

Committee Model Review Group

24 April 2025



Report of: Director – Legal and Democratic Services

Title: Full Council – Rules of Procedure

Ward: All

Recommendations:

That the Committee Model Review Group considers the matters set out in this report.

The significant issues in the report are:

This report provides an overview of the Rules of Procedure that the Council has in place for Full Council and identifies areas for consideration by the Review Group.



1. Summary

The Council's Rules of Procedure for Full Council meetings were agreed by Full Council as part of the development of the new Committee Model of governance and came into effect on 6 May 2024.

This report provides an overview of the Rules of Procedure for Full Council meetings and areas for consideration by the Review Group.

2. Overview of Full Council – Rules of Procedure

The Rules of Procedure for Full Council meetings are set out in Part 4.1 of the Council's Constitution. These rules are a combination of the legal requirements that the Council must have in place as a local authority as well as the practical arrangements that govern the effective management of a Full Council meeting.

The legal requirements within the Council Procedure Rules include the rules relating to calling a meeting of Full Council, publishing the agenda, specific arrangements for the Annual Meeting and the Budget Meeting, voting arrangements and the approval of minutes.

The practical arrangements for the effective management of the meeting are rules based on common practice within the local government sector and local custom and practice that has developed over time, including the frequency, timing and length of meetings, the rules of debate, the procedure for debating motions, the number of speakers, the length of speeches and public forum.

3. Areas for consideration

As the Rules of Procedure for Full Council are not strictly within the remit of the Committee Model Review Group any recommendations arising from this report would need to be considered by the Lord Mayor, Party Group Leaders and Whips before being taken forward because they are responsible for the planning and management of Full Council meetings through the Lord Mayor's Agenda Briefing. However, given that a number of matters relating to Full Council procedure have been raised in the Review Group's meetings, this report provides an opportunity to have a focused discussion on the points raised.

The following matters could be reviewed by the Review Group.

a. Frequency, timing and length of meetings

Full Council is legally required to hold an annual meeting, and this takes place in May every year. The Council will generally hold 7 ordinary meetings in every municipal year. Full Council meetings start at either 2pm or 6pm and are normally for 2 hours and 30 minutes duration. The exception to this is the budget meeting, where there is no time restriction on the length of the meeting. Meetings are occasionally extended to enable Full Council to deal with all the business on the agenda, in particular the debating of motions.

The Review Group may wish to consider whether any changes are required to the frequency, timing or length of Full Council meetings.

b. Rules of debate

The rules of debate for Full Council meetings cover a range of procedural matters, including a number of rules that are derived from custom and practice across the local government sector. These rules include proposing and seconding reports and motions, amendments, the right to speak in a debate, closure motions and points of order. Many of these rules have fallen into disuse and do not reflect the practical way in which meetings are now managed.

The Review Group may wish to review these rules and consider how they can be adapted to reflect the way in which debates are conducted.

c. Number of speakers

For the majority of matters considered by Full Council, it has become custom and practice for each political group to have one speaker per item of business. This is a long-established practice in the Council to ensure the effective management of the meeting within the time available for the meeting.

However, the rules of procedure do not reflect the practice for meetings and, if the Rules of Debate are to be reviewed then this would extend to setting out the arrangements for the number of speakers.

d. Length of speeches

The length of most speeches in a Full Council meeting is 3 minutes. The exceptions to this are the budget meeting which has its own timings for speeches and when the Council is dealing with civic matters, for example the election of the Lord Mayor or the conferring of honorary alderman/woman/person status, in which case the provisions relating to the timing of speeches are generally relaxed.

If the Rules of Debate are to be reviewed, then this could also include consideration of the arrangements for the length of speeches.

e. The debating of motions

The Council currently allocates 30 minutes on the agenda of an ordinary meeting for the debate of motions. It is often the case that 30 minutes is not sufficient time to consider both the golden motion and the silver motion. Therefore, the length of the meeting is often extended to enable the consideration of the golden motion and the silver motion; this is usually by no more than an additional 30 minutes.

The Review Group may wish to consider whether any changes are required to the consideration of motions.

f. Public Forum

The arrangements for Public Forum have been the subject of separate reports to the Review Group.

4. Summary of matters for consideration by the Committee Model Review Group

To summarise, the Committee Model Review Group could consider whether the arrangements for the following matters are effective and whether any changes are required:

- a. Does the Review Group wish to review the Rules of Debate, including the number of speakers and the length of speeches?
- b. Are any changes required to the arrangements for the consideration of motions?
- c. Are any changes are required to the frequency, timing or length of Full Council meetings?

5. Recommendation

That the Committee Model Review Group considers the matters set out in this report.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers:

None

Appendices

None