

## **APPENDIX 2 - MINUTES OF THE WEST LOTHIAN INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD**

### **Statutory requirements**

The only statutory requirements of Board minutes are that:-

- they record those members in attendance
- they include any decisions made at the meeting
- they are to be submitted at the next meeting for agreement
- they then must be signed by the Chair of that later meeting

### **Content**

The only rules about content are that they record the names of members present and decisions made. A minute containing nothing but that basic information would satisfy the statutory requirements, but would not meet generally expected standards of openness, accountability and good governance, and would not make it apparent to someone reading the minute the significant events of the meeting. More is needed.

### **Different approaches**

There are various views possible as to what a minute of a meeting of a public body should contain:-

- they could be brief notes of the proceedings which do little but record the decisions made
- they could be a narrative record of the business transacted - a verbatim, or near verbatim, record
- they could record clearly and concisely all decisions taken at the meeting and the advice and information necessary to give the reasons behind those decisions
- they provide not a verbatim record but a summary of the proceedings.

### **Purposes of minutes**

The overall purposes are:-

- to meet statutory requirements
- to record decisions taken
- to record significant advice
- to record rulings and information upon which decisions were based
- to enable an interested observer to understand what was decided and why

### **Recommended approach**

The approach will be as follows:-

- a verbatim record is not kept
- an accurate record of the decisions taken is the main purpose and the most important element of the minute
- a narrative, drawing on the committee report, is included to give context to the decisions taken and provide the reader with some of the reasons for the decision
- additional information will be included where:-

- required by legislation (e.g., a list of those members present),
  - by Standing Orders (e.g., declarations of interest)
  - it is significant to the decision made (e.g., advice on the Board's powers)
  - on the express direction of the Chair
  - as a result of a resolution of the meeting
- other information will not be recorded unless it serves the main purpose of recording decisions taken and matters which are directly relevant to the decisions taken. In particular, these types of information will not usually be recorded:-
    - questions put by members to officers and the answers given
    - points made by members in the course of discussion or debate
    - attempted challenges to a ruling by the Chair

### **After the meeting – Action Note**

Minutes are not required to be produced until they require to be circulated with the agenda for the next meeting of the Board or unless there is a particular reporting requirement in place. An Action Note will instead be circulated to officers and Board members soon after the meeting to confirm decisions taken and actions required of them.

### **Draft minutes**

Minutes are thereafter prepared on behalf of the Clerk from a Committee Officer's own notes. They may seek assistance or clarification from other officers if they encounter any points of difficulty when drafting the minute, but the draft minute is not subject to approval or checking by any other officers before being circulated with the following meeting's agenda.

Neither the Chair nor the Vice-Chair will be consulted about minutes under preparation and their approval is not required. They may ask to have sight of a draft minute when it is ready and that will not be refused, but any efforts by Board members to influence or amend the content of the minute are inappropriate and will be resisted.

### **Correction of minutes**

If Board members have concerns about the content of a minute then the appropriate action for them to take is to raise them when the minute is submitted for approval at the next meeting for agreement. That process is there to correct errors and not to allow history to be re-written. Such changes will be determined by the Board, by a vote if necessary.

Any corrections or amendments made to minutes in that way will not result in the principal minute physically being amended, but the minute of the meeting at which the changes are agreed will itself record those changes.

JDM  
14 August 2015