

Item

Amendments to Council Procedure Rules



To:

Civic Affairs Committee 29/01/20

Report by:

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Wards affected:

None directly affected

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The report seeks approval to change the rules for Council Meetings regarding (i) the duration of the meetings (ii) the length of time allocated to Group Leaders for introducing Annual Statements.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To recommend to Council a change to Council Procedure Rule 10 and the Scheme for Annual Statements as set out in this report.

3. Background

- 3.1 An informal discussion between Group Leaders, Chair and spokes of Civic Affairs Committee and the Mayor took place early last autumn. Under discussion were issues concerning Council meetings, two topics were resolved by this Committee at its meeting on 9 October. The other topics discussed at the time but not reported to the October committee are reported now.

Council Procedure Rule 10-duration of the meeting

- 3.2 It is proposed to alter the wording of Council Procedure Rule 10 to encourage a finish time of no later than 11pm. If the Committee recommends the change to Council it should note that if approved it would not take effect at the budget meeting on 13 February but the next scheduled meeting.

Current procedure rule:

10. Duration of meeting

10.1 When a meeting of the Council, on a Thursday evening, lasts to 10.30 pm a vote shall be taken as to whether or not the meeting be adjourned; on a decision to adjourn the adjournment shall be until 6 pm on the following Monday.

Proposed procedure rule:

10.1 When a meeting of the Council lasts to 10.30pm, the Mayor will announce that, if the meeting has not finished by then, a vote will be taken at 11.00pm on whether to close the meeting and (if it is a reasonable request given the remaining workload) urge members to assist in completing the remaining business by 11pm.

10.2 At 11.00pm, the Mayor will ask the Council if the meeting should close. Unless any member present dissents, the Mayor will then proceed to close the business of the meeting and go straight to the vote on any outstanding items without further debate.

- 3.3 The Committee should note that this proposal was not consensual when discussed last autumn.

Scheme for Annual Statements

- 3.4 To amend the time allocated to Group Leaders to introduce Annual Statements at the Annual Council Meeting from 15 minutes each to 10 minutes each (paragraph 3 of the Scheme would be changed to reflect this).

4. OPTIONS

The informal discussions also considered an officer proposal of reducing all Member contributions at Council meetings from 3 minutes to 2 minutes, but this was not supported by either Group.

5. Implications

(a) Financial Implications - none

(b) Staffing Implications-none

(c) Equality and Poverty Implications- Long late night council meetings can be challenging for those with disabilities or health conditions or caring responsibilities. They are also challenging for those who have to be at work early the next day or are reliant on public transport to get home. Not tackling this issue could impact on the ability for the council to recruit and retain officers and elected members from those groups and risk our reputation as an equal opportunities employer. It also makes it harder for members of the public from these groups to engage effectively with the full business of council meetings.

(d) Environmental Implications - none

(e) Procurement Implications - none

(f) Community Safety Implications - none

5. Consultation and communication considerations

The Chief Executive and Group Leaders were consulted on this report.

6. Background papers

There were none.