

Report of the Chief Executive

Report to General Purposes Committee

Date: 30th August 2012

Subject: Review of Council Meetings

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

The Annual meeting of Council in May 2012 adopted new arrangements for the operation of Ordinary Council meetings in particular to allow for greater opportunities for Council to engage in activities linked to Community Leadership and holding the Executive to account and these new arrangements were in place for the meeting of Council in July 2012.

Following the July meeting of Council whips from all political groups on the Council have met to review the new arrangements and to address any areas of concern.

In broad terms Whips felt that the new arrangements had worked well , however they did feel that;

- the introduction of a third White Paper would give an increased opportunity for all groups on the Council to have White Papers debated during the course of the year
- and an opportunity for members to comment upon more than just the Executive Board minutes would be beneficial.

An introduction of a third White Paper will require an alteration of timings for other elements of business and this is detailed within the main body of the report.

Recommendations

General Purposes Committee is asked to;

- a) consider the proposals contained in this report and recommend to Full Council adoption of the additional new arrangements, with the necessary consequential changes to Council Procedure Rules being delegated to the City Solicitor in consultation with Group Whips.
- b) That the revised arrangements be reviewed by General Purposes Committee during the course of the Municipal Year.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 Group Leaders and Whips earlier in the year discussed the scope for modernising the operation of the Full Council Meeting, in particular to allow for greater opportunities for Council to engage in activities linked to Community Leadership and holding the Executive to account, and a number of proposals were approved at the Annual Meeting of Council in May 2012.
- 1.2 Following the introduction of the new arrangements at the Council meeting in July , group whips have met to review the new arrangements and to address any areas of concerns, this report contains proposals arising from those discussions and General Purposes Committee is asked to recommend to Full Council adoption of the proposed new arrangements outlined, with the necessary consequential changes to Council Procedure Rules being delegated to the City Solicitor in consultation with Group Whips.

2 Background information

- 2.1 Group Leaders and Whips discussed the scope for modernising the operation of the Full Council Meeting on the lead up to the Annual Meeting in May 2012, in particular to allow for greater opportunities for Council to engage in activities linked to Community Leadership and holding the Executive to account. At the Annual meeting it was agreed that ;
 - Deputations to be retained in the present format but be reduced by one to four
 - That there be two free standing State of the City Meetings per municipal year
 - The order of Council business be altered to allow for the receipt of recommendations from the Executive Board and committees immediately after the item receiving reports from Statutory Officers
 - The period of Question Time be retained without amendment
 - The receipt of minutes be retained with minutes from joint committees/authorities and the Leeds Initiative also presented to full Council.
 - A new item 'Members' Community Concerns' be introduced;
 - Restrict the number of White Paper Motions to two (with each being time limited) with the first being reserved to the opposition
 - The viability of live streaming of the proceedings of Council be explored with a further report to Executive Board

3 Main issues

- 3.1 Following the Council meeting in July Whips from all political groups have met to review the new arrangements and to address any areas of concerns.

In broad terms Whips felt that the new arrangements had worked well , however they felt that ;

- the introduction of a third White Paper would give an increased opportunity for all groups to have White Papers debated during the course of the year, and
- an opportunity for members to comment upon more than just the Executive Board minutes would be beneficial.

- 3.2 The proposal therefore is to introduce a third White Paper and reserve submission of these as follows;
- 1 to the Labour Group
 - 1 to the Conservative Group
 - 1 to the Liberal Democrat, Morley Borough Independents and Green Groups on a rota to be agreed between those groups.
- 3.3 Members may wish to note that the consequence of introducing the additional White Paper will be the need to reduce the amount of time available for comments on minutes by 15 minutes and the need to extend the length of the Council meeting by a further 15 minutes to give an approximate finish time of 7.30pm.
- 3.4 The impact of reducing the time available for minutes and introducing the ability to comment on more than just the Executive Board minutes prior to the winding up of business will mean that the minutes element of Council would operate as follows;
- Discussion on Executive Board minutes would end at 4.10pm (the start time of these as always would be dependent on the time that Question Time concludes)
 - Discussion on the other minutes (Scrutiny, Regulatory, Area Committees, Advisory & Procedural and Leeds Initiative/Joint Cttees) would commence at 4.10pm and end at 4.30pm.
 - The Leader of Council would sum up on the minutes at 4.30pm until 4.40pm.
- 3.5 The alteration of the timings would also allow for 2 Community Concerns to be heard prior to tea with the remaining 4 concerns heard after tea and prior to the 3 White Papers. Details of the indicative timings can be seen at Appendix 1.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.2 Whips from across all political groups have been consulted on these proposed alterations to the format of full Council meetings.

4.3 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.3.1 An initial consideration of the equality, diversity, cohesion and integration screening form indicates that there are no issues raised by the review of the operation of Full Council .

4.4 Council Policies and City Priorities

- 4.4.1 The Council's Business Plan 2011 – 2015 sets out the Council's priorities in delivering services to the public over that period. Particularly the priorities and performance measures for Corporate Directorate require that we "Ensure there are good rules and procedures to govern the council's business".

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 These proposed amendments need to be made by Full Council.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 There are no corporate risks arising from this report.

5 Conclusions

5.1 The proposals contained within this report seek to further embed democratic accountability within the Council's governance arrangements and build upon the arrangements approved at the Annual Meeting of Council in May 2012.

6 Recommendations

6.1 General Purposes Committee is asked to;

- a) consider the proposals contained in this report and recommend to Full Council adoption of the new arrangements, with the necessary consequential changes to Council Procedure Rules being delegated to the City Solicitor in consultation with Group Whips.
- b) That the revised arrangements be reviewed by General Purposes Committee during the course of the Municipal Year .

7 Background documents¹

7.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available for inspection on request for a period of four years following the date of the relevant meeting. Accordingly this list does not include documents containing exempt or confidential information, or any published works. Requests to inspect any background documents should be submitted to the report author.