

By: Head of Democratic Services

To: Selection Committee – 6 July 2007

Subject: PROCEDURES AT COUNTY COUNCIL MEETINGS

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: The Committee is asked to consider arrangements for County Council meetings.

FOR DECISION

Introduction

1. At its meeting on 16 April 2007 the Committee agreed to recommend to the County Council that Procedure Rules applying to County Council meetings - paragraph 1.34(1) of the Constitution be amended as follows:-

“The text of any written motion or amendment must be given to the Clerk by 10.00 am on the morning of the meeting. If it is not, the Chairman may rule that it falls. Any proposed motion/amendment to be treated in confidence by the Clerk”.

2. The County Council at its meeting on 17 May 2007 referred this back to the Selection Committee for further consideration of the wording as it was felt that the proposal could restrict Members during the course of debate. The purpose of this change was so that any amendments would be available for use with the powerpoint presentation within the Chamber. This would assist the Clerk to the meeting where long detailed amendments are proposed. The Committee is asked to consider whether or not to insert the words “long and detailed written motions or amendments”.

3. At its meeting on 18 January 2007, the Committee asked the Informal Member Group on Going Local to review all aspects of County Council meetings, particularly the possibility of allowing greater public engagement, and make recommendations back to this Committee.

4. The Informal Member Group considered this issue at its meetings on 10 April, 9 May and 26 June 2007 and makes the following recommendations to the Committee:-

- (a) the idea of a public question time at full Council meetings be not pursued
- (b) the number of Council meetings held each year be increased by one;
- (c) no change be made to Council meeting start and finish times;

- (d) Members' questions be subject to rigorous checking to ensure that they comply with the rules in the Constitution. Those that do not comply should be rejected.
- (e) in order to enable more Members to have an opportunity to participate, the rules for the time-limited debates be modified so that:-
 - (i) no speech (including that by the proposer and seconder) should exceed three minutes;
 - (ii) the proposer should have no right of reply. Instead, the seconder should have the right to wind up the debate. (This would be the seconder's only opportunity to speak).

Recommendations

5. The Committee is requested to note the proposals in paragraph 4 (a) (c) and (d) above and to consider recommending the changes proposed in paragraphs 2 and 4 (b) and (e) to the County Council for approval.

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Background Information: None