

# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Overview and Scrutiny

**Date:** 27 September 2005

**Chairman:** Councillor Mrs D Collins

**Item:** 6

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## **1. COUNCIL MEETINGS – QUESTIONS AND MOTIONS**

### **Recommendations:**

- (1) That the deadline for submission of written notice of motions and questions by members of the Council be set at seven working days prior to the meeting;**
  - (2) That questions and motions continue to be excluded from the agenda for extraordinary Council meetings;**
  - (3) That the Council procedure rules be amended to require that any adopted motion:
    - (a) stands referred for consideration by the Cabinet if it relates to executive functions;**
    - (b) is subject to consideration and report back to the Council if it involves matters relating to the policy or budget framework, the Constitution or any other matter requiring Council consent; and****
  - (4) That existing practices in relation to questions and answers at Council meetings be amended so as to provide for copies of the reply to be circulated to all members of the Council at the Council meeting in order that questions and answers can be taken as read unless the questioner requires the reply to be given orally.**
  - (5) That the relevant changes be made to the Council procedure rules.**
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- 1.1 We have received a report from the Standing Panel on Constitutional Affairs regarding a review initiated by the former Policy Working Group 3 on the procedure for Questions and Motions.
- 1.2 The review highlighted the fact that different deadlines are currently set out in the Constitution for questions and motions under notice. The Panel have recommended to us that they should be standardised as set out in recommendation 1 to this report. This will, we hope make the position clearer for members.
- 1.3 As before, any question or motion of which notice is received before the despatch of the Council agenda will be set out in a summons to the meeting. Any received after the due date for despatch will be either circulated as a separate document or tabled depending on when received.

- 1.4 The review also touched on whether there should be provision in the agenda for extraordinary Council meetings for questions and motions. We have agreed with the view of the Standing Panel that extraordinary meetings should continue to be convened solely for the purposes of defined business. Thus, we are recommending that there should be no change in the current arrangements to exclude questions and motions from such meetings. It follows from this that motions and questions can only be raised at the annual meeting and at the ordinary meetings of Council
- 1.5 The Panel also noted that there had been an increasing tendency for Chairman of the Council to rule that both questions (which are currently available to all members of the Council, either as part of the agenda or as tabled items) and answers should be taken as read. We have agreed the recommendation of the Panel that in order to aid the despatch of business at the Council both the question and the answer must be available to all members of the Council to permit these to be taken as read, unless the questioner requires that the reply should be given orally.
- 1.6 We recommend as set out at the commencement of this report.