

Title of Report:	Proposed changes to the Constitution	Item 4
Report to be considered by:	Governance and Audit Committee	
Forward Plan Ref:	N/A	

Purpose of Report:

To propose a number of changes to the Council's Constitution in order to streamline the Council's processes and make them more effective and efficient.

Recommended Action:

- (i) To recommend to Council changes to Paragraph 5.6.1 of the Executive Rules of Procedure as set out in Paragraph 2 of this report.
- (ii) To recommend to Council changes to Paragraphs 7.1.1, 7.3.4 and 7.3.5 as set out in paragraph 3 of this report.

Reason for decision to be taken:

To ensure that the Council's decision making processes are as efficient and effective as possible

Key background documentation:

Council's Constitution

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the following Council Plan Theme(s):
CPO14 - Effective People
 The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Plan Themes and Outcomes by:
 Making the Council's decision making processes more effective and efficient.

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Implications

Policy

The proposals contained in this report accord with the Council's policy of regularly updating the Council's Constitution.

Executive Summary and Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council adopted a new Constitution in 2001 and since that time has carried out a number of reviews to ensure that its decision making processes are as effective and efficient as possible. Over the past year a number of issues have arisen and the Leader of the Council has asked that these issues be addressed by the Committee and forwarded to Council for approval.

2.0 Executive Rules of Procedure – Part 5 – Members Questions

- 2.1 Paragraph 5.11.2 deals with Members' Written Questions. At the present time Members questions are included as the fifth item on the agenda (Paragraph 5.6.1 refers) and follows questions received from the Public. The proceeding items are:

Apologies
Minutes
Declarations of Interest
Public Questions
Members Questions

- 2.2 In order to improve the efficiency of meetings of the Executive it is proposed to amend Paragraph 5.6.1 to provide for Members Questions to be included as the last item on Executive agendas prior to Part II matters. This mirrors the Rules of Procedure for Council (Paragraph 4.3.2 refers).
- 2.3 In addition to the proposal set out in Paragraph 2.2 above, it is also proposed that each Political Group on the Council be limited to five questions per agenda.

3.0 Regulatory and Other Committees Rules of Procedure – Referencing Up

- 3.1 Paragraphs 7.1.1, 7.3.4 and 7.3.5 all deal with Referencing Up and Exceptions to Referencing Up. The Committee will be aware that on 14 December 2004 the Council agreed to move from a four area based Planning Sub-Committee structure to an Eastern and Western Area Planning Committee structure. These changes involved the two Planning Committees meeting every three weeks replacing the previous 6 weekly schedule operated under the four area based Planning structure. Modifications to the Planning Protocol governing the referencing up by Members of Officer delegated decisions to Planning Committees were also made.
- 3.2 The purpose of moving to this new structure and modifying the Planning Protocol was to ensure that planning decisions were made much quicker but still with the degree of accountability and public involvement associated with the four area based Sub-Committees.
- 3.3 Since introducing the new planning structures the performance of the Planning Service has been improved significantly and public involvement in the planning decision making process has been maintained.
- 3.4 In order to improve the efficiency and accountability of the planning decision making process further it is now proposed to remove the "Referencing Up" provisions as set out in Paragraphs 7.1.1, 7.3.4 and

7.3.5. This will effectively mean that Area Committees will be expected to determine all planning applications coming before them.

Appendices

None

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: N/A

Officers Consulted: David Holling, Gary Lugg, John Ashworth, Nick Carter, Paul Jackson

Trade Union: N/A