

CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION – ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 To consider changes to the Constitution to enable the Annual Council Meeting to be conducted in two parts, a ceremonial meeting and a business meeting.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the revised Council Procedure Rule 1 stand adjourned to the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

3. Issues and Choices

- 3.1 There has been concern expressed, by Members and by dignitaries attending the Annual Council Meeting, that to combine the election of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, with other Annual Council business, such as the appointment of the Cabinet and committees and the agreement of the Scheme of Delegation, detracts from the ceremony associated with the election of the Mayor.
- 3.2 It is therefore suggested that the ceremonial business is dealt with at a separate meeting, which would allow the election of the Mayor to take precedence and not be over-shadowed by the conduct of other business.
- 3.3 The establishment of a ceremonial meeting would then allow the business of establishing the 'mechanics' of the decision making structures to take place at a later meeting without the constraints imposed by the timetable associated with the election of the Mayor, such as the Mayor entertaining the invited friends, guests and dignitaries at a reception following the Council Meeting.
- 3.4 The Council could continue to combine the ceremonial and business parts of the Annual Meeting, but this would not address the concerns raised.
- 3.5 To enable the Annual Council Meeting to be conducted in two parts it would be necessary to change Council Procedure Rule 1 to reflect the revised arrangements. A revised version of the amended Council Procedure Rule 1 is attached as an **Annex** to this report.
- 3.6 Council Procedure Rule 21 requires that any motion to add to, vary or revoke a Council Procedure Rule will, when proposed and seconded, stand

adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council. The next meeting is on 13 March 2007, when this matter can be considered.

- 3.7 The effect of this change would be that the ceremonial part of the Annual Meeting would be held this year on Tuesday 15 May. It is not possible to hold the ceremonial part of the meeting on the currently scheduled date of 22 May, because this would mean that the remainder of the business would be delayed until the following week, which is half-term in local schools, and normal business of the Council, such as meetings of the Development Control Committee, would have to be delayed.

4. **Implications**

4.1 Policy

None

4.2 Resources and Risk

The staging of an additional meeting of the Council will have negligible financial implications by way of additional costs in heating, lighting, officer time, and Members' travel allowances and refreshments.

To continue to combine the ceremonial and business parts of the Annual Meeting there is potential for damage to the Council's reputation. The conduct of 'other' business following the election of the Mayor and the appointment of the Deputy Mayor, particularly in a highly charged political atmosphere, is seen as detracting from the ceremonial aspects of the meeting.

4.3 Legal

Part 1 of Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972, provides that the Council shall in every year hold an Annual Meeting and that the election of Mayor shall be the first business transacted at the Annual Meeting. In years when elections to the Council are held, the Annual Meeting must be held within 21 days of the day of retirement.

4.4 Other Implications

None

Background Papers: None