

COUNCIL

DATE	24 th July 2025
REPORT OF	Monitoring Officer
SUBJECT	Amendment to Council Procedure Rules (Standing Orders)
STATUS	Open

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

Good governance arrangements and ethical standards contribute directly to the achievement of the Council's strategic aims.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out proposed amendments to the rules of procedure for Council meetings (the 'Standing Orders' of Council) as previously set out in the Annual Review of the Constitution report considered at the Annual Meeting of Council on 22nd May 2025. As per the Council's Constitution (Article 5, Appendix 1, Standing Order 21.2), this change was referred to the next ordinary meeting of the Standards and Adjudication Committee which will be held on 23rd July 2025. The committee's recommendations will be circulated after its meeting for Council's consideration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the proposed amendments to the Council's Standing Orders and any recommendations of the Standards and Adjudication Committee be considered by Council.

REASONS FOR DECISION

The Standing Orders form part of the Council's Constitution and any changes to the Constitution have to be notified to full Council for formal approval.

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

1.1 The Council's Constitution is reviewed on an annual basis and the outcome reported to the Annual Meeting of Council. Accordingly, a report was submitted to the Annual Meeting held on 22nd May 2025 and included a number of amendments to the Council's rules of procedure ('Standing Orders') proposed by the Constitution Working Group.

1.2 The amendments were proposed as follows:

1.2.1 Amendments to Motions on Notice

The working group felt that there should be reasonable time allowed to debate the original Motion on Notice prior to any amendments being proposed. The working group suggested that there be a limit to the number of amendments

to any Motion on Notice and advised that this be set at a maximum of three with at least one of those being allowed to be from the floor.

This would require an amendment to Standing Order 13.6.

1.2.2 Duration of Meeting

The working group considered the length of ordinary full Council meetings and raised concerns around the effectiveness of meetings that lasted beyond five hours. It was recommended that the start time of full Council meetings be brought forward to 6.30 p.m. and that the majority of members present at a meeting would need to vote for the meeting to continue beyond 9.30 p.m. There would then be a final and absolute guillotine of 11.30 p.m., beyond which any remaining business would automatically fall to be considered at a time and date fixed by the Mayor (or the next ordinary meeting of Council if a date was not fixed).

This would require an amendment to Standing Order 8.

1.2.3 Leader's Statement

Further to the concerns raised above regarding the duration of meetings, the working group recommended that the statement from the Leader of the Council received at each ordinary meeting of Council should be for a duration of no longer than 10 minutes (rather than the current 15 minutes). To help accommodate this, any Special Urgency decisions taken in accordance with the Constitution would be the subject of a separate agenda item rather than being part of the Leader's Statement.

This would require an amendment to Standing Order 2.2 (v).

1.2.4 The Minute Book

The working group considered benchmarking information from other local authorities that showed a varied approach to the approval of minutes of Cabinet, Scrutiny and the regulatory committees. It was confirmed that there was no statutory requirement for these minutes to be approved by Council.

The working group recommended that the minutes of Cabinet, Scrutiny and the regulatory committees no longer be submitted to Council and, instead, be submitted to those individual bodies for approval and sign off by the Chair.

This would require amendment to Standing Orders 2.2, 10.1 and 10B.

1.2.5 Content and Length of Speeches

The working group noted that Standing Orders were not clear on the time allowed to propose an amendment to a motion. The working group recommended that the Standing Order be amended to clarify that the proposer of an amendment to a motion may speak for up to 10 minutes.

This would require an amendment to Standing Order 13.4

1.2.6 Right of Reply

The working group felt that the right of reply rules needed to be clarified, in particular, with regard to motions that had been amended. The working group recommended that the proposer of an amendment should have the right of reply at the conclusion of the debate on the amendment. In addition, the proposer of the original motion should have the right of reply at the conclusion of any debate on a substantive motion as amended.

This would require an amendment to Standing Order 13.9.

1.2.7 Amendment of Standing Orders

Any motion to add to, vary or revoke Standing Orders will, when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Standards and Adjudication Committee.

The working group felt that this function should sit with the Audit and Governance Committee given its governance remit.

This would require an amendment to Standing Order 12.2 and Part 2, Article 10 (The Standards and Adjudication Committee).

- 1.2 Having been proposed and seconded, the proposals stood adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Standards and Adjudication Committee.
- 1.3 The Committee is due to consider the proposals at its meeting on 23rd July 2025. Any recommendations from the committee will be forwarded to full Council for consideration.
- 1.4 Full Council is now asked to make a final decision on this matter.

2. RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The proposed amendments to Standing Orders are suggested to clarify the way full Council meetings are managed.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Not applicable.

4. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

This matter is reported to Council as required by the Constitution.

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are no direct financial considerations arising from the proposals in this report. It is of note that the production of the Minute Book for the meeting of

Council in March 2025 was £471. It is not felt that this was exceptional in terms of average costs. An element of this cost would be passed on to the production of agendas for individual meetings if it was decided to take minutes to those meetings for approval.

6. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct implications for children and young people arising from the proposal in this report.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE, NATURE RECOVERY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct climate change and environmental implications arising from the proposal in this report. It is of note that there would be an environmental benefit to no longer having to produce paper copies of the Minute Book.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from the proposal in this report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

As set out in the main body of the report.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

There are no human resources implications arising from the proposal in this report.

11. WARD IMPLICATIONS

All wards are affected.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Annual Review of the Constitution Report to full Council dated 22nd May 2025.

13. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

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