



## Full Council

22 February 2016

### Report from the Chief Legal Officer

For Action

Wards Affected:  
ALL

## Changes to the operation of Full Council meetings

### 1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report discusses a number of proposals to change the Council's Constitution to improve the opportunities for non Cabinet members and members of the public to participate in full Council meetings. These changes have been considered by the Council's Constitutional Working Group and have been the subject of a Members' Development Seminar.

### 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Full Council approves the changes to the Constitution proposed in this report and, if applicable, marked up in Appendix 1 and authorise the Chief Legal Officer to make consequential changes throughout the Constitution.

### 3.0 Detail

#### *Questions from members of the public*

- 3.1 It is proposed that a new Standing Order will be inserted which allows members of the public to ask questions of Cabinet members. The revised Standing Order which in the Appendix 1 appears as Standing Order 40 would allow for questions to be submitted in writing and circulated with the agenda for full Council. A written answer would be circulated by close of business the day before full Council. One supplementary question could be asked during the full Council meeting.

### ***External speaker***

- 3.3 Provision is included in Standing Orders for an external speaker to be invited to attend full Council and speak for up to 10 minutes on an issue of relevance to Brent and for there to be an ensuing debate for up to 45 minutes. This will not be a standing item on the agenda but will be added to the agenda with the agreement of all Group Leaders. The relevant Lead Member will be permitted to speak for 5 minutes and will submit a motion in accordance with the normal rules on motions. Speeches by other members will not exceed 2 minutes.

### ***Non cabinet members' debate***

- 3.4 It is proposed that, following a recent trial of such a debate, at two Full Council meetings, that there should be a regular debate for a maximum of 21 minutes on a topic selected by backbench members. Up to six members can speak for up to three minutes and the Lead Member will be permitted to speak for up to three minutes and shall provide a written report, for information only, at the next Full Council meeting with what follow up action has been taken.

### ***Petitions scheme***

- 3.5 It is proposed that the existing petitions scheme is retained but in addition there is provision for ward members, or a chair of a scrutiny committee to make reference to the receipt of a petition to Full Council. In the event that a petition submitted via the Brent petition scheme attracts more than 200 signatures then Standing Orders will allow for a debate at full Council to be requested.

### ***Motions***

- 3.6. It is proposed that the timescales for motions will be amended so that motions must be submitted 5 days in advance and that amendments to motions must be submitted close of business the previous working day. This will allow members of the public to have available to them printed copies of the motions and amendments and to follow the debate more easily.

### ***Deputations***

- 3.7 It is proposed that the Chief Executive should have a power to determine whether or not a deputation should be accepted, on advice from the Chief Legal Officer.

### ***Leader's report***

- 3.8 It is proposed that the Leader should have the opportunity to present an Annual report to Full Council. The Leader will be permitted to speak for 5 minutes and there will follow a debate for 20 minutes. Opposition Group

Leaders will be able to speak for 2 minutes each and all other members will be able to speak for 2 minutes each until the time runs out.

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

- 3.9** It is proposed that the existing Standing Order is amended so that the original question and answer are provided in written form at the meeting of Full Council and there is provision for a member to ask one oral supplementary question lasting up to 1 minute and for the Cabinet member to reply taking up to 2 minutes.

### ***Miscellaneous amendments***

- 3.10 It is proposed that amendments are made by removing reference to the Division Bell and also removing reference to the Community Champion awards in the agenda of the council meetings.

## **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 None.

## **5.0 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 These are addressed in the body of the report.

## **6.0 Diversity Implications**

- 6.1 None.

## **Background Papers**

None

## **Contact Officers**

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