



**Committee:** COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

**Date:** THURSDAY, 17 JANUARY 2013

**Venue:** MORECAMBE TOWN HALL

**Time:** 6.00 P.M.

## A G E N D A

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Minutes**

Minutes of meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2012 (previously circulated).

3. **Items of Urgent Business Authorised by the Chairman**

4. **Declarations of Interest**

To receive declarations by members of interests in respect of items on this agenda.

Members are reminded that, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, they are required to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests which have not already been declared in the Council's Register of Interests. (It is a criminal offence not to declare a disclosable pecuniary interest either in the register or at the meeting).

Whilst not a legal requirement, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10 and in the interests of clarity and transparency, members should declare any disclosable pecuniary interests which they have already declared in the register, at this point in the meeting.

In accordance with Part B Section 2 of the Code Of Conduct, members are required to declare the existence and nature of any other interests as defined in paragraphs 8(1) or 9(2) of the Code of Conduct.

5. **Arrangements for Call-in (Pages 1 - 8)**

6. **Installation of Wireless Networking in Council Meeting Rooms (Pages 9 - 12)**

7. **Use of Mobile Phones at Council Meetings (Pages 13 - 16)**

8. **Appointments to Committees and Changes to Membership**

## **ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS**

### **(i) Membership**

Councillors Richard Newman-Thompson (Chairman), Roger Mace (Vice-Chairman), June Ashworth, Melanie Forrest, Janet Hall, Vikki Price and Sylvia Rogerson

### **(ii) Substitute Membership**

Councillors Tony Anderson (Substitute), Tim Hamilton-Cox (Substitute), Geoff Knight (Substitute), Jane Parkinson (Substitute), Ian Pattison (Substitute) and Emma Smith (Substitute)

### **(iii) Queries regarding this Agenda**

Please contact Peter Baines, Democratic Services - 01524 582074 or email [pbaines@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:pbaines@lancaster.gov.uk).

### **(iv) Changes to Membership, substitutions or apologies**

Please contact Members' Secretary, telephone 582170, or alternatively email [memberservices@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:memberservices@lancaster.gov.uk).

MARK CULLINAN,  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE,  
TOWN HALL,  
DALTON SQUARE,  
LANCASTER LA1 1PJ

Published on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2013.

**COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE****Arrangements for Call-in  
17 January 2013****Report of the Monitoring Officer****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To inform Members of the feasibility and legalities of the two proposals put forward at the last meeting of the Committee regarding the present call-in system and the introduction of new rules in addition to the present call-in system.

**This report is public**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- (1) That the Committee considers the information in this report in relation to the proposals put forward at the last Committee meeting.**

**1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 At the Committee meeting on 8 November 2012, Members considered a referral report from the Budget and Performance Panel asking the Committee to look at several procedures, including the procedure for dealing with call-in.
- 1.2 Two proposals were put forward at that meeting for amending the current call-in arrangements. Both proposals were complex and one proposal mixed elements of the Council's old Committee system with the current rules for call-in. It was clear that both proposals would need to be assessed in terms of feasibility and lawfulness and the Committee asked that the Monitoring Officer prepare a report for this meeting to address those matters.
- 1.3 The current rules regarding the arrangements for call-in are set out in Paragraph 16 of Part 4, Section 5 of the Council's Constitution. For ease of reference Paragraph 16 is appended to this report.

**2.0 The Proposals**

- 2.1 The two proposals are set out below:
- 2.2 Proposal 1 is that "a report on options for amendments to the call-in process so that an additional (less technical and confrontational) reason for rethinking a Cabinet decision could be created, such as one loosely based on the old procedure (standing order 23 under the former committee system) for

‘reference up of decisions’ to Council”.

