

SOUTH RIBBLE BOROUGH COUNCIL MINUTES PROTOCOL

There is no statutory definition of minutes but the guidance provided in Chapter 12 of the leading manual on Local Authority Meetings "*Knowles on Local Authority Meetings*" published by ICSA states:

- Minutes should record **clearly and concisely all decisions taken at a meeting**;
- There is no right or wrong way of preparing minutes: the form adopted by any particular local authority is a matter of individual choice or local custom. In the course of time a number of cardinal principles of good practice have become widely accepted. Thus for example, a minute should be brief, recording exactly what was done and no more, and be self-contained and decisive;
- A minute is **not a verbatim record but a summary of the proceedings** that includes the essence of the content of the report, discussion and decision. It is rarely necessary to reproduce, however summarily, what a particular speaker said; indeed there is a danger in recording individual contributions since all members are likely to want the same treatment and this would not result in a clear and concise minute.
- The summary can be properly used to record in narrative form, the tenor of the discussion on a particular item of business but in an impersonal way and **not attribute views expressed to individual members**.

Knowles indicates that the following examples of wording can be used in the summary / preamble to an individual minute:

- The following points were raised in the discussion: (a) ...; (b)...; and (c)...
- The Council / Cabinet / Committee had regard to / took account of the following points made in the course of the discussion: (a) ...; (b)...; and (c)...

It is also common practice for the following example to be used in minutes:

- Members of the Council / Cabinet / Committee expressed support / concern for / about the following issues raised in the report: (a) ...; (b)...; and (c)...

On occasions when several comments are made by Members of the Council, the following example with **bullet points** could be used:

Members of the Council / Cabinet / Committee expressed support / concern for:

- xx
- xx (summary of comments to be inserted)
- xx

Knowles states that the following form of wording **should be avoided at all costs** as the content would be open to claims that the Councillor or officer was misinterpreted and the content of the minutes were inaccurate and not clear and concise:

- Councillor A said ...; Councillor B replied ...; and Councillor C pointed out ...

COUNCIL MINUTES

The style of the Council Minutes is slightly different from the minutes of other meetings in view of the formality of the Council meetings, in that amendments and resolutions can be recorded showing the names of the proposer and seconder of motions, but in essence they follow the principles of good practice referred to above.

The minutes of the Council Meeting should provide a subject title, brief summary of the purpose / content of the reports, a summary of the debate, the motions and amendments moved and seconded by named Councillors, details of the votes taken and where requested by Members, details of the recorded votes* and finally a clear record of the decision taken on each agenda item.

* It should be noted that the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, require all local authorities to include provision within their Constitutions for recorded votes at Budget Council meetings on motions relating to the determination of the budget, council tax levels and the issuing of precepts. Please see Rule 16.5 in Part 4 of the Council Constitution.

In line with the principles set out above, reference should only be made in the minutes of Council meetings to the names of individual Councillors in the following particular instances when:

- they ask a question at a Council meeting;
- they respond to a question or an issue raised in a Council meeting as a “member with special responsibilities” (e.g. as a Cabinet Member, Committee/Forum Chair, Council representative on a particular Outside Body or Member Champion) and in those instances, the name and role of the member should be included in the minutes;
- they move or second a motion or amendment at a Council meeting;
- a recorded vote is taken at a Council meeting in accordance with Rules 16.4 and 16.5 in Part 4 of the Council Constitution; and
- a Member requests immediately after the vote is taken, that their vote is recorded in the minutes to show that he/she individually voted for or against the motion or abstained from voting in accordance with Rule 16.6 in Part 4 of the Council Constitution.

The names of members of the public will not be recorded in the minutes of Council meetings.

Unless the question is submitted in writing, 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 MINUTES

An individual minute of the Cabinet should consist of a subject title and a preamble or narrative, which should include a brief summary of the purpose / content of the report and a summary of the debate. Under regulation 3 of SI 2000/3272, it must also contain under separate headings:

- a record of the decision;
- a record of reasons for the decision; and
- details of any alternative options considered and rejected by the Cabinet at the meeting at which the decision was made.

This information will normally be included within the report on the particular issue by the report author and should be included in the minutes of the Cabinet meeting.

If the Cabinet do not approve the recommendation within the report or amend some of the substance of the recommendation, the Democratic Services Officer or Legal Officer should seek clarification if necessary from the Chairman of the meeting on the revised reasons for the decision and why the recommendation was rejected, for inclusion within the minutes.

Rule 31 in Part 4 of the Constitution allows the provisions of Rule 16 referred to above to apply in relation to recorded votes and the right of an individual vote to be recorded in the minutes of Cabinet meetings.

Rules 32 and 33 in Part 4 of the Constitution allow Questions / Statements to be made by Members of the Council and the Public at Cabinet and Committee meetings but only Members of the Cabinet/Committee can vote. In line with the principles set out above, the key issues of any questions and responses will be summarised but the names of Councillors or members of the public will not be recorded in the Cabinet minutes.

COMMITTEE MINUTES

The principles set out above should be followed and the minutes should include a subject title, brief summary of the purpose / content of the report, a summary of the debate and a clear and concise record of the decision made by the Committee.

As indicated above:

- Rule 31 in Part 4 of the Constitution allows the provisions of Rule 16 to apply in relation to recorded votes and the right of an individual vote to be recorded in the minutes of Committee meetings;
- the key issues of any questions and responses made in accordance with Rules 32 and 33 in Part 4 of the Constitution will be summarised but the names of Councillors or members of the public will not be recorded in the Committee minutes.

LICENSING AND PLANNING APPLICATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

These should normally provide a subject title, brief summary of the purpose / content of the report and a clear and concise record of the decision made by the Committee. The details of any debate should be excluded as is appropriate with a quasi-judicial Committee.

PUBLIC INSPECTION OF REPORTS

Copies of the reports considered at meetings are available for inspection via the Council's website, except on occasions when the information is deemed to be exempt in accordance with the requirements of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

STYLE / FORMAT OF MINUTES

Attendance Details

The format should be used:

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors xx (Chair), xx (Vice-Chair) xx, xx, xx and xx.

OFFICERS: xx (Designation), xx (Designation)

**OTHER MEMBERS
AND OFFICERS:** Councillors xx (Cabinet Member for xx) xx, xx
xx (Designation)

PUBLIC: (number present)

Resolution

The following format should be used:

RESOLVED: (Unanimously) **or** (For: xx, Against: xx, Abstention xx)

That the report be noted. **or**

That:

(1) xxxx; and

(2) xxxx.