PUBLIC SPEAKING – PROTOCOL

(For meetings of Cabinet, Overview & Scrutiny Committees, Audit & Governance Committee and Standards Committee)

1.0 Public Speaking

1.1 Residents of West Lancashire may, on giving notice, address any of the above meetings to make representations on any item on the agenda for those meetings, except where the public and press are to be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the item.

1.2 The form attached as an Appendix to this Protocol should be used for submitting requests.

2.0 Deadline for submission

2.1 The prescribed form should be received by Member Services by 5.00 pm on the Thursday of the week preceding the meeting. This can be submitted by e-mail to member.services@westlancs.gov.uk or by sending to:

Member Services
West Lancashire Borough Council
52 Derby Street
Ormskirk
West Lancashire
L39 2DF

2.2 Completed forms will be collated by Member Services and circulated via e-mail to relevant Members and officers and published on the Council website via Modgov. Only the name of the resident and details of the issue to be raised will be published.

2.3 Groups of persons with similar views should elect a spokesperson to speak on their behalf to avoid undue repetition of similar points. Spokespersons should identify in writing on whose behalf they are speaking.

3.0 Scope

3.1 Any matters raised must be relevant to an item on the agenda for the meeting.

3.2 The Borough Solicitor may reject a submission if it:

(i) is defamatory, frivolous or offensive;

(ii) is substantially the same as representations which have already been submitted at a previous meeting; or

(iii) discloses or requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

4.0 Number of items

4.1 A maximum of one form per resident will be accepted for each Agenda Item.

4.2 There will be a maximum of 10 speakers per meeting. Where there are more than 10 forms submitted by residents, the Borough Solicitor will prioritise the list of those allowed to speak. This will be dependent on:

a. The order in which forms were received.
b. If one resident has asked to speak on a number of items, priority will be given to other residents who also wish to speak
c. If a request has been submitted in relation to the same issue.

4.3 All submissions will be circulated to relevant Members and officers for information, although no amendments will be made to the list of speakers once it has been agreed (regardless of withdrawal of a request to speak).

5.0 At the Meeting

5.1 Speakers will be shown to their seats. An item 'Public Speaking' will be included on the agenda to enable local residents to make their representations within a period of up to 30 minutes at the start of the meeting. Residents will have up to 3 minutes to address the meeting when introduced by the Chairman for that meeting. The address must reflect the issue included on the prescribed form submitted in advance.

5.2 Members may discuss what the speaker has said along with all other information, when the item is being considered later on the agenda and will make a decision then. Speakers should not circulate any supporting documentation at the meeting and should not enter into a debate with Councillors.

5.4 If residents feel nervous or uncomfortable speaking in public, then they can ask someone else to do it for them. They can also bring an interpreter if they need one. They should be aware there may be others speaking as well.

5.5 Speakers may leave the meeting at any time, taking care not to disturb the meeting.