- 2.3 Proposal 2 is that “the simplest way of achieving the opportunity for a wider debate on an issue, potentially leading to a recommendation from Council to Cabinet, (similar to one of the options under the current call-in rules) (if it is legally acceptable as a permitted element in the City’s Constitution) would be for implementation of a Cabinet decision to be suspended pending the outcome of an extraordinary council meeting summoned under procedure rule 3.1 to debate a motion put forward within the normal call-in period – but under conditions of support similar to rule 19.1. This would be additional to the present rules.”
- 2.4 Regarding proposal 2, it should be noted that the conditions of support for rule 19.1 (motion to rescind a previous decision) are 15 Members, not 5 Members as set out in rule 3.1 (calling extraordinary meetings).

2.5 The two proposals are discussed below.

### **3.0 Proposal 1**

3.1 Old standing order 23 allowed Members to refer a decision up to Council if at least four of the voting Members present at a Committee meeting (or two fifths, whichever was the fewer) requested it immediately after the decision had been made. If this happened during a meeting, the decision which had just been made by the Committee would be of no effect but would instead be treated as a recommendation to Council for consideration.

3.2 The same standing order allowed any Member who believed that a Committee had made a decision which was

- contrary to council policy;
- would place the Committee in excess of its budgetary provision; or
- be in breach of the Council’s Constitution

to give notice in writing to the Chief Executive within 10 days of the Committee decision being made. The Chief Executive then had five days to respond explaining why the decision was in order, or confirming that the decision would be placed before the next meeting of the Council.

3.3 Presently the rules state that call-in should only be used in exceptional circumstances. “Exceptional circumstances” are further defined as where Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have evidence which suggests that the decision in question:

- Is not proportionate to the desired outcome
- Has not been consulted upon, or sufficiently consulted upon, or advice has not been taken from officers
- Has not been taken with regard for human rights
- Has not been taken with regard for openness

Or if

- The aims and desired outcomes of the decision have not been clearly expressed; or
- The options that were considered and the reasons for arriving at the

decision have not been explained.

- 3.4 The list above is quite wide-ranging and it has always been possible for Members who wish to call-in a decision to do so using at least one of the above categories. No request to call-in a decision has ever been declined by the Chief Executive.
- 3.5 Whilst it would be possible to adopt different criteria for calling-in a decision, any criteria would have to fit with the aim that call-in should only be used in 'exceptional' circumstances. If an additional criteria to be introduced, as suggested in Proposal 1, whereby a specified number of Councillors being in favour of call-in formed the only basis for a decision to be reconsidered, call-in might be used more often and no longer reserved for 'exceptional' cases. The looser the criteria, the greater the potential for any small group of members to call in any/every Cabinet decision simply because they don't like it, even though the decision may have been taken entirely in accordance with the principles agreed in the Council's Constitution. The Council has chosen a Cabinet and Leader model of Governance and call-in is intended to be used only if Members have occasion to believe that Cabinet has not taken a decision properly.
- 3.6 With regard to 'referencing up' under the old committee system it should be noted that the old committee system and the current system of Leader and Cabinet are entirely different. The old Committees were Committees of Council, with powers delegated to them by Council. The point of 'referencing up' was that Council had the power to overturn a decision of one of its Committees. With a Leader and Cabinet (Executive) system, Council deals with policy and other non-executive issues whereas the Executive/Cabinet has legally defined powers. Therefore Council has no power to overturn any decision made by Cabinet. Council can make recommendations to Cabinet but, in any event, the current arrangements already allow for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to refer a decision to Council and:

*"...if the Council does object, it has no locus to make decisions in respect of a Cabinet decision unless it is contrary to the Policy Framework, or contrary to or not wholly consistent with the Budget. Unless that is the case, the Council will refer any decision to which it objects back to the decision making person or body, together with Council's views on the decision."*

In practice, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has generally chosen to refer any decisions called-in straight back to Cabinet, not Council, perhaps in recognition that there is little point in referring a decision to Council unless Overview and Scrutiny believes the decision to be contrary to the Policy Framework or inconsistent with the Budget.

