

REPORT FOR DECISION

Agenda Item	
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MEETING: THE COUNCIL
DATE: 25 June 2008
SUBJECT: QUESTIONS AT MEETINGS
REPORT FROM: THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
CONTACT OFFICER: DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

TYPE OF DECISION: COUNCIL

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/
STATUS:** (This paper is within the public domain)

SUMMARY:

The purpose of this report is to put forward recommendations and provide clarity on the following issues:

- Public Questions at meetings
- Questions by Members at Council

OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDED OPTION (with reasons):

That the arrangements outlined in paragraph 2 of this report in respect of questions by members of the public and questions by Councillors be approved and the Council Constitution be amended accordingly.

IMPLICATIONS -

Corporate Aims/Policy Framework: Do the proposals accord with the Policy Framework? Yes No

The proposals in this report do not affect the Policy Framework; however, issues within this report require approval by the full Council since the Constitution of the Council may require amendment.

Statement by Director of Finance and E-Government:

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Equality/Diversity implications

The proposals in this report do not affect directly any of the Equality/Diversity Policies and Strategies of the Authority.

Considered by Monitoring Officer:

Yes

Are there any legal implications?

Yes No

The Council is under a statutory duty to maintain a Constitution.

Staffing/ICT/Property:

There are no staffing/ICT/Property issues from this report.

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Scrutiny Interest:

All

TRACKING/PROCESS

DIRECTOR:

Chief Executive/ Management Board	Executive Member/ Chair	Ward Members	Partners
Scrutiny Commission	Executive	Committee	Council
			25 June 2008

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report seeks Council's agreement to a series of changes to the Council's Constitution.
- 1.2 The Council at its last meeting held on 14 May 2008 (Minute C.08) considered a report by the Leader of the Council on various initiatives each requiring amendments to the Council Constitution.
- 1.3 The Council, in considering the proposals in relation to questions from members of the public and Councillors at meetings, referred the following proposals to the Democratic Arrangements Forum for further discussion:-

Public Questions at Meetings

- (a) Public questions for Council be submitted in writing to the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) for five clear working days prior to the meeting. No supplementary questions to be asked.
- (b) Public questions for the Executive will be allowed at the discretion of the Chairman.

- (c) Public involvement at Scrutiny Commissions, Licensing, Standards and Planning remain the same.

Questions by Members

- (a) All questions asked at Council by Members be received in writing by the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) five clear working days prior to the meeting, with one supplementary question arising out of the same issue allowed at the discretion of the Mayor.
 - (b) It is also proposed that any one Member may ask up to two questions on different subjects. There will be a 20 minute time limit on this part of the Council proceedings.
 - (c) Questions (which may be verbal) on the work of the Executive, to be in addition to written questions, but limited to one per Councillor, subject to the discretion of the Mayor, and to be limited in total to 20 minutes.
 - (d) Questions at the Executive relating to items on the agenda may be submitted by a Ward Councillor provided the question relates specifically to his/her Ward. The question should be submitted to the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) three working days prior to the Executive meeting. One supplementary question may be asked relating to the written question, at the discretion of the Chairman.
- 1.4 The purpose of this report is to report to Council on the outcome of the deliberations of the Democratic Arrangements Forum which met on 9 June 2008. The Minutes of that meeting are appended to this report (Appendix A).

2.0 PROPOSALS FOR THE SUBMISSION OF QUESTIONS AT MEETINGS

Arising out of the debate at the meeting of the Democratic Arrangements Forum, the Council is asked to approve these proposals:-

1. Public Questions at Meetings

- (a) Public questions for Council be submitted in writing to the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) four clear working days prior to the meeting. No supplementary questions to be asked.
- (b) Public questions for the Executive will be allowed at the discretion of the Chairman.
- (c) Public involvement at Scrutiny Commissions, Licensing, Standards and Planning remain the same.

2. Questions by Members

- (a) All questions asked at Council by Members be received in writing by the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) four clear working days prior to the meeting, with one supplementary question arising out of the same issue allowed at the discretion of the Mayor.
- (b) It is also proposed that any one Member may ask up to two written questions on different subjects at Council meetings. There will be a 30 minute time limit on this part of the Council proceedings.
- (c) Verbal questions on the work of the Executive at Council meetings, to be in addition to written questions, but limited to one per Councillor, subject to the discretion of the Mayor, and to be limited in total to 20 minutes.

3. Urgent Items of Business

Questions at the Executive relating to items on the agenda may be submitted by a Ward Councillor provided the question relates specifically to his/her Ward. The question should be submitted to the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) three working days prior to the Executive meeting. One supplementary question may be asked.

4. That the Council Constitution be amended as necessary to implement these proposals.
5. That a review of the effectiveness of these new arrangements for the submission of questions at meetings, be undertaken in October 2008.

List of Background Papers:-

Contact Details:-

David Hanson
Head of Democratic Services
June 2008
