

Written Response from Cllr Chris Weldon, Chair of the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee to Martin Brighton's fifth question on "Council Policy - Openness and Transparency and Accountability"

Question

Would the Scrutiny Committee please indicate whether it supports the removal of the agenda item, or not, and give reasons.

Response

I would refer you to Cllr Harry Harpham's answers to your questions on this topic at Full Council on 7th January 2015:

5.2.2 Public Questions Concerning Area Housing Forum Meetings and Housing and Neighbourhoods Advisory Panel (HANAP) Meetings

Mr Brighton asked the following questions concerning Openness and Accountability:

1. Why has the facility for citizens' questions been removed from Area Housing Forum Meetings?
2. At what meeting was this change to Council policy debated and approved by elected members?
3. At what meeting was the proposal to change the Council policy given prior consultation and consent from tenants?
4. Who authorised the change?
5. Why are citizens not allowed to attend HANAP meetings as observers, or ask Citizen's questions?
6. At what meeting was this change to Council policy debated and approved by elected members?
7. At what meeting was the proposal to change the Council policy given prior consultation and consent from tenants?
8. Who authorised the change?

Councillor Harry Harpham, the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods responded that the Area Housing Forum Meetings were not public meetings and there were therefore no public questions. Other meetings and fora did exist where people were encouraged to participate and ask questions. There had been no change in policy regarding the Area Housing Forum meetings. With regard to meetings of HANAP, there were no public questions at that particular body. This was to help manage time at those meetings. In relation to Mr Brighton's other questions, Councillor Harpham stated that there had not been any change in policy.

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