#### **4.0 Proposal 2**

- 4.1 Proposal 2 appears to be a request for a wider debate, by Council, on decisions taken by Cabinet. For the reasons set out in 3.6 above, this is not generally appropriate with a Leader and Cabinet system, nor would it be an efficient way of operating to hold extraordinary full Council meetings in the manner described. The proposal put forward suggests that a minimum of 15

Members would need to support convening an extraordinary meeting. However, this is not feasible as it would contravene Schedule 12 of the LGA 1972. Schedule 12 states that an extraordinary meeting can be called by 5 members, and this is reflected in Council Procedure Rule 3.1.

- 4.2 Proposal 2 does not, at first sight, appear to fit with the aim expressed in Proposal 1, which is to seek a less “confrontational” approach to rethinking a Cabinet decision. Arranging an extraordinary full Council meeting to consider a Cabinet decision would seem to be equally, if not more, confrontational than the current call-in process.
- 4.3 It is not clear how Proposal 2 could run alongside the current process for call-in of decisions. Presumably a group of Members could decide they wish to convene an extraordinary Council meeting to discuss a recent Cabinet decision whilst another group of Members could decide they wish to call in that Cabinet decision and start off the call-in procedure. So there could be two processes set in action at the same time to look at the same decision. Rules would have to be put in place to ensure that this was not possible, as such duplication would be inefficient, potentially contradictory and resource intensive.

	<b>Proposal 1</b>	<b>Proposal 2</b>
<b>Advantages</b>	No advantages to changing the grounds for call-in have been identified. No call-in requests have ever been refused on insufficient grounds.	No advantages identified. Overview and Scrutiny can already call-in a Cabinet decision and refer it to Council to consider.
<b>Disadvantages</b>	Does not fit with the aim that call-in should only be used in ‘exceptional circumstances’ where Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have evidence that the decision has not been made properly.  Could lead to frequent call-ins on the grounds that a group of Members don’t like a decision, rather than because Members believe it has been taken improperly.	Unlawful to insist that 15 Members are required to request an extraordinary meeting of Council as the law states that only 5 Members are required.  Duplication. Call-in rules already in place allow the same outcome.  Complexity and additional layer of rules.
<b>Risks</b>	Potential for disruption and delays to the implementation of decisions properly made by Cabinet in accordance with the Constitution.	See disadvantages. To make this proposal lawful it would be required to stipulate 5 Members (not 15) to call an extraordinary meeting of Council to consider a decision

		<p>which Cabinet had already taken. Potential reputational risk if this was introduced and extraordinary Council meetings were held frequently to discuss decisions taken in accordance with the Council's Constitution.</p>
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**5.0 Conclusion**

- 5.1 The current arrangements for call-in appear to be working. No requests for call-in have been refused and there seems to be no obvious gain by adding any additional ground for call-in or referring call-ins anywhere but back to the decision-makers. Referral of Cabinet decisions to Council and then back to Cabinet again is not an efficient way of working and it runs contrary to the Cabinet and Leader model which the Council has chosen to adopt. In any event, it is already possible under the current procedures for Overview and Scrutiny Committee to refer to Council a decision that has been called in.
  
- 5.2 Members are asked to consider the information in this report about the arrangements for call-in. Any proposals to make changes to the call-in arrangements should be referred to Council.

<p><b>CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b>  <b>(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)</b></p> <p>None.</p>
<p><b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b></p> <p>It is noted in the report that Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972 states that an extraordinary meeting can be called by 5 members so it would not be lawful to insist upon 15 members as set out in Proposal 2.</p>
<p><b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b></p> <p>If the rules were to change and there were more Full Council meetings required there would be implications, particularly officer time, along with additional travel and refreshment costs where applicable.</p>
<p><b>OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b></p> <p><b>Human Resources:</b> None.</p> <p><b>Information Services:</b> None.</p> <p><b>Property:</b></p>

None.

**Open Spaces:**

None.

**SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

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

**MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The report has been prepared by the Deputy Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, and there are no further comments.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**Contact Officer:** Debbie Chambers  
**Telephone:** 01524 582057  
**E-mail:** dchambers@lancaster.gov.uk  
**Ref:**



**16. Call-In Arrangements**

Call-in should only be used in exceptional circumstances. 'Exceptional circumstances' are where Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have evidence which suggests that the decision in question will not be, or has not been made, in accordance with the principles set out in Article 13 (Decision Making).

- (a) When a decision is made by the Cabinet or a Committee of the Cabinet, or a Key Decision is made by an Officer with delegated authority from the Cabinet, or an Area Forum/Committee or under joint arrangements, the decision shall be published, by electronic means and shall be available on the Council website and at the main Offices of the Council normally within 2 days of being made. Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be sent copies of the records of all such decisions within the same timescale by the person responsible for publishing the decision.
- (b) That notice will bear the date on which it is published and will specify that the decision will come into force and may then be implemented on the expiry of 5 working days after the publication of the decision, unless there are objections to it and it is called in.
- (c) During that period, the Chief Executive shall call-in a decision for scrutiny by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee if so requested in writing or by e-mail from a known or recognised source, by exactly 5 non-Cabinet Councillors, not all of the same political group, of which two must be members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and shall then notify the decision-maker of the Call-in. This can be a collective notification from two or more Councillors of the same political group. The decision shall be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee within 10 days of the decision to Call-in, and, if necessary, this may be dealt with as an item of urgent business at a scheduled meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee within that period.
- (c) If following a request to Call-in, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee does not meet within 10 working days, or does meet but does not refer the matter back to the decision making person or body, the decision shall take effect on the date of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, or the expiry of the 10 day period, whichever is the earlier.
- (d) If, having considered the decision, a majority of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is still concerned about it, then it may refer it back to the decision making person or body for further consideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns, or refer the matter to Council.
- (e) In the case of Individual Cabinet Member and officer delegated decisions these will be referred to full Cabinet for reconsideration.
- (f) If the matter is referred by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to Council and the Council does not object to a decision which has been made, then no further action is necessary and the decision will be effective in accordance with the provision in paragraph (h) below.

However, if the Council does object, it has no locus to make decisions in respect of a Cabinet decision unless it is contrary to the Policy Framework, or contrary to or not wholly consistent with the Budget. Unless that is the case, the Council will refer any decision to which it objects back to the decision making person or body, together with the Council's views on the decision. In the case of Individual Cabinet Member and officer delegated decisions these will be referred to full Cabinet for reconsideration. Cabinet shall then choose whether to amend the decision or not before reaching a final decision and implementing it. The matter will be re-considered no later than the next scheduled meeting of the Cabinet after the referral from Council. Following the re-consideration of the decision, the outcome must be publicised within 2 days and can be implemented with immediate effect.

- (g) If the Council does not refer the decision back to the decision-making body or person, the decision will become effective on the date of the Council meeting at which the Overview and Scrutiny Committee referral was considered.
- (h) The only exception to these Call-in arrangements is that contained in Rule 17 below.

<b>COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE</b>
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**Installation of Wireless Networking in  
Council Meeting Rooms  
17 January 2013**

**Report of the Democratic Services Manager**

<b>PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>
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For the Committee to consider a request for Wireless Networking (Wi-Fi) to be installed in Council meeting rooms.
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<b>This report is public</b>
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**RECOMMENDATION:**

- (1) That the Committee consider whether Wi-Fi should be installed in Council meeting rooms.

