

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

**Democratic Services Committee
21 January, 2019**

REPORT BY: Head of Democratic Services

SUBJECT: Review of Public Participation at Council Meetings

REPORT FOR: Decision

1. Introduction

- 1.1 As a result of a motion and debate at Council on 20th January 2016, the Democratic Services Committee [DSC] reviewed ways in which public participation operated in Authorities across Wales and developed a protocol and guidance for public participation at Council meetings. A pilot was undertaken at the Council meeting on 23rd January, 2017.
- 1.2 The DSC reviewed this pilot at its meeting on 3rd July, 2017 and the Council on 13 July, 2017 agreed the revised protocol and resolved:
that Public Participation at Council meetings be implemented for a year and that it be reviewed by the Democratic Services Committee after this period.

2 Review of the Public Participation at Council Meetings

- 2.1 A schedule of Council dates and dates for the submission of questions was developed. Participation was promoted on the “carousel” [front page] on the Council website, via press releases and on a regular basis on social media, during the month running up to the closing date for the submission of questions. An example of a press release is provided in Appendix 1. Questions could be submitted via the dedicated email address publicq2council.go.uk or by letter.
- 2.2 Appendix 2 provides details of the number of questions received for each meeting and associated information. The members of the public, who have participated, have been asked for their comments on the scheme and a summary of their feedback is provided in Appendix 3.
- 2.3 Public Participation at Council Meetings was supported by the those who responded to the questionnaire. Comments were however made that the process for participation needs to be as simple as possible to enable the public to be involved. If it is agreed that participation should continue, officers will review the information relating to the scheme and the process.
- 2.4 Comments were also made regarding the fact that the views of the public need to be taken seriously. Many of the questions relate to issues that people

feel strongly about and are seeking another means of redress so these comments are not surprising. This is not an issue that can be addressed by the scheme itself as the Council will not often be in a position to tell people what they want to hear.

Recommended to Full Council that:	Reason for Recommendation:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the Public Participation in Council meetings continues, 2. that officers review the information relating to the scheme and the process for involvement and 3. that the Democratic Services Committee monitors the use of the scheme on an ongoing basis and undertake reviews, as required. 	<p>To provide the public with an opportunity to put questions to Council.</p>

Person(s) To Action Decision:	Solicitor to the Council		
Date By When Decision To Be Actioned:			
Relevant Policy (ies):			
Within Policy:	Y	Within Budget:	Y
Contact Officer Name:	Tel:	Fax:	Email:
Wyn Richards Scrutiny Manager and Head of Democratic Services	01597 826375	01597 826220	wyn.richards@powys.gov. uk