



Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance)

General Purposes Committee

Date: 6th September 2010

Subject: Council Procedure Rules – Question Time

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

- 1.1 To propose an amendment to Council Procedure Rule 11.6 “Expiry of Question Time” to allow that at the close of question time, the question in progress will be dealt with in full, including the asking and response to any supplementary question.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 At a recent meeting of Council the Question Time period expired upon the conclusion of a response and prior to the opportunity for a supplementary to be asked. This resulted in a subsequent need for clarification to be provided to all Councillors.

3.0 Main Issues

- 3.1 It is clear that supplementary questions frequently contain the real substance behind a question. The letter containing the responses to unanswered questions cannot refer to a supplementary which was not asked in the meeting. The current rules therefore provide for a situation where a matter commenced in the meeting has the potential to be left without a course for its conclusion. Group Whips have been consulted and have agreed with the proposal put forward by this report.

4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

- 4.1 The proposal would remove the potential for confusion arising from a rule that can result in a matter being partly concluded in Council.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 It is logical to take the view that the supplementary question allowed by procedure rules does form an integral part of the process of a question which is put in Council. The question having been put it is therefore equally logical that the process should be allowed to run its course.

6.0 Recommendations

- 6.1 That Council be recommended to approve the amendment to Council Procedure Rule 11.6, as indicated in the appendix to this report, to allow that the last question put during question time will be dealt with in its entirety, including the supplementary question and response to it.

Background Papers

Council Procedure Rules