

Report of the County Solicitor: Chief Officer for Legal, Communications and Human Resources.

Please note that the following recommendation is subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to consider the current timings of speeches at Council and Committee meetings and consider if any changes are required.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The current timings of speeches at Council and Committee meetings have been in place for a number of years. They were, however, due to be reviewed by a Motions Working Group, originally convened due to the large number of motions being submitted to Council meetings, often on issues over which the Council had very little control or jurisdiction.
- 1.2 The first meeting of this working group was on 7th November 2019.
- 1.3 However, on 7th November 2019 (Minute 79 refers) the Procedures Committee RESOLVED that, in view of the current process working well at the last Council meeting, the working group should not make any recommendations at this time, but reconvene when and if required.
- 1.4 In light of this resolution, the timings of speeches were never fully considered by the Procedures Committee.

2. Current Lengths of Speeches

- 2.1 The current lengths of all speeches at Council and Committee meetings are outlined in the Constitution under Standing Order 16.
- 2.2 The Procedures Committee previously made some suggested changes to the lengths of speeches as outlined below, but no decision was made.
 - (a) on a minute or other matter relating to the Cabinet, by the Leader or a Cabinet Member: from 7 minutes to 5 minutes;
 - (b) on a minute or other matter relating to any other committee, by the Chair of that committee or the relevant 'spokesperson' of the main Party Groups serving on that Committee: from 7 minutes to 5 minutes;

- (c) by the mover of a motion to remove the 'star' from a minute to enable an amendment to that minute to be considered by the Council: to remain at 3 minutes;
- (d) by the mover of any other motion or an amendment: from 7 minutes to 5 minutes;
- (e) by the mover of a motion or an amendment exercising his/her right of reply: to remain at 3 minutes;
- (f) by the Leader of the Council exercising their right of reply to Budget amendments: to remain at up to 10 minutes;
- (g) by a Member attending a meeting of a committee understanding order 8(1) or 25: from 5 minutes to 3 minutes; and
- (h) all other speeches: from 5 minutes to 3 minutes

2.3 At the time of considering this, a representation was received from a Member of the Council in relation to (g) a Member attending a meeting of a committee under standing order 8(1) or 25. The issue raised was that a reduction to three minutes unnecessarily curtailed the ability of a Member to speak on a serious divisional issue, or to place any complicated divisional or other issue on the agenda of a Scrutiny Committee. The original time of 5 minutes was felt to be important in addressing both local and general issues and on that basis should be maintained.

3. Conclusion / Summary

3.1 Members are asked to consider the current timings and those that were previously proposed, taking into account the comments made in relation to Members attending a committee meeting under standing order 8(1) or 25. For ease of reference, standing orders 8(1) or 25 are attached at Appendix A.

4. Financial considerations

4.1 No financial implications have been identified.

5. Risk management considerations

5.1 No unmanageable risks have been identified.

6. Equality, Environmental Impact and Public Health Considerations.

6.1 No equality, environmental, climate change impact or public health implications have been identified.

JAN SHADBOLT

Electoral Divisions: All

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers:

None

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Standing Order 8 - Referred Motions

(1) When a motion has been referred to the Cabinet under standing order 6(6) the Chief Executive will inform the member who originally submitted it when the Cabinet is to discuss it. If they are not a member of the Cabinet, they have a right to attend the meeting and speak but not to vote on the motion.

Standing Order 25 - Attendance at Committee Meetings

(1) The Chair of the County Council or any member of the Cabinet may attend meetings of a Scrutiny Committee but may not exercise his/her right to speak under paragraph 2(a) below except at the invitation of that Committee.

(2) Subject to (1) above, a member of the Council may attend a meeting of the Cabinet or a committee of the council of which they are not an ordinary member as follows:

(a) Any member, having given 24 hours notice to the Chief Executive in writing or email, may attend any meeting and speak but not vote on an item on the agenda for that meeting.

(b) Any member of the Council may attend, without notice, a meeting of the Development Management Committee to speak (but not vote) about a planning application or other matter which is on the agenda and which affects his/her electoral division and will have the right to speak at the beginning of the debate and again before the debate is finished — before any right of reply by a mover of a motion or an amendment. If a local member is unable to attend a meeting of the Development Management Committee they may put their views in writing and they will be read out and circulated at the meeting.

(c) Any member who has asked under standing order 23(2) that an item be placed on the agenda of any committee (which is within its terms of reference) or whose Notice of Motion has been referred by the Council to a Committee or the Cabinet under standing order 6(6) may attend the meeting at which this matter is considered with a right to speak (but not vote) on that item.