

## **STANDING ORDER on Contributions from Members of the Public**

**Approved by APC on October 17th 2019 (para 70.8)**

**Revision 1, 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

### **Guiding Principles**

1. The APC shall be open and transparent about the conduct of its business and facilitate scrutiny and accountability. It welcomes contributions from the public in the form of letters (including emails) and speeches – and shall be flexible in accommodating them during its meetings. Letters and speeches shall be treated equally.
2. Members of the public are also welcome to make representations to one or more councillors so that their opinions may be reported to fellow councillors and to the APC at its next meeting.
3. The APC shall acknowledge publicly all the contributions it receives from members of the public.

### **Contributions from the public**

4. The APC shall issue a standing invitation to members of the public to speak at APC meetings (see below) and/or to write to the Clerk, Chair and/or one or more councillors on any matters.

All communications shall be processed by APC in accordance with APC's published Privacy Policy and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

5. Since letters, speeches and representations to councillors are treated the same, letters shall be received by the Clerk, Chair and councillors at any time prior to an APC meeting.
6. Normally, wherever possible, the Clerk, Chair and councillors shall circulate copies of letters received from members of the public to all councillors as soon as possible after receipt (subject to any redaction as in 12 below).
7. Where residents have made representations to the Clerk, Chair or one or more councillors, the representations shall be reported to the next APC meeting.
8. Early in APC meetings, the Clerk or Chair shall normally read aloud to the meeting the contributions received in writing and invite those present to speak on any topic they wish.
9. Both letters and speeches should not normally take more than three minutes to deliver or read; but (subject to this requirement) letters and speeches shall be heard in full.
10. The APC reserves the right to shorten or summarise letters exceeding three minutes.
11. Letter writers, speakers and those who have made representations to the Clerk, Chair or one or more councillors shall normally be identified in the meetings and APC minutes by name (subject to any redaction as in 12 below).

12. Letter writers and those making representations to the Clerk, Chair or one or more councillors shall be anonymous if requested; but those sending letters or making representations should give their names and addresses. Where anonymity has been requested, letters and reports of representations shall be redacted when circulated or read to APC meetings; but all councillors will be informed of the correspondent's identity unless there are compelling reasons not to do so.

13. The full text of all letters/emails shall be available to councillors and to members of the public, except (for members of the public) where personal details have been redacted (as in 12 above) or where the requirements of GDPR restrict this.

14. Fully anonymous letters, sent to the Clerk, Chair or to one or more councillors without any identification, shall not be heard or acknowledged at APC meetings. However, they should be shared with all councillors unless there are compelling reasons not to do so.

15. At the discretion of the Chair, standing orders may be suspended during the meeting to allow members of the public to make relevant contributions.

### **Responding to contributions from the public**

16. The Clerk shall normally acknowledge in writing all letters/emails received (unless they are wholly anonymous (unsigned)) and advise the senders that their letters will be heard (at least initially) at the next APC meeting, and they may attend and speak if they wish.

17. The Clerk or Chair will normally read aloud any letters/emails sent to the meeting, except where the requirements of GDPR restrict this. Representations made to the Chair or one or more councillors will also be reported fully in APC meetings.

18. The Chair shall consult the councillors on the most appropriate response to contributions received, which shall be either noted or discussed or deferred to a further meeting.

19. The Chair shall also consult with councillors on the most appropriate way of informing the contributor of the APC's response or decision, which shall be done either verbally via the Chair, or another appropriate councillor, or in writing via the Clerk.

20. If the APC consults with an outside organisation for advice on any letter/email or speech, then the contributor will normally be informed of the advice received.

21. Wherever consideration of a contribution is deferred to a subsequent meeting, the contributor shall be advised in advance of the date of that meeting and, afterwards (if the contributor does not attend), its outcome.

22. Wherever possible, the APC shall encourage informal feedback to contributors, to foster a sense of accessibility and responsiveness.