**1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This issue was raised as a supplementary question at Council on 13 June 2012 from Councillor Mace to the Leader of the Council in her capacity as Cabinet Member with responsibility for ICT. The question on notice related to facilities in the Council Chamber and the supplementary question raised was:

*Could Wi-Fi be introduced to the Chamber as part of the development of the new facilities?*

- 1.2 Councillor Blamire agreed to look into the possibility. Since the question was raised, another Councillor has formally requested that the ICT team look into the possibility of installing Wi-Fi facilities “in the council chamber and in the banqueting hall during planning meetings.” The reasons given for the request were:

*“The ability for members to refer to documents and look up information during debates would I believe increase the quality of debate and save on paperwork. In Planning the ability to look up on an ipad/ipod or tablet map the location of applications and other details which may not be in the existing documents and illustrations would be helpful. Should the Dept decide to issue ipads to the members this service would be essential.”*

**2.0 Wi-Fi**

- 2.1 Wi-Fi is a popular technology that allows an electronic device to exchange data wirelessly (using radio waves) over a computer network, including high-speed Internet connections. Currently there is no Wi-Fi provision in any of the

Council meeting rooms.

2.2 The issue of installing Wi-Fi was last raised on 21 January 2009 during part of the Audit Committee’s consideration of various issues relating to a Democratic Renewal Audit action plan. The report recommended that, if the Council wished to increase the number of ‘paperless’ meetings, then it would be necessary to install Wi-Fi to all Committee rooms used for meetings. At that time, only the Council Business Committee was paperless. Members of this Committee recently decided to return to paper agendas so the Council no longer has any ‘paperless’ Committees. The minutes of the Audit Committee meeting record that "Members discussed wireless networking but did not feel there was a need to increase the availability of wireless networks to all committee rooms used for meetings." Therefore the issue wasn't taken any further at that time.

2.3 In relation to wireless electronic devices and health, there has been anxiety and speculation regarding electromagnetic fields and their alleged effects on public health. Whilst this does remain a concern for some people, the World Health Organization says "there is no risk from low level, long-term exposure to wi-fi networks" and the United Kingdom's Health Protection Agency reports that exposure to Wi-Fi for a year results in the "same amount of radiation from a 20-minute mobile phone call."

**3.0 Costs**

3.1 The Democratic Services Manager has consulted with the ICT Manager who has researched the supply of WiFi for the meeting rooms. A low cost solution could be installed given two weeks notice and the costs could be met from existing ICT budgets.

**4.0 Options and Options Analysis**

4.1 Two options are set out below for the Committee to consider, or to make other recommendations.

	<b>Option 1:</b> To install Wi-Fi in Council meeting rooms.	<b>Option 2:</b> Not to install Wi-Fi in Council meeting rooms (no change).
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would be useful for Councillors who wanted to ‘opt out’ of paper agendas and use a wireless device to access agenda papers in meetings. This might also result in savings on paper, photocopying, staff time and courier costs.</li> <li>• Would allow the Council to move towards paperless meetings, if it so wished.</li> <li>• Would allow Councillors and Officers access on mobile devices to the internet, which might be useful in certain</li> </ul>	This option would not raise the issues of any potential adverse effects on health from electromagnetic fields which have been associated with Wi-Fi.

	<p>circumstances.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would allow those giving presentations easy access to the Internet for resources to use in their presentation.</li> <li>• May make rooms more attractive for lettings to external clients. (Currently if a client requests Wi-Fi, the ICT team set this up for the booking and remove it again when the event is over).</li> </ul>	
Disadvantages	See 'Risks' below. Concern about health risks may outweigh the advantages for some Councillors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council would not easily be able to move to paperless meetings which may mean that it is more difficult or impossible to make any savings in that area.</li> <li>• Remains resource intensive for the ICT team to set up and take down Wi-Fi in rooms each time a booking is taken for a client who requests Wi-Fi in the room.</li> </ul>
Risks	Some may perceive Wi-Fi as a health risk.	

4.2 The officer preferred option is Option 1, as this keeps the Council's options open to make savings by moving towards more paperless meetings or at least allowing individual Councillors the option to opt out of receiving paper agendas. It would also allow greater flexibility during meetings in an age where the reliance on electronic devices for information and communication is increasing.

