

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT TO THE
PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE

Date 22nd September 2014

1. **HEADING** Meeting Cycle for Public Protection Committee
- Submitted by:** Geoff Durham – Member Training and Development Officer.
- Portfolio:** Communications, Policy and Partnerships
- Ward(s) affected:** None

Purpose of the Report

To consider the existing meeting cycle of the Public Protection Committee and consider possible changes to the cycle as set out in this report.

Recommendations

That Members take a decision on the most appropriate cycle of meetings for this Committee and select one of the following options:

- a. **To continue with the meeting cycle of four pre-meetings (Option 1);**
- b. **To incorporate the agenda setting meeting into the actual Public Protection Committee meeting as a Work Plan agenda item (in common with other committees of the Council) (Option 2); or**
- c. **To incorporate the agenda setting meeting into the actual Committee meeting as a Work Plan item and also to discontinue the Chair's Briefing held prior to the publishing of each agenda (Option 3)**

Reasons

As a part of the drive to become more efficient in all areas of its work, the Borough Council is seeking to reduce bureaucracy and to generally 'ease the burden' on Members and officers in terms of meetings. It is therefore suggested that four pre-Committee meetings prior to the actual meeting itself are possibly excessive and unnecessary in the current climate.

1. **Background**

- 1.1 The Public Protection Committee currently has four 'pre-Committee meeting's' in its cycle:
- Agenda setting meeting
 - Officers' pre-meeting
 - Chair's meeting (prior to the agenda being published)
 - Chair's meeting (immediately before the actual meeting)

- 1.2 It could be argued that, in light of the sheer number of pre-Committee meetings, that discussions over the content of future agendas could be largely be discussed at the end of each Public Protection Committee meeting using a process similar to that adopted by the Audit and Risk Committee through the devising of a Work Programme. The method used by the Audit and Risk Committee example can be found at Appendix A.
- 1.3 Similarly, it could be argued that the two Chair's briefings are essentially looking at the same information (usually reports prepared for the actual Committee meeting). It could therefore be argued that the Chair's Briefing held prior to the Committee's agenda being published is possibly unnecessary as any matters can be raised with the Chair prior to the actual meeting itself.

2. **Issues**

- 2.1 Members have many tasks to attend to in order to carry out their role, as do officers.
- 2.2 It could be argued that four meetings dedicated to preparing for one Committee meeting is unnecessary.
- 2.3 In proposing reducing the number of pre-meetings in this way, it is accepted that some items considered by the Committee can be either urgent in nature or can arise during each meeting cycle and therefore cannot be predicted. This has been taken into consideration in proposing these changes and arrangements will be put in place to ensure that the Chair and Vice-Chair are aware of any developments as they occur during each meeting cycle.

3. **Proposal**

- 3.1 It is for Members to determine if they wish to reduce the number of pre-Committee meetings and there are three possible options:
- **Option 1.** to continue with the current cycle of four pre-Committee meetings
 - **Option 2.** to incorporate the Agenda setting meeting into the Public Protection Committee itself as a Work Programme Item (in common with other Committees of the Council, see Appendix A)
 - **Option 3.** To incorporate the agenda setting meeting into the Public Protection Committee as a Work Programme Item and also to discontinue the Chair's Briefing held prior to the publishing of the agenda

4. **Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 Reducing the number of pre-Committee meetings would release both Members and officers to focus on delivery of key services of the Council.

5. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 5.1 There are no legal provisions in relation to this report.

6. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 6.1 No issues have been identified

7. **Financial and Resource Implications**

7.1 There are no direct financial costs to the authority in holding the pre-meetings, although there are opportunity costs in terms of officer and Member time.

7.2 Member and officer time is taken in attending the four pre-Committee meetings, which usually involve the Chair, Vice-Chair and up to five officers for a meeting duration of between 30-60 minutes.

8 **Major Risks**

8.1 No major risks have been identified.

9. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

9.1 No sustainability or climate change implications apply.



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Audit & Risk Committee Plan of work

2014/15

Committee Date	Reports
21 July 2014	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Outstanding Recommendations & Assurance Qtr 4 2. Annual Report of Internal Audit Service 3. Review of Effectiveness of Audit Committee 4. Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit/Updates & Action Plan 5. Annual Governance Statement with Supporting Evidence 6. Health and Safety Annual Report 2013-14 7. Risk Management Policy and Strategy 8. Unaudited Statement of Accounts 9. Work plan for 2014-15 10. Audit and Risk committee Terms of Reference 11. Treasury Management Annual Report 12. External Audit Fees 2015/16 13. External Audit – Progress Report
29 September 2014	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Qtr 1 Progress 2. Qtr 1 Outstanding Recommendations & Assurance 3. Risk Management Report – April to June 2014 4. Audited Statement of Accounts 5. External Audit – Audit Findings Report
17 November 2014	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Qtr2 Progress 2. Qtr 2 Outstanding Recommendations & Assurance 3. Health and Safety Half-Year Report April-September 2014 4. Risk Management Report – July to September 2014 5. Mid-Year Review of Treasury Management Activities 6. External Audit – Financial Resilience 7. External Audit - Annual Audit Letter 8. External Audit – Audit Progress
16 February 2015	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Qtr 3 Progress 2. Qtr 3 Outstanding Recommendations & Assurance(include Oct, Nov & Dec assurances) 3. Internal Plan 2015/16 4. Revised Audit Strategy and Terms of Reference 5. Risk Management Report – October to December 2014

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	6. External Audit - Grant Claims Certification Report
16 April 2015	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Anti Fraud & Anti Corruption Polices – Review & Update2. Anti Money Laundering Policy3. Code of Corporate Governance4. Risk Management Report – January to March 20145. Certification of Claims and Returns (External Audit)6. Overview of the Councils Constitution in respect of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.7. Protecting the Public Purse

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