

Report to the Constitution and Member Services Standing Scrutiny Panel



Date of meeting: 23 September 2010

Portfolio Holder: Leader

Subject: Cancellation of Meetings - Extreme Weather Conditions

Responsible Officer: I Willett (01992 564243)

Democratic Services Officer: M Jenkins (01992 564607)

Recommendations:

- (1) To consider whether the Constitution should provide for clear procedures for the cancellation of meetings; and**
- (2) If so, to consider the wording set out in the Appendix to this report to achieve this.**

Report:

1. During the severe weather earlier in the year, transport conditions were so difficult, that one or two meetings were cancelled due to safety concerns and the quorum. At that time, the question was raised as to the procedure for cancelling meetings.
2. There are two elements in this process:
 - (a) the decision to cancel; and
 - (b) notifying interested parties.
3. The present protocol (which is unwritten) is that cancellation of meetings, whether due to extreme circumstances or lack of business is a matter that would initially be referred by Democratic Services staff to the Chairman concerned. If the Chairman agrees, it is for Democratic Services staff to communicate this decision to the members of the body concerned, place notices on the website and in reception for the benefit of the public, to cancel accommodation and Superintendent cover, and to advise any other individuals who are known to be due to attend the meeting from the public etc. When meetings are cancelled due to lack of business, this process is usually fairly simply achieved. However, with situations like extreme weather conditions, it often has to be carried out at the last moment.
4. If the Panel want to include specific provision for cancellation of meetings in the Constitution, the wording set out in the Appendix to this report is suggested. Alternatively, the Panel could determine that the current informal arrangements should continue to operate.