

REPORT TO	ON
Governance Committee	31 January 2018

September 2017



TITLE	REPORT OF
Minutes Protocol	Legal Services Manager / Interim Monitoring Officer

Is this report confidential?	No
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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The attached document sets out the protocol for the production of the minutes of meetings of the Council, Cabinet and various Committees, to be used by the staff in the Democratic Services Team.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Minutes Protocol be noted.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

The report relates to the following corporate priorities

Clean, green and safe		Strong and healthy communities	
Strong South Ribble in the heart of prosperous Lancashire		Efficient, effective and exceptional council	X

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Unfortunately, on some occasions in the past, incidents or debates which have taken place during the Council meetings have been referred to in the minutes even though they do not form part of the decision making process and therefore ought not to form part of the official minutes of the meeting.
- 4.2 Following the comments made by a number of Members of the Council about the content of the minutes of various Council meetings, the attached protocol has been produced to provide clear guidance to Members and Officers on the style and content of minutes.
- 4.3 Officers are trying to adopt a much more formal, professional and neutral style of minute taking as part of the Councils overall improvement journey.

5. MINUTES PROTOCOL

- 5.1 There is no statutory definition of minutes but the attached protocol is based on the leading manual *"Knowles on Local Authority Meetings"* produced by ICSA which provides guidance on the principles of good practice which have become widely accepted by local authorities.
- 5.2 Some of the key principles of good practice are that:
- Minutes should record clearly and concisely all decisions taken at a meeting;
 - The minutes are not a verbatim record but a summary of the proceedings;
 - The summary should include the essence of the content of the report, discussion and decision;
 - The minutes should not attribute the views expressed during a debate to individual members or members of the public.
- 5.3 The protocol provides examples of how the comments or concerns made by Members during any debates at meetings can be summarised in the minutes. This can often be done by the inclusion of bullet points in the minutes reflecting the key issues raised by Members.

Council Minutes

- 5.4 The protocol indicates that the style of the Council minutes is slightly different from the minutes of other meetings in view of the formality of the Council meetings and provides details of the information to be provided, together with the instances when the names of individual Members can be recorded in Council minutes but not in the minutes of other meetings.
- 5.5 Unless a question is submitted in writing to the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member, Committee Chairman or Council representative on an Outside Body for a response at a Council meeting, the precise details of the question will not be recorded and a brief summary of the question and response will be given in the minutes.

Cabinet and Committee Minutes

- 5.6 In addition to the principles referred to above, the protocol indicates that the minutes of **Cabinet meetings** must include the following information under separate headings, as set out in statutory legislation:
- Record of decision;
 - Record of the reasons for the decision; and
 - Details of any alternative options considered and rejected by the Cabinet
- 5.7 The details of other information to be included the minutes of Cabinet and Committee meetings is included in the protocol, which includes a summary of the key issues of any questions raised at meetings by Members of the Council and the public in accordance with Standing Orders 32 and 33 in the Council Procedure Rules and responses made.

6. WIDER IMPLICATIONS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTATION

6.1 Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

6.2 Comments of the Monitoring Officer

The issue of what should and should not be included in minutes has periodically been the subject of debate in this Council.

The purpose of the Minutes Protocol is to provide some clarity in this regard and to lead to greater uniformity of approach.

Other implications:	
▶ Risk	The minutes protocol will ensure that the minutes of meetings record clearly and concisely all decisions taken at meetings and that they follow the examples of good practice set out in <i>“Knowles on Local Authority Meetings”</i>
▶ Equality & Diversity	There are no equality implications arising from this report
▶ HR & Organisational Development	There are no HR & Organisational Development implications arising from this report
▶ Property & Asset Management	There are no Property & Asset Management implications arising from this report
▶ ICT / Technology	There are no ICT / Technology implications arising from this report

7. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

APPENDICES

Appendix – Minutes Protocol

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