

People & Families Scrutiny Committee

Procedure for dealing with Call-in of The Deanes School decision

Constitution

This procedure complements the call-in arrangements set out in the Constitution in Overview and Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rule 20.14. Procedure Rule 20.14 takes precedence.

Committee stage

It is the Chairman of the Committee's role to confine discussion within the scope of the meeting and reasonable limits to time. This guidance has been produced to enable him to do this. The Chairman of the Committee is suggesting this procedure.

As the call-in relates to a Schools issue the representatives of Parent Governors and Diocesan Education Committees have been invited and have the right to vote on this particular item.

Information to be available for the Committee

The Committee will be provided with copies of the decision and the reasons for the call ins as part of the Agenda papers put together by the Scrutiny Officer.

Calling of witnesses

Witnesses may be called by either side. Notice of any witnesses to be called will be provided in advance and given to the Scrutiny Officer. They must speak only to the reasons for the call in. They will have a maximum of three minutes each to address the Committee, subject to the discretion of the Chairman. When calling witnesses attention should be given to the quality rather than the quantity of witnesses. Any witness should have something new and relevant to say to the Committee. The Chairman will exercise his discretion to curtail any witness simply repeating anything that has already been clearly explained.

Committee meeting

The procedure at the meeting will be as follows:

- Members will be given the opportunity to make the case for calling in the decision in the following order:
 - Richard Carson
 - Councillor Ray Howard
 - Councillor Theresa Higgins
 - Councillor Melissa McGeorge
 - Councillor Dave Blackwell
 - Councillor Alan Bayley
- Any witnesses called by Members will then provide evidence to the Committee following each of the Members cases. This evidence must be based on the reasons given by the particular Member for the call-in. The suggestion is that the Member calling-in the decision and their witnesses shall have a total of three minutes each. However, the time allowed will be a combination of the time allowed, i.e. a Member and two witnesses will have a maximum of nine minutes between them.

- If the local member (Councillor Jillian Reeves) has not already had the chance to address the Committee and wishes to do so she will be given the opportunity to do so at this point (suggest three minutes).
- Questions of each of the call-in Members and witnesses will follow the individual call-ins. These questions must be confined to the reasons for call-in.
- The Cabinet Member will then be given the opportunity to answer the case and seek to justify the decision taken. The Cabinet Member will have the opportunity to call his witnesses (suggest 40 minutes in total).
- Questions for the Cabinet Member and his witnesses will follow, confined to the reasons for justification of the decision.
- There will then be an opportunity for other members of the Committee to ask questions of all parties, through the Chairman, and debate the issues.

Voting options

It is the intention of the Chairman of the Committee that each call-in is treated as a separate entity. In terms of the options available to the Committee the following is an extract from the Constitution 20.14:

- (xiii) Having considered the decision, the Committee may refer it back to the decision taker setting out in writing its concerns or refer the matter to the full Council also with a record of its concerns.
- (xiv) If the Committee does not refer a decision to either the decision taker or the Council, the decision shall take effect at the conclusion of the meeting of the Committee.

Any motion in line with 20.14 will not be put to the meeting until all parties have had a reasonable opportunity to make their case.

Action following the meeting

Following consideration of the call-ins by the Committee, the Scrutiny Officer will liaise with the Chairman and Group Spokespersons to agree the formal notification of its decision through a report from the Committee.