

Title of Report: Frequency of Executive Meetings and Report Format

Item 7

Report to be considered by: Governance and Audit Committee

Purpose of Report:

- (i) To consider moving meetings of the Executive to a 6 weekly cycle with effect from February 2006.
- (ii) To consider changing the format for Executive reports.

Recommended Action:

- (i) That the Council be requested to approve, with effect from February 2006, the Executive meeting moving to a 6 weekly cycle.
- (ii) That the Council be requested to approve the Individual Decision Making Protocol be extended to enable the Leader of the Council to approve for publication the Council's Forward Plan.
- (iii) That, where Executive reports are more than three pages in length, the report format be changed to provide an Executive Summary of no more than one page and the full report attached as an appendix.

List of other options considered: None

Key background documentation: Local Government Act 2000

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Supporting Information

1. Frequency of Executive Meetings

- 1.1 In 2001 the Council introduced its new decision making structures which included the Executive meeting on a fortnightly basis. In May 2002 the Council agreed to the Executive moving to a monthly cycle.
- 1.2 In order to ensure that the Council's decision making structures are efficient and effective at all times regular updates of the Council's Constitution have taken place. As part of these updates the Council introduced in XXX a protocol to support decision making by individual Portfolio Holders which was permitted for the first time by the Local Government Act 2000.
- 1.3 The individual decision making protocol has been regularly updated and is supported by robust procedures and consultation processes. . No decision can be made by a Portfolio Holder unless the item for decision has appeared on the Council's Forward Plan for at least one month. This ensures that decisions are made in an efficient, timely and open way.
- 1.4 It is now proposed that the Executive meet on a 6 weekly cycle. The Committee will need to consider when they wish to see the new cycle implemented given the lead in to the Budget Cycle. If this is implemented with effect from the first meeting in January then this would have significant implications in terms of agenda despatch, having regard to the Christmas and New Year break. The Committee may therefore wish to consider implementing this change with effect from the February meeting.
- 1.5 In order to achieve this change the Council will need to agree to an addition to the Council's Individual Decision Making Protocol in relation to the Forward Plan. The Council is required by the Local Government Act 2000 to publish its Forward Plan to cover a four month period, beginning with the first day of each month covered. The Forward Plan has to be prepared on a monthly basis and any subsequent Plan has to cover a period beginning with the first day of the second month covered in the preceding Plan. The Plan has to be published at least fourteen days prior to it coming into force.
- 1.6 It is therefore proposed that under the Individual Decision Making Protocol the Leader of the Council be authorised to approve the Council's Forward Plan for subsequent publication in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000.
- 1.7 If this proposal is agreed by the Committee then the calendar of meetings for 2006/7, submitted to Council in December 2005 for approval, will be redrafted to reflect these changes.

2.0 Report Format

- 2.1 Since introducing the new decision making structures in 2001, the Council has continued to make changes to the Executive Report format to enable Members to clearly and easily identify the salient points within a report before making "Key Decisions". It is now proposed that where Executive Reports are more than three pages in length the report format be changed to provide for an Executive Summary of no more than one page. This is being proposed to enable Members to understand the key elements of a report without having to necessarily read it in its entirety. The full report would then be attached as an appendix.
- 2.2 *Attached to this report are examples of previous, current and proposed new report formats.*

Appendices

- Appendix 7(a) - Calendar of Meetings
 - 7(a)(i) – From February 2006
 - 7(a)(ii) – From May 2006
- Appendix 7(b) – Examples of Executive report formats
 - 7(b)(i) – Current report Format
 - 7(b)(ii) – Proposed Report Format

Implications

- Policy:** This proposal accords with the Council's policy of reviewing its Constitution and Structures to ensure that they continue to provide the most effective and efficient decision making possible.
- Legal:** This proposal is in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000.

Consultation Responses

- Local Stakeholders:** None
- Officers Consulted:** Nick Carter, David Holling,
- Trade Union:** N/A