

Terms of Reference - Scrutiny Review of Meeting Start Times & Time Management at Meetings

Aim of the Review	<p>To consider meeting start times as requested by Full Council on 8 December 2016, when it considered the timetable of meetings for 2017-18 and resolved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) That Council approve the timetable of meetings for 2017-2018, attached as Annex A of the report. (ii) That we refer this matter [of meeting start times] to O&S for further discussion and production of a report to be considered by P&R and then Full Council. <p>To also consider the efficient running of proceedings at Full Council, including the length of meetings, as requested by Full Council on 21 February 2017, when it considered recommendations from the Corporate Governance Standards Sub-Committee and resolved:</p> <p>That practices around electronic voting and time management at Full Council meetings be improved as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Any Member leaving a meeting early, to notify the Chairman when they depart and return their voting unit to the front of the room, and the time of their departure to be recorded in the minutes; (b) That the O&S Review into the start times of meetings also looks at the efficient running of proceedings at Full Council to include the length of meetings.
Why has this review been selected?	<p>The issue of meeting start times was raised at Full Council, when the following amendment was moved:</p> <p><i>"That Full Council and Planning Committee should start at 6pm.</i></p> <p><i>That all other meetings start at 4pm.</i></p> <p><i>That these changes take effect from 18 May 2017."</i></p> <p>The amendment was lost when put to the vote, so the existing meeting start times were continued for 2017-18.</p> <p>However a further amendment proposed that O&S review the issue looking to the longer term.</p> <p>An informal review of start times was last carried out in December 2010 by the Corporate Director (s151). However there have been changes to the membership of the Council and the way in which it operates since then.</p> <p>The issue of time management at Full Council meetings was raised by the Corporate Governance Sub-Committee at a meeting on 9 February 2017 and subsequently included in its recommendations to Full Council.</p>

<p>Who will carry out the review?</p>	<p>The review will be carried out by a task group including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum of 2 members of the O and S committee (but open to all members of O and S) • Support will be provided by the Democratic Services Manager • With input from other officers as required, including the Monitoring Officer
<p>How the review will be carried out?</p>	<p>The task group will consider the implications of both the current meeting start times and possible changes to these. Potential questions that could be considered in scoping the review include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the equalities impacts on Members, Officers and members of the public of daytime and evening meetings, and can these be mitigated? [An equality impact assessment has already been carried out and can be made available to the task group.] • What were Members expectations around meeting start times when they decided to stand for election, and should any changes only be introduced at the beginning of a new term and with sufficient notice ahead of elections? • What is the capacity of the organisation to support evening meetings and what is the impact on both Members and Officers in terms of quality of decision making and work the following day? <p>The task group will consider options for improving time management at Full Council meetings, in terms of efficient running of proceedings and reducing the length of meetings. Potential questions that could be considered in scoping the review include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is business dealt with in the right order at Full Council or should it be rearranged to put items for decision at the start of the agenda? • Should the guillotine be brought forward or enforced more rigidly, rather than often extended, at Full Council meetings? When the guillotine falls should debate end on the item being considered and the vote taken? • Would a timed agenda be helpful at Full Council meetings? • Should amendments to the minutes be submitted in advance? • Should amendments be submitted in advance? • Should any questions to officers be dealt with ahead of the meeting instead of during the meeting? • Would any measures proposed balance the efficient running of the meeting and the improved quality of decision making earlier in the evening, with the need to debate issues sufficiently thoroughly to reach sound decisions and to represent the views of residents in the democratic process and to hold the ruling group to account?
<p>What are the expected outputs?</p>	<p>It is expected that the task group will produce a report, summarising the evidence they have gathered.</p>

Timescale

It is anticipated that the group will conclude the outcomes of the review by June 2017. Progress reports will be submitted to the committee if required during the review.