

Report to: Council

Report Ref: C1928
Meeting Date: 2nd March 2020
Agenda Item: 11
Prepared By: Town Clerk



Subject: Standing Orders Annual Review

1.0 BACKGROUND

Standing Orders are one of the principal policy documents for the council. Standing Orders required that they are reviewed annually. In recognition of their importance, Standing Order 115 sets out that any resolution to permanently add, vary or revoke a Standing Order shall stand adjourned from one meeting to the next.

The Town Clerk issued a circular email seeking any proposals from members for amendments to Standing Orders, one proposal was received and is included in section two.

Members may propose additional amendments at the meeting, which will stand adjourned without debate to the first ordinary meeting following Mayor Making.

2.0 SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS

2.1 AMENDMENT TO SO 110

Standing Order 110 sets out that contracts must comply with financial regulations with a schedule of exceptions. Standing Order 110b sets an exception for “specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants.”.

The council’s Internal Auditor has advised that a recent audit decision in Wales has called into question this exception and that the National Association of Local Councils has removed it from its model recommended Standing Orders.

It is recommended that Standing Order 110b is deleted.

2.2 MEMBERSHIP AND QUORUM FOR PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The terms of reference and membership of the Personnel Committee was increased to comprise seven members (plus the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor, ex officio) in June 2019. The quorum of the committee (three members) was not changed.

It is recommended that Council:

- a) Gives consideration as to whether the membership should remain at a total of nine



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- b) Whether the quorum of the committee should increase to four, in line with other committees of a similar membership.

2.3 ADDITION TO SO 94

Following the announcement of the uncontested election in April 2019, elected councillors who had not yet taken office attended a number of committee meetings. On two occasions, the public and press were excluded but the soon to be councillors were invited to remain. This has been questioned as the members had not yet signed an undertaking to comply with the councillor code of conduct.

It is suggested that Standing Order 94 be amended to include: "Elected members who have not yet taken office (i.e. during the period between the announcement of an uncontested election and the date of poll) shall not be permitted to remain after the public and press have been excluded."

2.4 NEW SO 60 AND AMENDMENT TO SO 61

As part of reviewing all personnel policies, the Personnel Committee adopted a new Training Policy which covers both members and officers. It enhanced the council's commitment to the development of members and set the following policy:

The Town Council will:

Require Members to have undertaken Chairmanship training before being appointed as a committee Chairman.

Require Members to have undertaken training in local council finance to serve on the Finance Committee, the planning system to serve on the Planning and Licensing Committee and general human resources to serve on the Personnel Committee.

It is recommended that this policy is implemented through inclusion in Standing Orders through a new Standing Order 60:

Appointment to the following committees shall be subject to the member having undertaken adequate training:

Finance Committee	Local Council Finance
Planning and Licencing Committee	The Planning System
Personnel Committee	Human Resources

The Town Council shall provide opportunity for such training to members annually.

And an amendment to Standing Order 61 to state: "The committee shall ensure that the member it is appointed as Chairman has undertaken adequate training in chairmanship prior to appointment".

3.0 DECISIONS REQUIRED

In accordance with Standing Orders, any proposed changes to Standing Orders shall stand adjourned to the next meeting without debate.



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