

Lancaster Three Tier Forum Terms of Reference December 2013

- The Forum is a joint business meeting of County, District, and Town and Parish Councillors, open to the public.
- The membership of the Forum will be all local County Councillors with an Electoral Division within the District and an equal number of District Councillors appointed by the District Council, and one Parish/Town Council representative nominated from the Parish Councils within the District area. District Councils and the Parish/Town Councils can nominate deputies or replacements in accordance with their own procedures. The officer(s) supporting the meeting must be notified of any changes prior to a meeting. Political balance rules do not apply to the Three Tier Forum, although districts may follow these for their nominations.
- The Forum will discuss issues that are of joint interest across the three levels of local government in the area. Agenda items will focus on strategic issues relating to all local councils in the area.
- Any member of the Forum can request that an item is considered at a future meeting of the Forum. The Chair is responsible for agreeing the agenda and deciding whether an issue raised by a member will appear on an agenda. Where issues are raised that do not fall within the remit of the Forum these will be dealt with via the appropriate mechanism.
- The Forum will make provision for public speaking, The Lancaster Three Tier Forum allows public speaking on the following basis:
 - For 15 minutes at the beginning of the meeting (up to 3 mins per person) on topics included on the agenda for the meeting, and be able to ask a question following each agenda item at the discretion of the chair.
- The Chair of the meeting is responsible for managing the debate at the Forum. The Chair's ruling on any aspect of a member of the committee's right to speak will be final. Members who persistently ignore the ruling of the Chair may, after being warned, be asked to leave the room for the duration of the meeting.
- Decisions of the Forum should be by consensus wherever possible. In the event that a consensus cannot be reached, decisions are by simple 'show of hands' majority with the chair having a casting vote.
- The Forum is not a formal committee of the County, District or Parish Councils, therefore Access to Information provisions do not apply. However, as it is a public meeting, agendas and minutes will be available on the County Council's website and by request can be obtained in person at County Hall, Preston.

- The Chair and Deputy will be elected at the Annual Meeting from amongst the membership of the Forum. Should a vacancy arise during the year, a new Chair or Deputy will be elected. A Chair or Deputy may be removed from their position by a vote of the Forum.
- The Forum will meet 3 times a year, one of which will be the Annual Meeting. The Forum does not have the authority to establish sub groups or working groups. From April 2014, the Annual Meeting will be the first meeting of the Forum after the County Council's AGM.
- Urgent business is allowed, with the consent of the Chair. Any member wishing to raise a matter of urgent business should advise the Chair via the officer support for the Forum as soon as possible.
- The "Protocol on Public Speaking at Three Tier Forums" applies.

Protocol for Public Speaking at Three Tier Forums

For the purpose of this protocol, "members of the public" includes members of the press and parish and district councillors who are not members of the Forum. It does not include officers of county or district authorities who are in attendance to support and advise the meeting.

Each Forum will agree at what points of the meeting members of the public will be entitled to speak.

Each Forum may also set a maximum length of time for any individual speech from a member of the public.

Public speaking must be on topics included on the agenda for the meeting

Whilst a member of the public is speaking, no interruption shall be allowed from either a member of the Forum or another member of the public.

However, the Chair of the meeting may intervene in the speech of a member of the public. This includes the right of the Chair to terminate a speech if it is felt appropriate to do so. The Chair's judgement will be informed by the following provision:

Members of the public must not

- Speak at a point in the meeting other than those specified
- Interrupt another speaker
- Speak for longer than the allotted time
- Reveal personal information about another individual
- Make a personal complaint about a service provided by County, District or Town / Parish Councils in the area

- Make individual or personal complaints against any member of the authority
- Reveal information which they know or believe to be confidential
- Use offensive, abusive or threatening language
- Ignore the ruling of the Chair of the meeting

Members of the public who breach these guidelines may, following a warning, be asked to leave the meeting. If a person refuses to leave the room, the chair shall adjourn the meeting for a short period of time and if necessary to a later date

Speeches by members of the public are not expected to be the subject of a debate, nor are any questions raised expected to be answered. The Chair may, at his or her discretion, invite a response or comment from an appropriate officer or Forum member, but it is anticipated that this will be the exception rather than the rule.

The contents of any speech by a member of the public will be noted by officers supporting the Forum and will be dealt with via the appropriate mechanism.