward councillors be similarly limited to seven minutes.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

- 3.1 The revisions of the member and officer protocol for planning have resulted from the previous peer review of planning and are intended to provide clarity for members.
- 3.2 Members of the Planning Committee have requested the amendments to the public speaking.
- 3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No
- 3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes
- 3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None, the previous protocol is out of date so the approval of a revised version is necessary.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council priority is 'The Economy: maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool'.

5.0 Background Information

5.1 For a number of years the Council has had as part of its constitution a protocol on member and officer relationship in respect of planning matters. The aim of the document is to provide an easy to read document that defined the different roles and responsibilities of both Councillors and Officers. The document has not been updated for a number of years and it had been noted that the current practice differed from the protocol. Equally, the planning peer review identified a number of areas of best practice.

5.2 Following on from the planning peer review, a discussion session was held on the 8 March 2018, arising from that a draft protocol has been produced based on the broad principles agreed at that meeting and as attached at Appendix 6(a). For ease of use, the previous protocol has been included in red.

5.3 Also at the training session, members expressed concern as to the times allocated for public speaking and expressed a wish to increase the time limit for members of the public, but also to introduce an element of consistency by also adding this limit to apply to Ward Councillors. The aim being to allow sufficient time for representations, but avoid significant levels of repetition. Currently the Council allows one speaker for and one against with a limit of five minutes and an unlimited period for Ward Councillors. Following research it is clear that while the Council is in line with other Councils in terms of time limits some Councils do allow multiple speakers both for and against and some do not differentiate Ward Councillors in their schemes. It is therefore proposed to amend the public speaking rules for planning to extend the limit for members of the public to seven minutes for both those speaking for and against and additionally for this limit to also apply for Ward Councillors.

5.4 The Planning Committee at its meeting on 14 August 2018 agreed to recommend to Council both to approve the new Member and Officer Protocol and the revisions to the public speaking protocol.

5.5 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

5.6 List of Appendices:

Appendix 6(a) - Revised Member and Officer Protocol for Planning

6.0 Legal considerations:

6.1 None.

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

7.1 None.

8.0 Equalities considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Financial considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 None.

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 None.