

**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

**HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD**

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN MEETINGS OF THE  
HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD**

**1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 To consider arrangements for public participation in meetings of the North Lincolnshire Health and Wellbeing Board.

**2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 The Health and Social Care Act 2012 established Health and Wellbeing Boards as a forum where key leaders from the Health and Care system work together to improve the health and wellbeing of their local population and reduce health inequalities. Each top tier and unitary authority had to establish its own Health and Wellbeing Board as a committee of the council.
- 2.2 The board consists of six statutory members and a number of other non-statutory partner members. The board has now met on two occasions and much work is being done to enable it to carry out its statutory and other functions.
- 2.3 As a committee of the council the board is subject to the same requirements of openness and transparency as any other committee. The access to information regulations apply to the board with regard to making copies of agendas and reports of meeting open to inspection by the public. In addition, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 provides a general right of access to the information held by public authorities and regulations under the Local Government Act 2000 make provision for public access to meetings and to information relating to decisions of council executive and committees.
- 2.4 At its last meeting held on 3 October 2013, the board asked for a report to be submitted to this meeting about how the public could participate in meetings of the board. The council and some council committees/panels currently have some arrangements for public participation in meetings. These include the ability to ask questions.
- 2.5 The board should note that any member of the council can attend any meeting of a committee or sub-committee of which they are not a member and can take part in the business of such meetings if invited to speak.

### 3. **OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 There are a number of potential options for public participation in meetings. The board is invited to consider these and any other potential methods of public participation for decision and implementation at this and future meetings of the board.

#### **Option 1**

To enable members of the public to ask questions of the chairman of the board with questions being submitted in advance to a predetermined timescale which would allow for detailed responses to be prepared in advance. This is similar to the process used at full council meetings.

#### **Option 2**

As option 1 but the questions to be directed at any members of the board.

#### **Option 3**

To set aside a specified period of time where members of the public can ask questions of either the chairman or any other board member without questions having to be submitted in advance. If it is not possible to give an answer to questions at the meeting arrangements could be made to inform the questioner by letter or e-mail afterwards. The board would need to determine whether the question and answer session should be at the beginning of a meeting or at the end.

### 4. **ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

- 4.1 Some analysis of the various options is set out as follows:-

#### **Options 1 and 2**

Having to give notice of questions in advance would enable proper and detailed responses to be prepared for questioners. However, this is quite formal and restrictive and there may be occasions where issues discussed at meetings could prompt questions.

#### **Option 3**

Setting aside a specified period of time for questions would enable some spontaneity in terms of the questions to be asked, some of which may be generated by issues raised at the meeting and in the agenda papers. On the basis careful consideration would need to be given as to when the question and answer session should be held i.e. at the beginning of the meeting or at the end when in fact some of the potential questions may have been answered by the debate in the meeting itself.

### 5. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)**

- 5.1 There are no financial, staffing, property or IT implications associated with the proposals contained in this report.

6. **OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)**

6.1 Not applicable

7. **OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED**

7.1 The board will need to consider and determine which of the arrangements it wishes to put in place as set out in the options above.

8. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 That the board adopts option 3 with immediate effect as the method of engaging with the public at meetings of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

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**Background Papers used in the preparation of this report - Nil**