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Protocols for Public Participation in Council Meetings

Approval date: 04 October 2023

Provision to refer: (September Council 2023, 63.4.2; to include a clause in all relevant policies and procedures the option to refer to external parties for advice and/or determination where this is appropriate. The default being HAPTCo (Hertfordshire Association of Town & Parish Councils) and/or the body that created the model document; in the case of the Code of Conduct this to be the Monitoring Officer at NHC (North Herts Council))

Review date: (September Council 2023, 63.4.3; following the election of a new council or when agreed to be necessary, or prompted by external bodies)
Next scheduled following election of new Council in May 2027.

This protocol applies to:

1) Participation in the public forum

This council meeting is not a public meeting, it is a meeting conducted in public, and there is no requirement in law to provide a public forum. As the council meets and makes its decisions in public and is committed to community engagement, we warmly invite members of the public, the press, the police and district/county councillors to attend our meetings and contribute **within the public forum**.

Please respect the fact that this is a meeting to conduct council business and interjections during council business are not permitted. If you disrupt business in any way you may be asked to leave. If you feel for any reason that you do not wish to take part in the public forum or if your problem is complex, you might wish to provide information to the council prior to the meeting in plenty of time before the meeting (at least 7 clear days if possible) using the contact details below.

- Public participation will be for a period of 15 minutes.
- The agenda will indicate when the public participation will take place. This will be early on the agenda in order that councillors can take account of any views expressed when reaching their decisions.
- Questions and comments should address business on the agenda. Otherwise, in most cases, the matter will be carried forward, without discussion, to the next meeting.

- Verbal questions addressed to the Chairman must not exceed 3 minutes in length.
- Only one question on a topic to be received from each person but supplementary questions will be at the Chairman's discretion.
- No question shall be repeated within a 6 month period.

2) Reports in the public forum

We will also provide an opportunity for the police and district/county councillors to provide reports to the meeting and an opportunity to ask them questions will be given, at the council's discretion subject to the relevant conditions above with an overall time limit of 15 minutes including questions.