## 5.0 Conclusion

5.1 Members are asked to consider the information and options in this report regarding the installation of Wi-Fi in council meeting rooms.

<p><b>CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b>  <b>(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)</b>  None.</p>	
<p><b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>  None directly arising from this report.</p>	
<p><b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b></p> <p>Should the Council decide to move towards 'paperless' meetings, savings could be made. It is estimated that printing agendas cost in the region of £3,500 in 2011/12, along with the staff time in printing and delivering the agendas.</p> <p>ICT have confirmed that the cost of installing Wi-Fi in the meeting rooms would be around £1,000 and can be met from existing ICT infrastructure budgets. There would be staff implications for setting up the Wi-Fi in all the meeting rooms but this would be offset against the time spent setting up and taking down Wi-Fi for external room hire.</p>	
<p><b>OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b></p> <p><b>Human Resources:</b> None</p> <p><b>Information Services:</b> None.</p> <p><b>Property:</b> None.</p> <p><b>Open Spaces:</b> None.</p>	
<p><b>SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS</b></p> <p>The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.</p>	
<p><b>MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS</b></p> <p>The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.</p>	
<p><b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>  (Q&amp;A Wi-Fi Health Concerns, May 2007)  <a href="http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/6677051.stm">http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/6677051.stm</a>  WHO Electromagnetic Fields and Public Health.  <a href="http://www.who.int/peh-emf/publications/facts/fs296/en/">http://www.who.int/peh-emf/publications/facts/fs296/en/</a></p>	<p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Debbie Chambers  <b>Telephone:</b> 01524 582057  <b>E-mail:</b> dchambers@lancaster.gov.uk  <b>Ref:</b></p>

**COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE****Use of Mobile Phones at Council Meetings  
17 January 2013****Report of the Democratic Services Manager****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

For the Committee to consider whether Councillors should use mobile phones and other electronic communication devices during Council meetings.

**This report is public**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- (1) That the Committee consider whether Councillors' use of mobile phones and other electronic communication devices should be banned during council proceedings.

**1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This issue was raised by a question on notice at Council from Councillor Scott to Councillor Newman-Thompson in his role as Chairman of this Committee. Councillor Scott's question was:

*Please can we have an agreement that all mobiles are switched off unless Councillors are expecting an emergency call from the family and a definite ban on texting during council proceedings, as it looks unprofessional.*

- 1.2 Councillor Newman-Thompson pointed out that, in order to enforce such a protocol, there would need to be a provision within the Council Procedure Rules and that the current rules did not refer to the use of mobile phones during Council meetings. The matter has therefore been brought to this Committee to consider.

**2.0 Additional Implications**

- 2.1 It should be noted that some Councillors 'tweet' from the Council Chamber during meetings using a mobile phone. Therefore, if the Committee intends to enforce a ban on 'texting' during council proceedings because it looks unprofessional, it might wish to extend this to all electronic communication tools, as tweets can be sent from laptops, tablet computers, ipads and other devices.

**3.0 Options and Options Analysis**

- 3.1 Three options are set out overleaf for the Committee to consider, or to make other recommendations. There is no officer preferred option.

	<b>Option 1:</b> Recommend a change to the Council Procedure Rules banning the use of mobile phones and other electronic communication devices at Council meetings by Councillors except when an urgent call is anticipated.	<b>Option 2:</b> Make a recommendation that Members be asked to switch off their mobile phones and other electronic communication devices at the start of each meeting by the Mayor/Chairman.	<b>Option 3:</b> No change.
Advantages	All participants in the public meeting would be seen to be giving the meeting their full attention.	Would remind Councillors to switch off their phones.	Councillors would still be able to text and tweet during meetings. Some may feel this is an advantage.
Disadvantages	Councillors would no longer be able to tweet from the Council Chamber. Some may feel this is a disadvantage.	May not address the concerns of the Councillor who raised this issue, if Councillors don't comply with the request.	Does not address the concerns of the Councillor who raised this issue.
Risks	Councillors feeling they have been 'silenced' from commenting to a wider audience as proceedings unfold.	Potential for the public attending the meeting to perceive use of the phone during the meeting as 'unprofessional' and that Councillors are not giving their full attention to the meeting.	As option 2.

