

**Report to:** Council

**Subject:** Proposed Amendments to Procedural Standing Order 11

**Date:** 25 February 2012

**Author:** John Robinson, Chief Executive

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To seek approval to amendments to Procedural Standing Order 11.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Council's Constitution includes a number of Procedural Standing Orders. Number 11 deals with that part of the Council meeting that provides an opportunity for members to make comments or ask a question on matters dealt with by the Executive, or by a Committee or Sub-Committee.
- 2.2. This part of the agenda has come to be referred to by some members as "the back of the book" and operates as follows. The Mayor invites questions or comments; members signal to speak and the Mayor takes questions or comments in the order in which members have signalled to speak. Once all comments and questions have been raised on a particular set of minutes or delegated decision, the appropriate Cabinet member or Committee Chair responds.
- 2.3. While this part of the meeting generally runs smoothly, there is the potential for confusion.
- 2.4. When a member signals to speak, it is not immediately apparent whether they wish to speak on the item currently under discussion or on a future item. As a result, members may be called to speak on an item which they don't intend to speak on, creating a degree of awkwardness on the part of both the Mayor and the member concerned.

**Appendix 1**

- 2.5. As a way of resolving this potential confusion and to assist with the smooth running of the meeting, it is proposed to take questions or comments for each set of minutes **in the order in which they appear listed on the agenda.**
- 2.6. In practice, the Mayor would say “Are there any questions or comments on the minutes of Cabinet dated ....”. Once these had been dealt with, “Are there any questions or comments on the minutes of Planning Committee dated....” and so on.
- 2.7. Standing Order 11.02 is as follows:
- “The Mayor shall ask for comments or questions under Standing Order 11.01 to be put in relation to the work of the Executive and of each Committee in turn”
- 2.8. To bring the suggested change into effect, it is proposed to amend Standing Order 11.02 as follows:
- “The Mayor shall ask for comments or questions under Standing Order 11.01 in the order in which the minutes of meetings and delegated decisions appear listed on the agenda”.
- 2.9. This amendment would bring Standing Order 11.02 into line with Standing Order 10.01.
- 2.10. The proposed change falls within Standing Order 29 which means that, if it is proposed and seconded, it will have to stand adjourned to the next meeting of Council. However, notwithstanding this Constitutional requirement, it could be argued that the current wording of Standing Order 11.01 could be interpreted in accordance with the proposed change (rather than how it has been interpreted in the past). This being the case and with the agreement of the Mayor, it is proposed to follow the revised approach at the meeting on 22 February 2012.

### 3. **RECOMMENDATION**

That Standing Order 11.02 be amended as set out in paragraph 2.8 above and the Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer be authorised to make the appropriate change to the Constitution.