



Report To: Civic Affairs Committee
Lead Officer: Fiona McMillan, Legal and Democratic
Services Manager and Monitoring Officer

15 January 2015

Recorded votes at meetings of Full Council

Purpose

1. This report provides the Committee with an opportunity to consider a Notice of Motion referred from the meeting of Full Council on 27 November 2014 in relation to recorded votes.

Recommendations

2. That the Civic Affairs Committee considers the Notice of Motion and makes a recommendation to Full Council.

Reasons for Recommendations

3. The Committee is required to consider this Notice of Motion and submit its outcomes or a recommendation to the next meeting of Full Council.

Background

4. The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer at the meeting of Full Council on 27 November 2014:

"This Council agrees that all votes, except for those taken by affirmation and for appointments, be recorded in the manner described in Standing Order 16.5 (Recorded Vote) and that the Constitution be amended accordingly".

5. The Council agreed to refer consideration of the motion to the Civic Affairs Committee.

Considerations

6. Below is an extract from the draft minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2014, setting out the key points that Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer made in presenting the motion:

"Councillor Van de Weyer said that the Council needed to be making efforts to ensure that its processes were open and understandable. His proposal only related to decisions at Full Council meetings and he felt it essential that the electorate understood what their Councillors were doing and how they were voting on decisions made by the Council. Transparency already existed with regard to Councillors' attendance at meetings and Councillor Van de Weyer thought that recorded voting was simply a further step to being more open. He reflected on how votes were usually recorded at Council meetings and stated that he had no way of showing which way he voted, and that no one else would be able to find out. It was for this reason that Councillor Van de Weyer wanted votes recording automatically and not left to the mechanism provided by the existing Standing Orders."

7. The Council's Standing Orders currently make the following provision for recorded votes:
 - (a) A recorded vote can be instigated when any six Members, or a quarter of those present at the meeting (whichever is the fewer) demand it. The names for and against the motion or amendment will be taken down in writing and entered into the minutes for the meeting, together with the names of any Members abstaining from voting or not voting.
 - (b) A demand for a recorded vote overrides a demand for a ballot, but the recorded vote procedure does not apply to voting on appointments.
 - (c) Members have the right to require that their individual vote on a motion or amendment be recorded in the minutes.
 - (d) If the Council is considering an item on the Council's budget or the setting of the Council Tax, the names for and against the motion or amendment, abstaining from voting or not voting will be taken down in writing and entered into the minutes.
8. The issue of recorded votes was previously considered by the Civic Affairs Committee on 20 March 2014 and Full Council on 24 April 2014. Extracts of the minutes from these meetings are attached at **Appendix A** and **Appendix B** respectively.
9. An extract from the Council's Standing Orders in relation to voting is attached at **Appendix C**.

Options

10. The Committee could support the motion and recommend a change to the Council's Standing Orders to reflect that the names for and against the motion or amendment will be taken down in writing and entered into the minutes for the meeting, together with the names of any Members abstaining or not voting, for all decisions at meetings of Full Council, except for those taken by affirmation or for appointments.
11. The Committee could recommend that the Council maintains current practice for recorded votes.

Implications

12. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, there are no significant implications to consider.

Consultation responses (including from the Youth Council)

13. No consultation on the content of this report has been undertaken.

Effect on Strategic Aims

14. This report does not have any significant effect on the Council's strategic aims.

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the writing of this report.

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