

# Gloucester City Council

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>General Purposes Committee Council</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>17 October 2017 23 November 2017</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Amendments to Council Procedure Rules</b>		
<b>Report Of:</b>	<b>Head of Paid Service</b>		
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Budget/Policy Framework:</b>	<b>No</b>
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<b>Appendices:</b>	<b>None</b>		

## FOR GENERAL RELEASE

### 1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report sets out options for amendments to the council's Council Procedure Rules, which form part of the Constitution.

### 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 General Purposes Committee is asked to consider the options set out in the report and determine which, if any, should be **RECOMMENDED** to Council for approval.
- 2.2 Council is asked to **RESOLVE** that Council Procedure Rules be revised to reflect the recommendations of the General Purposes Committee.

### 3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 At the request of the Chair of the General Purposes Committee, following feedback from a number of Members regarding the length of the Council meeting on 20 July 2016, this report provides options for revising the council's Council Procedure Rules to assist with the effective management of Council meetings.

#### Meeting Start Time

- 3.2 Full Council is the only meeting in the formal calendar of meetings that begins at 7.00pm. As it also tends to be the longest meeting, Members should consider whether an earlier start time would be preferable. It is noted that some political Groups meet immediately prior to Council, however, it is also noted that some meet earlier in the week of the meeting. As other meetings begin at 6.00pm or 6.30pm, one of these times may be appropriate.

**Option for consideration:** That, the start time for ordinary meetings of Council be changed to 6.00pm or 6.30pm (Rule 5).

### **Length of meeting**

- 3.3 A 'guillotine' or limit on the duration of meetings is a common feature; indeed the Council has a two hour guillotine in place for some of its meetings, including the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. In order to focus debate, Members should consider introducing a guillotine, which can be extended by resolution of the meeting.

**Option for consideration:** That the length of Council meeting be limited to 3 hours unless extended by resolution of the meeting (Rule 6).

### **Substantive Agenda Items**

- 3.4 The Council agenda generally comprises important Budget and Policy Framework items that Members are keen to debate before a decision is made. However, from time to time routine items must be included in the agenda because legislation or the Constitution requires a decision to be taken by the full Council; Members often choose not to debate such items after their introduction by the relevant Cabinet Member or Committee Chair. In order to focus meetings on the items that Members wish to debate, Members should consider the inclusion of a 'callover' at the start of the meeting. The purpose of a callover is for Members to consider which items should be reserved for discussion and which items can be approved without discussion. The list of substantive agenda items (reports) would be read out at the beginning of the meeting and Members would indicate if they would like to reserve items for discussion. Any items that are not reserved would automatically be approved as per the recommendations in the report.

**Option for consideration:** That a 'callover' be added to the order of business for ordinary meetings of Council (Rule 2.02).

### **Notices of Motion**

- 3.5 The most substantial amount of time during Council meetings is spent debating Notices of Motion. A number of Councils put limitations on this part of the agenda and there are generally two options available: (1) to limit the number of motions each political Group can submit; or (2) to put a time limit on this part of the meeting. A time limit may result in some motions not being debated at all and that will be dependent on the order in which they are received. As this places undue emphasis on the need to get motions in first and could result in some Groups' motions not being debated, it is suggested that Members consider introducing a limit of one Notice of Motion per Group. This would ensure that each Group has an opportunity to have one Notice of Motion debated at each Council meeting and that the debate is not cut off when a time limit has been reached.

**Option for consideration:** That a limit of one Notice of Motion per Group per meeting be introduced (Rule 13) and provision be made that, where a Councillor is not a member of a Group, they may submit one Notice of Motion per meeting provided that they are able to secure the support of a seconder.

### **Amendments to Notices of Motion**

- 3.6 Current practice in respect of amendments to Notices of Motion is that a request is made for them to be received by Democratic and Electoral Services two hours

before the start of the meeting to enable sufficient copies to be made. Amendments are not circulated until they are tabled at the relevant point on the agenda, usually resulting in a short break while Members are given the opportunity to digest the content of the amendment. It is suggested that amendments should be circulated at the beginning of the meeting to assist with the efficient transaction of the business and prevent undue delays. In order for this to work it would be necessary to formally distinguish between amendments to Notices of Motion and amendments to other motions within the Constitution and then introduce a formal deadline for the submission of amendments to Notices of Motion.

**Option for consideration:** That, a formal deadline for the submission of amendments to Notices of Motion be introduced (Rule 15.06) and amendments to be circulated at the start of the meeting.

### **Written Questions to Cabinet Members**

- 3.7 Use of the written questions facility has varied over the years and has recently become popular again, with the Council meeting on 28 September having the highest number ever received for one meeting with 11 on the agenda. With a 30 minute time slot already available for verbal questions to Cabinet Members, there is a danger that written questions could become a second lengthy question and answer session. Given that any Member can contact a Cabinet Member to ask a question at any time, Members should consider whether the number of written questions received at Council meetings should be limited in any way. Members could consider introducing a limit on the number of written questions per Member, thereby preserving the opportunity for all Members to ask a written question. However, as this could result in a very high number of written questions, an alternative would be limit the number submitted per Group.

**Options for consideration:**

(1) That a limit of two written questions per Member per meeting be introduced (Rule 12.02).

OR

(2) That a limit of 3 written questions per Group per meeting be introduced (Rule 12.02) and provision be made that, where a Councillor is not a member of a Group, they may submit one written question per meeting.

### **4.0 Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Considerations**

- 4.1 There are no ABCD implications as a result of this report.

### **5.0 Alternative Options Considered**

- 5.1 The report contains options for consideration. Members may choose to recommend any of these options for approval by Council or recommend that no changes be made to the council Procedure Rules. Members may also make alternative suggestions for amendments.

### **6.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 6.1 The options proposed are designed to assist with the efficient management of Council meetings. Council approval is required for any changes to Council Procedure Rules, which form part of the Council's Constitution.

## **7.0 Future Work and Conclusions**

- 7.1 Any recommendations agreed by the General Purposes Committee will go forward to Council for approval. If approved by Council, any amendments to the Council Procedure Rules will come into effect immediately and the Constitution will be amended and re-published.

## **8.0 Financial Implications**

- 8.1 There are no financial implications.

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

## **9.0 Legal Implications**

- 9.1 The Council Procedure Rules form part of the Constitution. Article 14.02(a) of the Constitution states that changes to the Constitution will only be considered by full Council upon consideration of a proposal prepared by the Head of Paid Service after consultation with the General Purposes Committee.

(One Legal have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

## **10.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications**

- 10.1 There are no risks associated with the recommendations in this report.

## **11.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):**

- 11.1 The PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact, therefore a full PIA was not required.

## **12.0 Other Corporate Implications**

### Community Safety

- 12.1 There are no community Safety implications arising out of the recommendation in this report.

### Sustainability

- 12.2 There are no sustainability implications arising out of the recommendation in this report.

### Staffing & Trade Union

- 12.3 There are no Staffing and Trade Union implications arising out of the recommendation in this report.

**Background Documents:** None