

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Council

Date: **8 June 2015**

Report of: **Monitoring Officer**

Subject: **Changes to Council agenda items**

SUMMARY

This report asks the Council to consider suggested changes to the practice of sending all Policy Development and Review Panel minutes to Council for questions and instead referring them to the Scrutiny Board.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council:

- (a) agrees to immediately stop the practice of all Policy Development and Review Panel minutes being sent to Council for receiving and that instead, these minutes are referred to the Scrutiny Board for questions on matters contained within the minutes; and
- (b) authorises the Monitoring Officer to make such consequential amendments to the text of the constitution as may be required.

INTRODUCTION

1. On 11 December 2008, the Council resolved to introduce Policy Development and Review Panels to support the Executive in researching options for improving and developing the Council's services.
2. Members have recently indicated that improvements could be made to the work of the Policy Development and Review Panels and the Scrutiny Board and so the following proposal suggests a possible way forward.
3. There has also been concern that Council meetings have become dominated by the rubber-stamping exercise of receiving minutes from PDR Panels and Committees, rather than an opportunity for meaningful debate amongst Members.
4. This report provides an alternative option for the standard agenda items for Council meetings and provides an opportunity for the review of the format of future meetings of the Council.

PROPOSALS

5. It is proposed that the practice of all Policy Development and Review Panel minutes being sent to Council for receiving be stopped.
6. All minutes must be approved by the next meeting of that particular committee or PDR Panel and so the sending of all minutes to Council is reduced to being a rubber stamping exercise.
7. Instead, the PDR Panel minutes will be referred to the Scrutiny Board to allow Members to raise any questions about matters contained within those minutes. Each Chairman of the PDR Panels is present at the Scrutiny Board and therefore available to answer questions put about matters contained within the minutes.
8. Any Member wishing to raise a question, can do so by attending the Scrutiny Board meeting and putting the question verbally, or by submitting a written question to the Chairman of the Scrutiny Board ahead of the meeting date.
9. The Scrutiny Board would not be required to make recommendations to the Executive based on the minutes of the Policy Development and Review Panels. The PDR Panels will still be able to make recommendations directly to the Executive via the standard Executive agenda item: References from Other Committees.
10. The standard agenda items of Council meetings could therefore be reviewed and amended to provide opportunities for effective debate and to encourage a more interactive and forward-looking meeting.
11. A return to a focus on discussion and debate for Council meetings should result in wider participation from all Members across all political parties.

RISK ASSESSMENT

12. As the reviewing of Committee and Panel minutes is not a legislative requirement for meetings of the Council (other than its own minutes of the last meeting) there are no significant risk considerations in relation to this report.

CONCLUSION

13. That the Council agrees to stop the practice of all Policy Development and Review Panel minutes being sent to Council for receiving and that instead, these minutes are referred to the Scrutiny Board for questions on matters contained within the minutes.
14. All other committee minutes (Executive, Scrutiny Board, Planning Committee, Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee, Audit and Governance Committee and Appeals Committee) will continue to be presented to Council meetings for receiving.

Background Papers:

None

Reference Papers:

Report to Council 11 December 2008 – Changes to the Constitution – Policy Development

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Leigh Usher. (Ext 4553)