

BRIEFING NOTE

MOTION: RULES REGARDING MOTIONS ON NOTICE

The Council notes that:

- (a) A number of debates at full Council concern matters irrelevant to the business of a district council (such as nuclear warheads, foreign policy, the mode of conducting parliamentary elections), usually brought tenuously within the ambit of the Council's Constitution by including a resolution that the Chief Executive write a letter to some external authority or body reflecting the outcome of the debate.
- (b) Although the financial cost to the Council of writing such letters is confined to the cost of the paper, envelope and postage, the debates themselves take up the time of councillors and officers, and also delay other Council personnel staffing the building leaving for the day.
- (c) The debates also involve the use of energy for lighting and heating in the Council chamber and other parts of Morecambe Town Hall, beyond what would be necessary if the debates did not occur, thus also generating concomitant carbon dioxide emissions, contrary to the purposes of the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency.
- (d) Debates the substantive content of which is beyond the competence of a District Council are apt to bring local government into disrepute.

It is therefore RESOLVED that:

- (1) Save as provided in paragraph (2), below, the Chief Executive shall rule out of order (in accordance with clause 15.4 of the Constitution of Lancaster City Council) any motion on notice for an ordinary meeting of the Council, the substantive content of which does not, in his reasonable opinion, fall within the scope of district council responsibilities, notwithstanding that the notice includes a resolution technically within the power of the Council to carry into effect.
- (2) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), above, the Chief Executive may allow a motion on notice which, whilst falling to be ruled out of order under paragraph (1), above, falls within the terms of clause 15.4 of the Council Constitution, only provided that the matter so raised affects "the area or residents, workers or visitors to the District" in a degree significantly greater than it affects residents, workers or visitors to other districts in England, so making its discussion of particular pertinence to Lancaster City Council.
- (3) The Monitoring Officer be authorized to make such amendment to the Constitution of the Council as is required to give effect to the above resolutions.

PROPOSER:

Councillor Austen-Baker, seconders Councillors Jackson (Joan) and Thomas.

OFFICER BRIEFING NOTE

Council Procedure Rule 15 in Part 3, Section 1 of the Council's Constitution sets out the requirements for Motions on Notice. Rule 15.4 is concerned with the Scope of motions and, as quoted in motion, this currently states that "Motions must be about matters for which the Council has a responsibility or which affect the area of residents, workers or visitors to the District."

Should the motion above be passed by Council, the Monitoring Officer would make the required amendments to Council Procedure Rule 15.

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 involved in the drafting of this briefing note.