

## Council

18 July 2017

### Report of the Monitoring Officer

### Amendments to Standing Orders

#### Recommendations

1. That the Council considers whether to approve the amendments to Standing Orders as set out in this report
2. That the Council authorises the Joint Managing Director (Resources) to make any changes to the Constitution that are necessary to reflect the Council's decision.

#### 1.0 Key Issues

1.1 At the Council meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2017, in line with the requirements of Standing Order 8, three proposed amendments to Standing Orders were adjourned for consideration at this meeting.

1.2 The three proposed amendments are as set out below

(a) Amend second paragraph of **Standing Order 34.3** to read:

Speakers at Council, Cabinet or Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings may speak on any matter relevant to the remit of the Council, Cabinet or Committee. Any address must not contain any defamatory, frivolous or offensive statements.

(The rest remains as printed)

(b) Amend **Standing Order 34.6** to read

Answers may take the form of either a direct oral answer or reference to a publication. Where an oral answer cannot immediately be given, a written answer may be given to the questioner as soon as practicable following the meeting. The chair of the meeting or someone nominated by the chair will normally respond to any questions. At meetings of the full Council the Leader or spokesperson of each political group shall have a right of response to any questions.

(The rest remains as printed)

(c) Add the following to **Standing Order 44**:

‘The Council shall use audio visual equipment to record all full Council and overview and scrutiny meetings and make these available online for a period of at least one year.’

1.3 The comments of the Monitoring Officer on the proposed amendments are set out in the following paragraphs.

## **2.0 Comments**

### **2.1 Standing Order 34.3**

This standing order relates to the rights of the public to speak at meetings. The impact of the proposed amendment to this standing order would be to widen the matters which could be raised at Council and Cabinet meetings from matters on the agenda to other matters within their remit. There is already provision for people attending Overview and Scrutiny Committees to ask questions on matters relevant to their remit; this right is not restricted to asking questions related to the agenda. Should this amendment be approved, the Council would need to ensure provision on Council agendas for such issues as the Council may only transact business which is specified on its agenda.

### **2.2 Standing Order 34.6**

This standing order relates to the rights of the public to ask questions. The proposed amendment is more specific about who would normally respond to any questions raised (the Chair of the meeting or someone nominated by the Chair). The amendment would also allow a right of response by each political group to questions asked at full Council meetings. Should this amendment be approved, from a practical perspective the Council would need to ensure that the member of the public raising the question is clear about the Council’s response and any decision making process.

### **2.3 Standing Order 44**

The Council currently uses audio visual equipment to record Council, Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny meetings. Since the last meeting of the Council, the provider of this service has confirmed that their service now includes the availability of recordings on-line for at least a year.

## **3.0 Timescales associated with the decision and next steps**

Council decisions have immediate effect.

## Background papers

None

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): None

Other members: None