

SOUTH YORKSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel
2.	Date:	13 th March 2013
3.	Title:	Public Questions
4.	Organisation:	Monitoring Officer, RMBC – Host Authority

5. Summary

To consider the arrangements for allowing a period for public questions at the commencement of each meeting.

6. Recommendations

That the Panel considers and, where appropriate, endorses the proposed arrangements for public questions to be considered at the commencement of each meeting.

7. Proposals and details

The Panel has previously expressed a wish that, to support the principles of transparency and public accountability, members of the public should be permitted to ask questions of the Panel at the beginning of each meeting.

The proposed arrangements are:-

“ Rule10. General Questions by Members of the Public at Panel Meetings

- a) Subject to sub-paragraph (h), a member of the public may ask one general question of the Panel.
- b) A member of the public must give at least three working days' notice in writing to the Monitoring Officer, before the day of the Panel meeting, of any question to be put to the Panel.
- c) The notice, given under sub-paragraph (b), must contain the text of the question and the question must not exceed 50 words in length.
- d) The Chairman, after taking such advice from the Monitoring Officer that he/she considers appropriate, may –
 - i. exclude a question from the order of business for the meeting on the ground that the question concerns a matter which is outside the Panel's area of responsibility or influence or is offensive, unlawful, repetitious or vexatious;
 - ii. make clerical amendments to a question in order to render it fit for adding to the order of business for the meeting.
- e) The Chairman shall invite the member of the public to read aloud any question submitted and reply him or herself or invite the appropriate member of the Panel to reply.
- f) In accordance with this rule, a question and reply shall be put and answered without debate.
- g) A question may be answered by –
 - i. responding directly to the question put;
 - ii. referring the questioner to a publication of the Panel, the Police and Crime Commissioner or South Yorkshire Police; or
 - iii. undertaking to provide a written answer to the questioner and to circulate the answer to the members of the Panel.
- h) If a question put in accordance with this rule is answered, the questioner may ask, with the Chairman's permission one supplementary question.

i) The reply shall be made in one of the ways specified in sub-paragraph (g).”

When determining the arrangements the Panel should consider particularly:-

- the length of notice to be given of the question (rule 10 (b));
- the length of the question (rule 10 (c));
- the reasons for excluding a question (rule 10 (a)(i));

The procedure will be subject to the existing rule 6 of the Panel Arrangements that:-

“The ruling of the Chair, after consultation with the Director of Legal Services of the host authority, as to the application and meaning of any of these Rules of Procedure shall not be challenged at any meeting of the Panel.”

The procedure would be inserted into the Panel’s Rules of Procedure, as rule 10, with the re-numbering of the subsequent rules.

8. Finance

No implications.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The proposed procedure can be seen to strengthen the robustness of the Panel’s governance arrangements.

10. Background Papers and Consultation

None

Contact

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