

# **DOWNS COMMITTEE RULES OF PROCEDURE**

## **DOWN'S COMMITTEE PROCEDURE RULES (DCR)**

The Downs Committee was created by The Clifton and Durdham Downs (Bristol) Act 1861 (the 'Downs Act'). Section X of the Act stipulates that:

- The committee shall be made up of the Lord Mayor and six members of the council and the Master and six members of the Society;
- The quorum is five;
- The committee shall sit until 9 November each year, at which point the committee shall nominate a new membership;
- Two members of both the council and the Society shall not be capable of re-election;
- All questions before the committee shall be determined by a majority of the votes of the members present;
- The Lord Mayor shall chair meetings, with the Master chairing in the absence of the Lord Mayor and the committee choosing a chair if the Master is also absent.

These rules were adopted in addition to the above statutory requirements in order to assist with the running of the meetings. The Committee is not subject to the Local Government Act 1972.

These rules shall apply only to meetings of the Downs Committee and such other sub-committees or working groups as it shall determine shall meet in public.

### **DCR1**

#### **ANNUAL MEETING**

##### **Timing and business**

The annual meeting, to be held in July unless otherwise decided by the chair in consultation with the vice chair, will:

- (i) establish any sub-committees or working groups considered necessary including:
  - determining the membership of the sub-committee/working group;
  - agreeing the terms of reference of the sub-committees/working group; and
  - determining whether the sub-committee/working group should meet in public or private.
- (ii) receive any announcements from the chair; and
- (iii) consider any business set out in the notice convening the meeting.

## **DCR2**

### **ORDINARY MEETINGS**

(1) Ordinary meetings will:

- (i) elect a person to preside if the Lord Mayor and Master are not present;
- (ii) approve the minutes of the last meeting;
- (iii) receive any announcements from the chair;
- (iv) receive questions and statements (and provide answers);  
**Time limit – 30 minutes**
- (vi) receive reports on any matter which is within the committee's general remit or work programme; and
- (vii) consider any other business which the chair has agreed.

## **DCR3**

### **EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS**

#### **DCR3.1**

##### **Calling extraordinary meetings**

Those listed below may call committee meetings in addition to ordinary meetings:

- (i) the committee by resolution; and
- (ii) the chair.

#### **DCR3.2**

##### **Business**

The agenda for an extraordinary meeting will specify the matters that the meeting will deal with. Questions and statements will be accepted only if they relate to the business for which the extraordinary meeting has been arranged.

## **DCR4**

### **TIME AND PLACE OF MEETINGS**

The time and place of meetings will be determined by the committee and no

less than five clear working days' notice shall be given ahead of a meeting being held. The agenda and any reports shall also be published no less than five clear working days ahead of the meeting, subject to the fact that any information considered by the chair not to be suitable for publication shall be removed from the report prior to publishing.

## **DCR5**

### **STATEMENTS AND QUESTIONS**

#### **DCR5.1**

##### **General**

- (a) Members of the public who live or own a business in Bristol may submit statements or questions by no later than 12 noon three working days before the meeting.
- (b) Each member of the public may submit one question or one statement per meeting.
- (c) Questions and statements must relate to the terms of reference and role and responsibility of the committee and its work plans.
- (d) Questions shall be addressed to and shall be dealt with by the chair of the committee or such member as may be nominated by the chair.
- (e) A questioner who has put a question in person may also put without notice, one supplementary question to the chair following the reply to their original question. A supplementary question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.
- (f) There will be no debate after receiving a statement.

#### **DCR5.2**

##### **Scope of statements and questions**

The chair may reject a statement or question if it:

- is not about a matter for which the committee has a responsibility;
- is defamatory, frivolous or offensive; or
- requires the disclosure of information that the chair considers not to be suitable for public disclosure.

Rejected statements or questions will be re-sent to the person submitting the statement or question and include reasons for rejection.

## **DCR6**

### **BUSINESS**

#### **DCR6.1**

##### **Agenda**

The agenda shall be set ahead of the meeting by the chair in consultation with the vice chair.

#### **DCR6.2**

##### **Voting**

As the Downs Act does not provide for a casting vote, decisions may only be taken by a majority of those present. A tied vote shall mean that the decision has not been taken.

#### **DCR6.3**

##### **Decision-making**

All decisions shall be taken at the committee. For the avoidance of doubt, sub-committees and working groups shall only be empowered to make recommendations to the committee, rather than themselves exercising decision-making powers on behalf of the committee.

Where there is a clear and pressing need for a decision to be taken and it is not reasonably practicable, for any reason, for that decision to be taken at either the next committee meeting or at an extraordinary meeting of the committee, then the chair shall have the authority to take the decision in consultation with the vice chair. If time allows, then the chair shall also consult the committee via email. Where a decision is taken in these circumstances, it shall be reported to the committee at the next meeting.

## **DCR7**

### **MINUTES**

Minutes will be approved at the subsequent meeting of the committee and published once approved.

## **DCR8**

### **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC**

Members of the public may only be excluded where the committee is considering information that has not been made public. It shall be at the discretion of the chair as to whether information should be considered in

public or in private.

## **DCR 9**

### **DISTURBANCE BY PUBLIC**

#### **DCR9.1**

##### **Removal of member of the public**

If a member of the public interrupts proceedings, the chair will warn the person concerned. If they continue to interrupt, the chair will order their removal from the meeting room.

#### **DCR9.2**

##### **Clearance of part of meeting room**

If there is a general disturbance in any part of the meeting room open to the public, the chair may call for that part to be cleared.