3.2 For clarification, any change in the procedure rules would apply to Members only and would not apply to the public attending Council meetings.

#### 4.0 Other Councils

4.1 The Democratic Services Manager has asked other Councils about their policy on this issue and only one, Coventry City Council, has replied to say they ban the use of electronic devices during Council meetings. Coventry's Constitution simply states that "All electronic devices will be switched off during meetings of the City Council." Members who want to tweet have to leave the Council chamber to do so.

4.2 Some Councils do have protocols in place regarding use of social media during meetings and an example, from Westminster Council, is appended for information. Paragraph 7 is the relevant part. It does not ban the use of mobile phones and other modern media tools but does make the point about how this can be perceived by other participants and observers at the meeting.



**5.0 Conclusion**

5.1 Members are asked to consider the options in this report regarding use of mobile phones and other electronic communication devices during council meetings.

<b>CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b> (including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing) None.	
<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b> None directly arising from this report.	
<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b> None directly arising from this report.	
<b>OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b> <b>Human Resources:</b> None. <b>Information Services:</b> None. <b>Property:</b> None. <b>Open Spaces:</b> None.	
<b>SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS</b> The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.	
<b>MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS</b> The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.	
<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	<b>Contact Officer:</b> Debbie Chambers <b>Telephone:</b> 01524 582057 <b>E-mail:</b> dchambers@lancaster.gov.uk <b>Ref:</b>

## **CITY OF WESTMINSTER COUNCIL'S PROTOCOL ON CONDUCT AT MEETINGS AND USE OF MODERN MEDIA TOOLS**

### **Introduction**

1. Under the Council's Standing Orders (Meeting Procedure Rules) the Chairman of each meeting has powers to deal with issues relating to the conduct of those present to ensure the due and orderly despatch of business.
2. The purpose of this protocol is to provide guidance on the conduct within meetings which is acceptable, particularly in the context of the use of modern media tools (eg blogging and tweeting) and filming and recording at meetings.

### **Background**

3. The principle is that the proceedings of the meeting concerned should not be impaired or handicapped by the use of media tools and that it is a matter for the Chairman to determine on the day, in the particular circumstances, what he or she regards as not appropriate.
4. The protocol attempts to recognise the different obligations which rest on elected members, representatives of the media and members of the public respectively.

### **Members of the Public**

5. No restrictions will be placed on members of the public attending meetings in relation to the use of Twitter, blogs, Facebook or still photography, provided that their actions do not affect the conduct of the meeting.

### **Filming and Recording**

6. Filming and recording of meetings, normally by representatives of the media, shall be permitted provided that the detailed arrangements are agreed beforehand with the Chairman of the meeting by the Director of Communications and Strategy.

### **Elected Members and Other Participants**

7. Members are in a different position to members of the public and their actions affect the reputation of the Council. Members have an obligation to pay close attention to the proceedings of meetings they attend and demonstrate that they are playing an active part. This is in addition to the general point of showing respect and courtesy to other participants. Any use of modern media tools by participants in meetings should be considered in this context.

### **Planning, Licensing and Similar Quasi Judicial Meetings**

8. Filming and the taking of photographs may not generally be widely allowed at meetings of these bodies as they undertake matters of a quasi judicial nature which do not always make them suitable for filming.

With respect to Planning and City Development and Planning Applications Committee/Sub-Committee meetings it will generally be permitted provided that the detailed arrangements are agreed beforehand by the Chairman of the meeting in consultation with the Strategic Director Built Environment or Operational Director Development Planning and the Director of Communications and Strategy.