

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval of a proposed amendment to the procedure rules for County Council meetings.

Information and Advice

2. Revised meeting procedure rules were adopted at County Council's annual meeting in May. These rules stipulate that at meetings of County Council a maximum of 30 minutes is allowed for questions to Committee Chairmen.
3. County Council's July meeting followed the revised procedure rules. There was some concern that the 30 minutes allocated was not sufficient. Four questions were tabled, but there was only time to deal with two. The Council's Monitoring Officer has since written to all Councillors asking for their views on amending the procedure rules.
4. The Monitoring Officer received 5 responses that were in favour of increasing the time allowed to 45 minutes and 8 (including 1 response from the Committee Chairmen's group and 1 group response) that were in favour of allowing 60 minutes. No responses suggested keeping the 30 minute time allowance. There was 1 suggestion to have no time limit, but leave the time for questions to the Chairman's discretion.
5. It was also suggested that there could be a limit on the number of supplementary questions allowed. One suggestion was to allow one supplementary question from the original questioner, and not others. The other suggestion was to limit the number of supplementary questions to 2 or 3.
6. Taking these views into account it is proposed that the Constitution is amended to allow 60 minutes for questions to Committee Chairmen. It is not proposed to amend arrangements for supplementary questions at this stage, but to leave that to the Chairman's discretion. This may be reviewed in future if considered necessary.

Other Options Considered

7. The procedure rules could remain as they are now, or the time for questions could be limited to 45 minutes. The arrangements for supplementary questions could be changed.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

8. To ensure an appropriate amount of time is allocated at meetings for questions to Committee Chairman; to allow democratic debate and also to ensure Council meetings run smoothly and efficiently.

Statutory and Policy Implications

9. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, the public sector equality duty, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) To revise paragraph 31 of the Procedure Rules for meetings of Full Council set out in the Council's Constitution to state that 60 minutes is allowed for questions to Committee Chairman.

Councillor Kay Cutts
Leader of the Council

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Jayne Francis Ward
0115 9773478
jayne.francis-ward@nottsc.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments (SG 07/09/2012)

10. Full Council is the appropriate body to decide the issues set out in this Report. Changing the Constitution is a function reserved to Full Council (paragraph 1(e) of the Terms of Reference).

Financial Comments (MB 07/09/12)

11. There are no specific financial implications arising from the report.

Background Papers

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Council's Constitution is published on its website -
<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/thecouncil/plans/councilplansandpolicies/>

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All