

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Reports 'for Noting' 10 March 2016

Report of the Democratic Services Manager

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To enable the Committee to consider the process and presentation of reports for noting at Council and Committee meetings.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the Committee considers the current arrangements for reports 'for noting'.**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been drafted in response to a request from a Member of the Committee, Councillor Mace, who has asked officers to look into why it is necessary to have reports for noting on Council and Committee agendas, and whether they can be removed from agendas or reported in an alternative fashion.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 This issue was first raised during the Council meeting on 21 October 2015, when the agenda contained a report of the Chief Officer (Governance) and a report of the Leader, which were both for noting. The report of the Chief Officer (Governance) was to give notice of amendments made by the Leader to the Scheme of Delegation to Officers, and the report of the Leader was to advise Councillors of a change to a Cabinet Member's area of special responsibility. The Constitution, in the Cabinet Procedure Rules, provides for such changes in executive arrangements to be reported to the next ordinary meeting of the Council.
- 2.2 In proposing that reports for noting be dealt with in an alternative manner, Councillor Mace has suggested that, if council and committee agendas were to be split into Part 1 and Part 2, with Part 1 items for decision and Part 2 items for noting, this would move proceedings on more swiftly. He suggested a mechanism whereby a member could propose to move a particular report (or reports) from Part 2 of an agenda to Part 1 if they wished to ask questions. For example, the Leader's report to Council is simply for noting, but Members quite

often wish to ask questions about the issues the Leader has written about. In that instance, the report would appear in Part 2 of the agenda and anyone wishing to move it to Part 2 could propose that. Provided they have a seconder and Council votes to pass the resolution, the item could then be moved to Part 1 of the agenda to allow Members to ask questions. In this way, placement in Part 2 of an agenda would not remove the chance for questions, it would simply avoid unnecessary questions.

2.3 It should be noted that the order of business of ordinary meetings of Council is set out in the Council Procedure Rules in the Constitution (Part 4, Section 1, paragraph 2). Any change to the presentation of the agenda, such as the introduction of a two part agenda with item for noting being taken at the end, would necessitate a change to the procedure rules

3.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Option 1: To retain the current system	Option 2: To move to a two part agenda as described in (2) above
Advantages	Avoids the need to for two parts to the agenda. Avoids the need to formally make a resolution before questions may be asked on a report with information for noting. An agenda which is not split into different parts is easy to prepare administratively and clear for Councillors, officers and the public.	None identified. If the number of reports for noting was much higher, there would be an advantage in grouping them together and avoiding the need to look at them in turn. However, there are few reports for noting which go to Council or Committees.
Disadvantages	None identified.	The need to pass a resolution before a Councillor could ask a question about a report in Part 2. This would take up time in the meeting and may result in a Councillor being unable to ask a pertinent question because the resolution to move the report to Part 1 is lost (or s/he has no seconder). Two part agendas are more complex for Councillors, officers and the public.

Risks	None identified. Information which must be reported will be made available for Members and the public with both options, satisfying the need for transparency and openness.	None identified. Information which must be reported will be made available for Members and the public with both options, satisfying the need for transparency and openness.
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3.2 A possible further option would be for the Monitoring Officer to review everything the Constitution requires to be reported to a Member body, and to make recommendations to enable this Committee or Council to consider whether that is still necessary, or whether the Constitution could be amended in each case for the information to be provided to Members or the public in some other way. This review would be a time-consuming exercise for a senior officer in Democratic Services to undertake on behalf of the Monitoring Officer, but could be done if the Committee feels the number of reports for noting is problematic and needs to be changed.

4.0 Conclusion

4.1 In summary, the officer preferred option is to continue the current arrangements. Introducing a split of the agenda into two parts seems unlikely to save any time at meetings and may even lengthen them.

<p>CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)</p> <p>None.</p>
<p>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</p> <p>There are no legal implications as a result of this report.</p>
<p>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</p> <p>There are no financial implications as a result of this report.</p>
<p>OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</p> <p>Human Resources: None.</p> <p>Information Services: None.</p> <p>Property:</p>

None.

Open Spaces:

None.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

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

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

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