

Report to the Council

Report of: Overview and Scrutiny

Date: 2 November 2010

Subject: Cancellation of Meetings – Extreme Weather Conditions

Chairman: Councillor Richard Morgan

Item: 13

Recommendations:

(1) That the Constitution be amended to provide procedures for the cancellation of meetings; and

(2) That the proposed amendment to the Council Procedure Rules as set out in the Appendix to this report be approved.

Report:

1. We have received a report from the Constitution and Member Services Standing Scrutiny Panel (SSP) on arrangements for cancelling meetings.

2. 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.

3. There are two elements in this process:

(a) the decision to cancel; and

(b) notifying interested parties.

4. The SSP has informed us that 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.

5. 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. We are proposing that the decision to cancel is made no later than two hours before the start of the meeting.