

**POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE – 9 FEBRUARY 2023**

**AGENDA ITEM 5 – PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

**1. From Mr Cosgrove to the Chair**

**FULL DETAIL OF THE QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED IS DETAILED BELOW**

Note, the Chair will:

- invite questions from members of the public who have submitted in writing their questions in line with the Council's Constitution.
- confirm that Public Question Time allows Members of the public to ask one question at a time and that a maximum of one minute is allowed for each question;
- state that questions will be invited in the order in which they have been received and that if there is time remaining from the 15 minutes allowed for Public Question Time, questioners will be allowed to ask a supplementary question.

**QUESTION ONE**

**From Mr Cosgrove to the Chair of the Policy & Finance Committee**

**Question**

On 8th December a 'private briefing' of members of your Committee was held on, as I understand it, the Bognor Regis Centre Levelling-Up scheme or related matter, and that at least one other Councillor, not a member, was excluded, and that there was to be an Agenda item on 13th December meeting of the committee. What constitutional or legal provision allowed for such a briefing away from public scrutiny, surely this was an unacceptable avoidance of the basic and legal concept in local government of openness and accountability?

**Response**

There is no legal or constitutional requirement for all meetings between Councillors and Officers to take place in public. It is perfectly ordinary for Councillors with each and Officers to have discussions in private. The meeting in question was not a decision making meeting, it was a briefing meeting.