

To: Selection and Member Services Committee – 4 September 2013

From: Gary Cooke, Cabinet Member, Corporate and Democratic Services
Peter Sass, Head of Democratic Services

Subject: Committee minutes submitted to County Council meetings

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

This report invites the Committee to consider varying the current practise of submitting certain committee minutes to the County Council for information.

1. The Constitution¹ currently provides for the minutes of the Governance & Audit, Planning Applications and Regulation Committees to be included in the agenda for ordinary meetings of the County Council. The minutes for the Planning Applications and Regulation Committees are submitted for information only. A debate on the Governance & Audit Committee minutes not exceeding 15 minutes is permitted.

2. In addition to the three committees listed above, it has been the practise in recent years for the minutes of the Superannuation Fund Committee to be reported to the County Council for information, although the Constitution does not provide for this.

3. It is unclear why the minutes of these committees are the only ones that are submitted to County Council and there is no obvious reason for doing so, especially given the fact that since 2007 all committee minutes have been published online prior to the next meeting, often several weeks before the next County Council meeting is held.

4. This practice is now seen as an historic anomaly, especially in relation to those minutes submitted for information only, as there are numerous other committees that do not submit their minutes for information but it could be argued have a much more direct impact on the business of the County Council meeting.

4. As an alternative, it would be more appropriate for a link to the published minutes to be included in the Members' Information Bulletin emailed out to Members on a weekly basis. Members are also able to set up an email alert for specific committees, which would send them an email as soon as these minutes are published. This would mean that these minutes would be drawn to Members attention in a more timely way than waiting until the next meeting of the County Council. Also if these minutes were no longer submitted to County Council there

¹ Appendix 4 Part 1: Rules applying to Council Meetings, Paragraphs 1.10 and 1.23

would also be a reduction in printing costs and more time available at Council meetings for debate.

5. Accordingly, the Committee is asked to agree that, in light of the ability to access the minutes of all committees online as soon as they are published rather than waiting until the next meeting of the County Council, it is no longer necessary to submit any committee minutes to the meetings of County Council for information or debate.

6. **Recommendation:** That the Committee requests that the County Council:

(a) agrees to amend paragraphs 1.10 and 1.23 of Appendix 4 Part 1 to remove the requirement for the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Applications and Regulation Committees to be submitted for information and to cease the practice of the Superannuation Fund Committee Minutes being submitted to the County Council for information; and

(b) agrees to remove the requirement for minutes of the Governance and Audit Committee to be submitted to County Council and the provision for a debate and to amend paragraphs 1.10 and 1.23 of Appendix 4 Part 1 accordingly..

Contact:
Peter Sass
Head of Democratic Services
peter.sass@kent.gov.uk
Ext 4002

Background documents

None