

Meeting	Audit & Governance Committee
Date	24 September 2014 and reconvened on 2 October 2014
Present	Councillors Potter (Chair), Brooks (Vice-Chair), Ayre (minute 23-34), Fraser, Gunnell, Burton (Substitute for Councillor Barnes - minute 23 -34), Warters (Substitute for Councillor Wiseman - minute 23-34), Watson (Substitute for Councillor Wiseman - minute 34) and Cuthbertson (Substitute for Councillor Ayre - minute 35) and Mr Whiteley (Co-opted Non-Statutory Member) – minute 23-34
Apologies	Councillors Barnes (for meeting of 24 September 2014), Ayre (for meeting of 2 October 2014) and Wiseman (for meeting of 24 September 2014 and 2 October 2014) and Mr Whiteley for meeting of 2 October 2014

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## **Part B - Matters Referred to Council**

### **34. Updating the Constitution - New Council Procedure Rules**

Consideration was given to a report which asked Members to make recommendations to Council in respect of revised procedure rules for Full Council.

It was noted that the draft revised rules had been the subject of considerable consultation and sought to address issues including:

- A view that motions were not given sufficient priority and that time should be found within the agenda to allow for them to be debated
- A wish to reinvigorate the system of asking questions of Members
- Suggestions that the current process for dealing with petitions could be improved upon

Members were also asked to consider whether the rules detailed in paragraph 19 of the report should also apply to other bodies.

Members gave consideration to the draft revised procedure rules and put forward a number of changes to the wording.

Members also recommended that consideration be given to the following:

- As there is usually a ten minute break during the course of the meeting, para 11.1 should be amended to read *“All ordinary meetings (including Budget Council) will finish three hours and forty minutes after the start time of the meeting, unless extended by the agreement of the Council”*
- para 15 to include *“Members will be permitted to speak for up to one minute to present a petition”*
- para 24.3 - guidance to be put in place to provide clarity regarding the negating of motions

- Recommend:
- (i) That the rules set out in the attached annex be adopted in place of the existing constitutional provisions.
  - (ii) That the rules set out in paragraph 19 of the report apply to Committees, Cabinet and other groups referred to in the Constitution.
  - (iii) That the recommendations in respect of paragraphs 11.1, 15 and 24.3 (as detailed above) be approved.

Reason: To ensure that the Council meetings operate effectively.

*[Members agreed to adjourn the meeting at this point and reconvene on 2 October 2014 to enable time for full consideration of the remaining agenda item].*

### 35. Arrangements for Petitions

*[Reconvened meeting held on 2 October 2014]*

Members considered a report that proposed new arrangements for handling petitions to Council.

Discussion took place regarding a proposal that petitions would be reported to a committee of the Council and that, at least initially, this should be the Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee.

Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 4 of the report which listed some exceptions. It was noted that these exceptions were in line with the existing criteria.

Members agreed that the current arrangements for dealing with petitions required improvement in order that petitioners were better informed as to the outcome of their petition.

Members suggested that, although in the longer term it may be necessary to establish a Petitions Committee, initially it would be appropriate for the terms of reference of the Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee to be amended to incorporate this function on a pilot basis. Members also agreed that the arrangements for handling petitions should be better publicised on the Council's website.

Members supported the suggestion that had been put forward by the co-opted member that the arrangements should include notifying the petition organiser of how the petition was being handled. Members suggested that the timescale for responding to the petitioner should be five working days.

Recommend: (i) That Council amends the terms of reference for the Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee by adding:  
"7. To receive details of petitions received by the Council in line with the Council's published arrangements and responses or proposed responses to those petitions. To consider using its powers as a scrutiny committee to support the Council in responding appropriately to issues raised by such

petitions and, in doing so, to promote public engagement”

- (ii) That, as part of the updating of the petitions scheme to reflect the changes detailed in the report, consideration be given to the inclusion of:
- A requirement for the petitioner to be notified, within five working days, of how the petition was being handled.
  - A requirement for a report to be presented to Full Council detailing the petitions that had been considered by the committee and the action that had been taken in response.

Reason: To ensure that the Council responds appropriately to petitions.

Councillor Potter, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 9.00 pm on 24 September 2014. It was reconvened at 7.45pm on 2 October 2014 and finished at 8:10pm].