



HERTFORDSHIRE WASTE PARTNERSHIP

MEMBERS' GROUP 13th July 2009

Item 9: Opportunities for the Public to Address HWP Member Meetings Draft Protocol

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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To propose a draft protocol for allowing members of the general public to contribute appropriately to public meetings of the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership (HWP) whilst ensuring the effective discharge of Partnership business.
- 1.2. The report seeks comments on the draft protocol detailed in section 3 of the report and has been put together following consultation with the Committee Services department at the County Council and discussion at the Directors' group meeting on the 22nd June 2009.

2. Background

- 2.1. Meetings of the HWP Member's group are held in public to promote the dissemination of information relevant to waste management services across the County.
- 2.2. In recent times members of the general public have not attended and as a consequence the HWP needs to consider how best to encourage and manage contributions from the general public.
- 2.3. Bearing in mind the County Council's recent success with its bid for PFI funding it is highly likely that the level of interest in Hertfordshire's waste procurement programme (and the range of services provided by the boroughs / districts) will increase. Consequently we can expect a renewed interest in public meetings of the HWP.
- 2.4. Given that the Partnership is not a legal entity and has no formal constitution it needs to be considered that Member meetings are 'held in public' which allows the public to be present as opposed to being held specifically 'to engage the public' where the public can speak. Consequently, there is no automatic right for the general public to speak at HWP meetings.

- 2.5. However, given that the HWP will be reviewing the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy in the next 12 – 18 months it clearly would be advisable to be able to channel input from the general public into informing this process.
- 2.6. Taking the above into account we need to ensure that we provide opportunity for the general public to engage with the Members Group whilst at the same time remembering the need to ensure the structure of the meetings are not adversely affected and that HWP business is discharged effectively.

3. Draft Protocol (Subject to Approval by HWP Members)

3.1. To this end the following is proposed :-

- a) Individuals do not need to give advance warning if they are planning to attend in an observation capacity only.
- b) It would be helpful if groups wishing to attend a meeting advise either the Partnership Development Manager or Partnership Support officer of the size of the group at least 7 working days in advance of a meeting. This is to check that venues will be able to accommodate a large group and / or combination of groups. It maybe necessary to request that group sizes are limited to ensure meetings can be held in safety.
- c) If an individual or / and group wish to speak at a meeting, a written request needs to be sent, via the WasteAware email, to either the Partnership Development Manager or Partnership Support officer at least 3 working days in advance
- d) If an individual or / and group wish to ask questions at a meeting, a written request, via the WasteAware email, must be submitted to either the Partnership Development Manager or Partnership Support Officer at least 7 working days in advance of the meeting to allow time for the answers to be prepared.
- e) Individuals and / or groups wishing to speak and / or ask questions must confine themselves to issues under the remit of the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership. Issues of operational concern about specific local services need to be addressed to the relevant individual authority.
- f) Members of the public wishing to speak / ask a question must do so in person at the meeting. Normally they will be asked to do so at the start of a meeting.
- g) If there is more than one organisation applying to speak / ask a question on the same topic, it will be at the Chairman's discretion who is allowed to speak.

- h) Answers will given by the Chairman of the HWP Member group, following which the individual or group tabling the question will be allowed to ask 1 supplementary question. 5 minutes will be allowed for the asking of the supplementary question and the ensuing response.
- i) If the Chairman, other HWP Members, or officers present at the meeting cannot provide the answer a written response will be provided by the Partnership Development Manager in consultation with the Chairman within 3 working days.
- j) Up to 3 individuals or groups will be allowed to address each individual meeting. Individual speeches or questions will be limited to a maximum of 3 minutes each.
- k) Where the Chairman feels that it would be of benefit to allow more time to discuss a particular question, the Chairman can exercise the discretion to suspend this protocol in part or whole, dependent on the issues being dealt with.
- l) The protocol is reviewed on an annual basis to make sure that it effectively manages contributions from the general public and interested parties whilst ensuring effective discharge of HWP business.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1. That the Member's group approve the protocol as outlined above.
- 4.2. Once agreed the protocol is incorporated into the Memorandum of Understanding and is considered during future reviews of the MOU, and Intermediate Inter Authority Agreement.