

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

REPORT OF HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

Report prepared by Neil Harris

Date Issued: 28 May 2012

1. Leaders Report on Current Issues

1.1 Key Issue for Decision

- 1.1.1 To consider a change to the Constitution to open up the item on the "Leaders Report on Current Issues" to allow a period of questioning from Members of the Council on matters addressed by the Group Leaders in their speeches.

1.2 Recommendation of the Head of Democratic Services

- 1.2.1 That it be recommended to the Council that Procedural Rule 17 in the Council Procedure Rules in the Constitution be deleted and the following inserted:-

"Leaders Report on Current Issues"

17.1 At every Ordinary Meeting of the Council (except the Annual Meeting) after the Question and Answer session dealing with questions by Members, the Leader shall report to the Council on current issues.

17.2 The Leaders of every other Group shall then have the right to respond to the issues raised.

17.3 Each Group Leader may speak for up to five minutes.

17.4 After the Leader and the other Group Leaders have spoken the Mayor will open the item to questions from Council Members for a period of fifteen minutes.

17.5 Questions to be asked by Council Members as set out in 17.4 above will be limited to those issues raised by the Leader and the other Group Leaders in their speeches. Questions will be answered as directed by the questioner and will not require a response from all Group Leaders. The Mayor will be the sole determinant of whether the question relates to the issues raised in these speeches.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 Currently the constitution states the following

“LEADERS REPORT ON CURRENT ISSUES

- 17.1 At every Ordinary Meeting of the Council (except the annual meeting) after the Question and Answer session dealing with questions by Members, the Leader shall report to the Council on current issues
- 17.2 The Leaders of every other Group shall then have the right to respond to the issues raised.
- 17.3 Each Group Leader may speak for up to ten minutes.
- 17.4 After the other Group Leaders have spoken the Leader shall have the right to speak for a further three minutes in response to points raised by them.”

This means that the item on the Council Agenda entitled “Leader’s Report on Current Issues” allows for the Leader to speak for ten minutes and for the other Group Leaders to respond speaking for ten minutes with the Leader summing up for a further three minutes. The Group Leaders have requested a review of the “Leaders Report on Current Issues” with a view to opening it up to all Members to give them an opportunity to participate in this item. The view is that each of the Leaders should still have five minutes to speak but after that there should be a period of fifteen minutes for Council members to ask questions of the Leader and other Group Leaders about matters they have raised in their speeches. It is proposed that there will be no summing up by the Leader. It is felt that this gives a greater opportunity for all Members to be involved in the proceedings of the Council meeting.

1.3.2 The recommendation sets out the changes necessary to the Constitution to implement the proposal made by the Group Leaders.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.4.1 The Leader could agree to take no action and retain the existing system but that would fail to provide an opportunity for greater involvement in the Council meeting for all Members on the Council.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 The proposed change will support corporate and customer excellence by providing the opportunity for greater member involvement in this part of the council meeting.

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 There is no risk to the Council as this report relates to how the Council conducts business at the Council meeting.

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

- 1. Financial
- 2. Staffing
- 3. Legal
- 4. Equality Impact Needs Assessment
- 5. Environmental/Sustainable Development
- 6. Community Safety
- 7. Human Rights Act
- 8. Procurement
- 9. Asset Management

There are no implications arising from this report.

1.8 Relevant Documents

1.9 None

1.9.1 Background Documents

1.9.2 None

IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?

Yes

No

If yes, when did it first appear in the Forward Plan?

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This is a Key Decision because:

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Wards/Parishes affected:

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How to Comment

Should you have any comments on the issue that is being considered please contact either the relevant Officer or the Member of the Executive who will be taking the decision.

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