

General Purposes Committee	
Meeting Date	8 July 2020
Report Title	Amendments to council procedure rules: Leader's statement
Cabinet Member	Cllr Roger Truelove – Council Leader
SMT Lead	David Clifford – as Monitoring Officer
Head of Service	
Lead Officer	
Key Decision	No
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. General purposes committee is asked to recommend the revised wording in paragraph 3.1 to council for incorporation into the constitution.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report proposes a change to the council procedure rules to allow more members than the leader of the opposition to respond to the leader's statement.

2 Background

- 2.1 The administration which took office in May 2019 wanted to change the format of the leader's statement to make it shorter than had previously been the case, primarily in order to create more time on council agendas for debating motions.
- 2.2 This approach has essentially worked well, with at least one and often two motions now being debated at a typical council meeting. However, in order to provide members with more opportunities to express themselves on more general matters affecting the borough, it is now felt that some loosening of the restrictions on who can speak in response to the leader's statement would be beneficial.
- 2.3 Prior to 2019 the rule was that members could ask questions – but by implication not make general comments – about the statement. This led to the situation in which members would make frequently long orations concluded by a simple, "Does the leader agree?". It should probably be accepted that members will want to make statements of their own and should not be restricted to questions.
- 2.4 Given the ongoing desire to have time for debating motions, there should be a time limit for the discussion of the leader's statement. In order to create time for more members to speak, the proposal is that this should be extended from the current 15 minutes to 30 minutes.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 The proposal is to insert the words in bold italics into what the council procedure rules currently say about the leader's statement, as follows:

At ordinary meetings of the Council (except the Annual Meeting) the Leader shall give an update report on the main areas of work of the Executive. ~~This will not be subject to debate but~~ The leader of any group which is not represented on the Executive may make a statement in response to the Leader's statement, ***following which any other member may also make a statement, subject to there being sufficient time.*** The Leader will then be given an opportunity to respond to any such statements.

The Leader's statement will be a maximum of seven minutes. Any group leader who wishes to respond will have a maximum of five minutes. ***Any other member who wishes to speak will have a maximum of three minutes.*** The Leader will have a final right of reply at the end of the statement(s) of three minutes. ***The whole agenda item will have a time limit of 30 minutes.***

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 There are a wide range of options for how the procedure rules should deal with the leader's statement. The current proposal is an evolution based on experience of how different formats have worked to date.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 The administration's desire to provide more members with the ability to make statements in response to the leader's statement was first mentioned at council in June, where it received a positive response from the leader of the opposition.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	This change would support the priority 'Renewing local democracy and making the council fit for the future' in the emerging corporate plan.
Financial, Resource and Property	No specific implications identified at this stage.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	Given that the leader's statement is not a decision-making agenda item, there is wide legal flexibility over how it should be structured.
Crime and Disorder	No specific implications identified at this stage.

Environment and Sustainability	No specific implications identified at this stage.
Health and Wellbeing	No specific implications identified at this stage.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	No specific implications identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	No specific implications identified at this stage.
Privacy and Data Protection	No specific implications identified at this stage.

7 Appendices

7.1 None.

8 Background Papers

8.1 There are no relevant background papers.