

REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL

CONVEYANCE OF STATEMENTS FROM ABSENT MEMBERS



Report Reference C-22-15
Meeting Date 5th September 2022
Agenda Item 11
Prepared by Town Clerk

1.0 BACKGROUND

Some members have observed that at some meetings recently absent members have sent reports of their views/comments on matters under discussion which have been relayed to the meeting by the clerk or another member. Members have requested an item to consider introducing a prohibition on this practice.

2.0 AMENDMENT TO STANDING ORDERS

Members have a democratic right to make such statements as they consider necessary in the course of debate. This may only be fettered by reasonable standing orders governing the rules of debate. The council's rules of debate are contained within Standing Orders 36 and 37.

To prohibit members giving statements on behalf of other members, an amendment to Standing Order 36 would be recommended. The addition of a new clause 36(d) could state:

No statement or opinion may be given at a meeting on behalf of a member who is not present.

This would enable another member to raise a point of order and/or the Town Mayor/Chairman to rule that the member giving the statement cease to do so. Repeated breaches of the standing order at a meeting would then allow the Town Mayor/Chairman to move that the member no longer be heard or required to leave the meeting.

3.0 DECISIONS REQUIRED

Council should consider:

- a) Does it wish to introduce a restriction on members conveying the opinions of absent members at meetings
- b) Does it wish to do so by the introduction of a Standing Order

Any proposal to amend Standing Orders shall, when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned without debate to the next ordinary meeting.