

**DEMOCRATIC ARRANGEMENTS FORUM  
MONDAY 18 MARCH 2013**

**In attendance:** Councillor M Connolly (in the Chair)  
The Mayor (Councillor J Grimshaw – Chair of Standards Committee), Councillor I Gartside, T D Pickstone and J Smith

**Officers:** M Kelly – Chief Executive  
J Hammond – Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services  
C Shillitto – Head of Democratic Services

**Apologies for  
Absence** -

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**1. MANAGING THE BUSINESS OF COUNCIL**

A briefing paper was submitted in response to the recent trend of meetings of the Council failing to get through the business set out in the Summons. This had resulted in the Closure Motion being invoked and remaining business being approved/noted without the opportunity to discuss it. In particular, a number of policy reports and documents had not been considered, and there had been no opportunity to ask questions of the representatives of Joint Authorities or consider a report from one of those representatives.

It was agreed that the following proposals should be put to the meeting of Council on 3 April 2013:

- The agenda order be changed so that Joint Authority Reports and Questions are considered after the Leader Statement and Member Questions; and Notices of Motions are debated after consideration of any policy reports/documents;
- Questions to Joint Authority representatives be limited to a period of 15 minutes;
- Member speeches be reduced from 10 minutes to 5 minutes except for movers of motions/amendments;
- A member who is speaking be informed when he/she has one minute remaining;
- Notices of Motion be limited for each meeting to one per group and these be dealt with by rota rather than date received.

**2. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (PQT)**

A briefing paper was submitted which asked the Forum to consider amending the wording of the item "Public Question Time" to make it relevant to meetings of various committees and other bodies, and less all encompassing. Currently, the wording on agendas for Council, Cabinet and all other committees, including Township Forums, refers to questions being invited on "any matter relevant to the Council or its services to the community." The

exception to this is Planning Control Committee where public speaking is confined to statements for or against planning applications.

It was agreed that the following proposals should be put to the meeting of Council on 3 April 2013:

- In respect of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the PQT item should refer to "Matters considered at the last meeting and set out in the minutes or on the agenda for tonight's meeting." This suggestion is made in light of the fact that the Committee's remit is basically all Council business but unlike Cabinet and Council, the people who could answer a question on any issue of Council business will not necessarily be present.
- For other committees, which includes Health Scrutiny Committee, Health and Well-Being Board, Licensing and Safety Panel, Standards Committee and Audit Committee, the PQT item refer to "questions on matters for which this Committee/Body is responsible."
- For the Township Forums, the PQT item should read, "ask questions or raise issues of concern relating to the provision of local services."

### **3. MEETINGS TIMETABLE FOR 2013/14**

The draft timetable of meetings was submitted. The final version would be submitted to the meeting of Council on 3 April 2013.

**COUNCILLOR M CONNOLLY**  
**Chair**

**(Note: The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 5.40 pm.)**