

# **COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

## **Constitution: Petition Scheme**

**6 November 2014**

### **Report of the Monitoring Officer**

#### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To consider an amendment to the Petition Scheme in the Council's Constitution clarifying that the Council only accepts original petitions with signatures, not photocopies.

**This report is public**

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**That Council Business Committee approves a change of wording to the petition scheme in Part 10 of the Council's Constitution, as set out in this report.**

#### **1 Introduction**

1.1 Council Business Committee may agree amendments to all parts of the Constitution other than Parts 2, 3 and 5. Recently, an issue has arisen with the wording of the Petition Scheme in Part 10 of the Constitution and a Member has asked the Committee to consider clarifying the wording of the Scheme to assist petitioners.

#### **2 Details**

2.1 Members of the public who wish to submit paper petitions to the Council have generally understood that the documents they present must have the original signatures to help ensure authenticity. However, on two occasions recently, petitioners have submitted a photocopy of their petition, not the original. The first time this happened the petition organiser agreed to pass the original to Democratic Services after the meeting, but on the second occasion, the petitioner refused to provide the original. This is a concern because individuals signing a petition to Council do so in the belief that the paper with their signature and details on it will be presented to Councillors.

2.2 When the Petition Scheme was drafted it was always the intention that all references to paper petitions would mean an original petition, with signatures, not a photocopy. It is suggested that this should now be set out explicitly in the scheme to prevent any confusion in the future.

2.3 The introduction to the petition scheme is appended to this report. Changes, which are shown in bold and highlighted, indicate how this point could be clarified.

### 3 Conclusion

3.1 Members are asked to approve the amendment of the wording of the introduction to the Petition Scheme as shown at Appendix A.

#### **CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)**

None arising from this report.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

#### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report

#### **SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

#### **MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Monitoring Officer is the officer responsible for the Constitution, and, as such, is recommending the Committee to approve the amendment.

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

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