

To: Cambridgeshire Police Authority

From: Chief Executive

Date: 11th February 2010

REVISION OF POLICE AUTHORITY STANDING ORDER 6

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To seek the Police Authority's approval to revise the wording of Standing Order no. 6 (paragraphs 2, 4 and 6 only).

2. Background

- 2.1 The provisions made by the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 clearly state that any meeting of a body exercising public functions should be open to the public.
- 2.2 Cambridgeshire Police Authority committee meetings are held in public and members of the public are invited to attend to observe proceedings that do not contain exempt information as specified in the Local Government Act 1972.
- 2.3 There is provision for members of the public to make a statement or ask a question at the meeting and the procedure for this (Standing Order 6) is on the Police Authority's website. It was identified that further work was required on Standing Order no. 6 to consider how meetings held and questions asked in public should contribute effectively to local democracy, openness and transparency.
- 2.4 Following discussion with the Police Authority Chair, the Media and Communications Officer revised the wording to ensure greater flexibility for members of the public to ask questions, but within the limited structure of the meeting agenda. The Citizen Focus Panel agreed on 7th December 2010 to recommend approval of the revised standing order to the full Police Authority.

3. Standing Order 6 – revised paragraphs

- 3.1 Suggested revised wording to paragraph 2 in square brackets: "Any member of the public may ask questions of or make a statement to the Police Authority relevant to its business. [Members of the public are asked to submit questions or statements in advance wherever possible to ensure an accurate and meaningful response.

If the agenda permits, questions received on the day may be permitted at the Chairman's discretion. However, members of the public are advised that it may not be possible to provide a meaningful response on the day without further research, in which case a written response will be provided within three working days.] Dates of forthcoming meetings are published on the Police Authority website (www.cambs-pa.gov.uk)."

- 3.2 Suggested revised wording to paragraph 4 in square brackets: "Question(s) from and statements by members of the public shall be included on all committee agendas as a standing item as the next item of business after the approval of the minutes of the last meeting. Questions must be addressed to the Chairman. [The person asking the question or making a statement shall be given the opportunity of attending the meeting to speak. The Chairman will then invite the person posing the question, if they are in attendance, to read it out and ask the appropriate officer or member of the Authority to respond. If a person putting a question is not present the answer as reported to the Authority shall be sent to such persons following the meeting.] If in attendance the appropriate officer and/or member shall [offer to] meet the questioner to discuss any further concerns they may have and to clarify any answer given if necessary. Arising from such questions, if members want a report or an issue to be debated then they must use existing procedures to ensure that at the following meeting the item is raised.
- 3.3 Suggested revised wording to paragraph 6 in square brackets: "The Chairman may use discretion to limit the number of questions asked or statements made by members of the public in order to avoid disruption of the business of the Police Authority. Members of the public asking a question or making a statement will be allocated a maximum of 3 minutes to do so. One supplementary question may be asked if clarification of the answer to the first question is required. The total time allowed for public questions, answers and statements shall not exceed 15 minutes [and for that reason the Chairman may restrict the number and length of questions at his/ her discretion.] Any questions which remain unanswered within the timeframe shall receive written responses only. The purpose of this "open forum" is to enable succinct questions or statements to be made within the allowed time limit in the presence of Members. This procedure does not enable a debate to take place involving the member(s) of the public nor for public participation in other business of the meeting.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 The Authority is recommended to approve the revised wording of paragraphs 2, 4 and 6 of Standing Order 6.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Source Document (s)	Contact Officer	Location
	Anna Horne, Media & Communications Officer Ext. 2649	Cambridgeshire Constabulary Hinchingsbrooke Park, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE29 6NP.
<p>Originating OfficerMrs Anna Horne.....</p> <p>Is it considered that this report contains 'exempt information' and should be considered in private? No</p> <p>If the answer is "YES", please state the nature of the exempt information and the relevant clause (s) by virtue of Part 1 of Revised Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972</p> <p>The attached report has been cleared with the undermentioned Officer/s who have assessed the exemption status above</p> <p>Chief Executive</p> <p>Others</p> <p>Submitted on3rd February 2010.....</p> <p>A report will not be sent to the Authority unless this box has been satisfactorily completed and all necessary consultation carried out - the responsibility for which rests with the originator (except for consultation with the Chairman and this will be undertaken by the Chief Executive).</p>		