

# **Report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

## **Report of: Constitution & Member Services Standing Scrutiny Panel**



**Date of meeting:** 18 October 2010

**Portfolio Holder:** Leader

**Subject:** Cancellation of Meetings – Extreme Weather Conditions

**Responsible Officer:** I Willett (01992 564243)

**Democratic Services Officer:** M Jenkins (01992 564607)

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### **Recommendations:**

- (1) That the Constitution be amended to provide procedures for the cancellation of meetings; and**
- (2) That a report be submitted to the Council recommending that the proposed amendment to the Council Procedure Rules as set out in the Appendix to this report be approved.**

### **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. We feel that it would be helpful if there were specific provision for cancellation of meetings in the Constitution and we recommend an alteration to the Council Procedure Rules as set out in the Appendix to this report.

**CANCELLATION OF MEETINGS – PROPOSED ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

**(a) Council Procedure Rules**

ADD new Procedural Rule (to be numbered 5)

“Cancellation of Meetings

The decision to cancel any meeting of the Council shall be made by the Chairman in consultation with the Chief Executive (or his representative). In circumstances where a meeting has to be cancelled for reasons which are outside the Council’s control at short notice, the decision to cancel shall be made no later than 2 hours before the commencement of the meeting and notified to all Councillors and other interested persons as soon as possible thereafter.”

AMEND existing Procedural Rule 24 by adding the following words:

“The requirements of Procedure Rule 5 (Cancellation of Meetings) above shall apply to the Cabinet, Committees, Panels and Sub-Committees and any other meeting convened by the Authority.