

# **Report to Constitution and Member Services Scrutiny Standing Panel**

**Date of meeting: 2 June 2011**

**Subject: Member Substitutions at Committees**

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**Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins (01992 56 4607)**

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## **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

- (1) That a report be submitted to Overview and Scrutiny Committee and then Council recommending as follows:
  - (a) That one of the following members, or all three, be designated as group contact for making substitutions:
    - (b) Group Leader;
    - (c) Deputy Group Leader;
    - (d) Party Whip;
    - (e) Or other appointed Group member; and
  - (2) To consider amendment to the Constitution in respect of Operational Standing Orders – Non-Executive Bodies (14) (4) (i) in respect of notification deadlines for substitutes.
  - (3) To seek consequential amendments to the Constitution as a result of this review.

## **Report:**

1. The District Council's Constitution allows for substitutes to be nominated at Overview and Scrutiny Committees/Panels and the District Development Control Committee (Operational Standing Orders – Non Executive Bodies (14)).
2. Currently a substitution has to be notified to Democratic Services by 10.00 a.m. on the day of the meeting. The point of contact is a single member for each group. It has recently been the case, with one political group in the district, that the party whip had undertaken this role. However the Constitution stipulates that only the Deputy Group Leader undertakes this role. There may be scope for widening this role to include the Group Deputy Leader and a whip or other delegated individual.
3. At the last Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 11 April 2011 a request was made for a report to be submitted to the Constitution and Member Services Scrutiny Standing Panel regarding the process of making substitutions for Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the District Development Control Committee. The request to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee earlier in the year was to change the 10.00 a.m. deadline for notification to 4.00 p.m. on the day of the meeting. This would provide groups with greater flexibility when arranging substitutions, particularly if apologies are received at short notice.
4. However it should be noted that not all meetings concerned here start at the conventional time of 7.30 p.m. The Housing Scrutiny Standing Panel begins at 5.30 p.m. In

this case notification for substitutions should take place earlier. There are options for the substitution deadline:

- (a) That substitute arrangements remain the same; or
- (b) That substitutions take place by 4.00p.m. on the day of the meeting; or
- (c) That substitutions take place, say, three hours before the start of the meeting, or by 4.00p.m., whichever is the earliest.

The Panel is asked to consider these options.