

## **Protocol for Public Speaking at the West Lancashire Three Tier Forum**

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.

The Forum has agreed that members of the public can at the discretion of the chair raise any matters of interest or concern during a maximum 30 minute period prior to the start of a meeting. The public cannot speak once a meeting has started.

Public speaking must be on matters which are the functions of the County, District or Parish Council.

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 5 minutes
- 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.