

REPORT TO THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

30 JANUARY 2018

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AT THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD – PROCEDURAL ARRANGEMENTS

Report Sponsor: Cllr Sir Stephen Houghton
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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To review the procedural arrangements for the public to ask questions at the Health and Wellbeing Board meetings, approved at the Board meeting on 6 June 2017.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Health and Wellbeing Board members are asked to:-

- agree to pilot arrangements to allow public questions on agenda items with a deadline of 12noon on the day after the publication of the agenda; and
- review the arrangements again after six months operation.

3. Introduction/Background

- 3.1 At its meeting on 6 June 2017, the Board approved arrangements to allow the public to ask questions at meetings of the Health and Wellbeing Board in order to increase transparency in respect of the issues under discussion. The agreed procedure is set out in the appendix to this report. The Board agreed to review the arrangements after 6 months operation.

4. Review of the Arrangements

- 4.1 The arrangements have applied to two meetings, on 8 August and 3 October 2017. A third meeting, scheduled for 28 November, was cancelled due to lack of business. The opportunity to ask questions is notified on the meeting page for the Board on the Council website.
- 4.2 No public questions have been asked for either meeting, although the requirement to give 10 days' notice of a question has been queried. This time limit was introduced to ensure that there was sufficient time for an answer to be given at the meeting. Concerns have been raised that this is before publication of the agenda for the meeting, meaning that questions cannot be linked to agenda items.

- 4.3 It should be noted that there is no specific requirement that questions be linked to agenda items. The Chair would also have the facility to allow urgent questions to be asked on a matter which the Board is due to consider at any meeting.
- 4.4 Despite this, however, no public questions have been asked. In order to establish if this is due to the deadline for questions, it is proposed to pilot a revised arrangement for a further 6 months. This will allow questions on a specific agenda item to be asked if 5 days' notice is given, or by 12noon on the day after the agenda is issued. The deadline of 10 days for other items will remain.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this matter. The staff time required to operate the arrangements will be contained within the Council Governance Unit's existing resources.

6. Consultation with stakeholders

- 6.1 The Chair and Vice Chair of the Board and SSDG have been consulted.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Proposed Procedure/Arrangements for Public Questions.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1 Published Works – Barnsley MBC Constitution and associated Local Government legislation.

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PROPOSED PROCEDURE/ARRANGEMENTS FOR PUBLIC QUESTIONS

1. A member of the public may ask a question at a meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board that, in the opinion of the Council's Executive Director, Core Services, is relevant to the business of the Board and has been notified to the Council Governance Unit in writing by email no less than 10 clear days in advance of the meeting in question.
2. No question shall exceed 100 words in length.
3. An item shall be included as the first substantive item on the agenda for each Board meeting for the purpose of reporting public questions received. Details of questions received will be made available to the Board by inclusion with the agenda papers, if necessary as a supplementary document. Questions will not generally be read out at the meeting, but the person who has submitted the question may attend for the item in question.
4. All questions shall be answered by the relevant Board member, who may reserve the right to indicate that the answer is given within a specific paper on the Board's agenda or reply in writing after the meeting.
5. The Executive Director, Core Services reserves the right to reject questions that are libellous or vexatious, or simply repeat questions answered at previous meetings.