

AMENDMENTS TO THE LEADERS REPORT

Standards Committee 10 March Committee

Previously Considered by:

Constitutional Review Working Party Wednesday 23 February 2022

Report Author Director of Law and Democracy

Portfolio Holder Cllr Ashbee, Leader of the Council.

Status For Recommendation

Executive Summary:

The Leader of the Council has asked Democratic Services to propose a number of amendments to the Council Procedure Rules regarding elements of the Leader's Report.

It is proposed that opposition group leaders should submit questions on the Leaders Report to the Leader in advance of the meeting in order for the Leader to be able to provide more comprehensive answers. To accommodate this process, minor alterations would be required to the timescales of production and distribution of the Leader's report.

Recommendation(s):

That Standards Committee recommends that Council make the amendments to Council Procedure Rule 2.4 regarding the Leader's Report as outlined in Annex 1 to the report.

Corporate Implications

Financial and Value for Money

There are no additional costs resulting from this recommendation.

Legal

Any procedural changes such as this to the Constitution must be approved by CRWP, before being considered by Standards Committee and finally approved by Council.

Corporate

Commenting and asking questions on the Leader's speech is an important part of the Council's democratic process and an important way for group leaders to hold the Executive to account.

Equality Act 2010 & Public Sector Equality Duty

Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to the aims of the Duty at the time the decision is taken. The aims of the Duty are: (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Protected characteristics: age, sex, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and pregnancy & maternity. Only aim (i) of the Duty applies to Marriage & civil partnership.

This report relates to the following aim of the equality duty: -

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- To foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

There are no equality implications in respect of this report.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

This report relates to the following corporate priorities: -

- Communities

1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Leader of the Council has asked Democratic Services to propose a number of amendments to the Council Procedure Rules regarding elements of the Leaders Report.
- 1.2 It is proposed that opposition group leaders should submit questions on the Leaders Report to the Leader in advance of the meeting in order for the Leader to be able to provide more comprehensive answers at meetings of Council.
- 1.3 To accommodate this process, minor alterations to the timescales of the production and distribution of the Leader's report would be necessary to manage the process and make it fair.

2.0 Proposed changes to the Constitution.

- 2.1 In order to accommodate the request from the Leader it is proposed to make the following changes to the Leader's report process:
 1. The Leader of the Council will make available in writing the content of their oral report to opposition group leaders no later than one week prior to the meeting.

2. The Leader of any other political group must then provide the Leader and Chairman with any questions that they intend to ask as part of their response to the Leader's speech by close of business on the Tuesday prior to the meeting.
 3. Any questions on the Leader's speech that were not submitted in advance by political group leaders would be ruled as inadmissible by the Chairman.
- 2.2 These amendments are reflected in a revised version of paragraph 2.4 of the Council Procedure Rules attached at Annex 1 of the report.

3.0 Consideration by Constitutional Review Working Party

- 3.1 This report was considered by the Constitutional Review Working Party (CRWP) at its meeting on 23 February 2022.
- 3.2 At that meeting the CRWP made the following recommendation to the Standards Committee:

"That CRWP recommends to the Standards Committee that Council make the amendments to Council Procedure Rule 2.4 regarding the Leader's Report as outlined in Annex 1 to the report."

4.0 Next Steps

- 4.1 If agreed by the Standards Committee, the amendments would be recommended to Full Council for final approval.
- 4.2 If agreed by Council the amendments will be added to the Council's Constitution and would become effective from the date of Council's decision.

Contact Officer: Estelle Culligan, Director Law and Democracy
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Annex List

Annex 1 Proposed amendments to paragraph 2.4 of the Council Procedure Rules

Background Papers

None

Corporate Consultation

Finance: Matthew Sanham Financial Services Manager

Legal: N/A