



Committee and Date
Shifnal and Sheriffhales
Local Joint Committee

6th October 2009

7.00 pm

Item

10

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PUBLIC QUESTIONS & CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Summary

This document sets out proposals for formally registering questions and discussion points for consideration by the Shifnal & Sheriffhales Local Joint Committee (LJC). It also considers whether additional members can be co-opted onto the LJC.

These criteria will be reviewed on an annual basis, or more frequently at the discretion of the LJC.

Background

The Constitution for Local Joint Committees sets out their function as being to encourage public participation and engagement in the decision making of the Council. In order to encourage public participation and engagement in the business of the LJC, members and officers should ensure that local people are informed, involved and consulted about any issues relevant to the LJC. The Constitution also allows LJCs to co-opt representatives of other local bodies to participate in its deliberations but any such co-optees would have no voting rights.

Registering Public Questions & Issues for Discussion

Each meeting of the LJC includes provision for public questions from the floor and the panel will provide either an immediate response or commit to giving a reply following the meeting. It is proposed that this agenda item is retained for all future meetings.

If a member of the public wishes to raise an item for discussion or to register a question for discussion at the LJC meeting then, in order to give the panel time to approve the item for discussion and make the necessary preparations for discussion, it is proposed that questions should normally be submitted by no later than 1 month in advance of the LJC meeting except where the Christmas holiday break extends this timescale.

Members are asked to consider the route by which questions and issues for discussion may be raised. The options are as follows:

1. Through the Chair only, OR

2. Through any member of the LJC, OR
3. Through any member or officer of the LJC

The LJC will consider whether any agenda item raised in this way is a suitable item for discussion at its planning meeting in advance of each LJC meeting.

Co-Opting Representatives of Local Bodies

Members are asked to consider whether it wishes to co-opt any representatives from the local community to the panel which would allow that representative to take part in the deliberations but would not allow any voting rights. This is allowed under the Constitution for LJCs.

The Constitution also allows for the Chair to invite any person to attend a meeting for the purpose of making a presentation or participating in any discussion on any item relevant to the LJC.

There may be a benefit to having co-opted members in that local expertise in particular issues may be better provided by the co-optee to inform the decision-making process. However, care would need to be exercised where the members were being asked to consider funding applications from an organisation represented by the co-optee and normal declaration of interest procedures would need to be followed.

Members would also need to consider whether, if co-optees were to be permitted, these would be on a permanent or temporary basis (for example if a specific issue required some additional local knowledge or expertise), and how many co-optees would be permitted at any time.

Members may also wish to consider whether the proposals for registering items for discussion by the public would negate the need for regular co-opted members of the panel.

Conclusion

Members are asked to recommend and approve the process for:

1. Considering public items for discussion at future LJC meetings, and
2. Whether to co-opt permanent or temporary non-voting members of the LJC.

<p>List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information) None identified.</p>
<p>Human Rights Act Appraisal No conflicts with the Human Rights Act have been identified.</p>
<p>Environmental Appraisal Not applicable</p>
<p>Risk Management Appraisal None identified</p>
<p>Community / Consultations Appraisal This decision is subject to approval by the Shifnal & Sheriffhales Local Joint Committee as representatives of the local community.</p>
<p>Cabinet Member Gwilym Butler</p>
<p>Local Member <u>Shropshire Council</u> Gordon Tonkinson – Shifnal North Stuart West – Shifnal South & Cosford</p> <p><u>Parish Councils</u> Mrs Rebecca Johnson – Sheriffhales Mrs Janet Jones – Sheriffhales Mrs Eileen Briscoe – Shifnal Mr Les Jones – Shifnal</p>
<p>Appendices</p>