

**Governance Working Group**

Portfolio Leader

Ward(s) Affected: n/a

**Purpose**

To receive a report from the Governance Working Group and to consider a recommendation in relation to adopting a Protocol for the Recording of Public Meetings of the Council

**Introduction**

1. The Working Group met on 30 August 2013. The notes of this meeting are available on Escene.
2. The Working Group has considered a number of issues and made recommendations which are addressed below.

**Review of the Council's Scrutiny Arrangements**

3. In accordance with the Council's decision in April 2012, the Working Group reviewed the Council's revised scrutiny arrangements after a year's operation.
4. The Group considered the scrutiny arrangements and the views of councillors who had responded to a survey on the arrangements. It was agreed that no changes would be proposed at the current time. Members did, however, suggest that further clarity was required regarding the allocation of topics between the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee and the Community Services Scrutiny Committee and agreed that the matter would be considered in detail at a future meeting.
5. The Group discussed the topics and purpose of some of the reports considered by some of the Committees and questioned the outcomes achieved from some of the items. In particular, it questioned the value of update reports where the only outcome was a further report in 6 months and suggested that items for information could be disseminated in a more efficient way.
6. It was agreed to advise the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committees to review the inclusion of such items on their committees' work programmes. It was also suggested that some topics included in Work Programmes may be more appropriately dealt with by a Member Panel rather than an officer report; the Working Group noted that no Member Panels had been established to date.

**Recording of Public Meetings of the Council Protocol**

7. The Working Group considered a draft protocol for the recording of public meetings of the Council, which covered photographing, filming and making audio recordings of meetings. The Group was advised that it was intended to support opportunities for members of the press and public to record public meetings of the Council and the Protocol was therefore designed to provide a 'light touch' approach towards regulating the recording of meetings. It was also noted that the Government had indicated its support for local authorities to facilitate citizen journalism.

8. The draft protocol also included a framework for any Members who wished to record public meetings, which mirrored the rules for Members' use of social media during council meetings, as set out in the Social Media Protocol for Councillors.
9. The Group noted that a statement had been included in the Protocol requesting that those recording a meeting did not edit the material in such a way that could lead to misinterpretation of proceedings; it was considered that, whilst the Council could not control this matter, it was important that this statement was made.
10. The Working Group requested that the Council's Information Governance Manager clarify any requirements in relation to recording of meetings, in particular relating to instances where a minor could be giving a presentation to a committee. The Information Governance Manager has subsequently clarified that those attending a meeting should be made aware that there is a possibility that they could be filmed and a notice should therefore be placed on agendas and on the Council's website. It is proposed that, where a meeting is officially being recorded, the Chairman should announce at the beginning of a meeting and notices should be placed in the meeting venue. She has also advised that, where a minor registers to speak at a public meeting, it would be good practice to advise their parent in writing.

**Resource Implications**

11. In relation to the proposed amendments to the Constitution, costs will be met from existing budgets.

**Recommendation**

12. The Council is advised to RESOLVE that the Recording of Public Meetings of the Council Protocol, as attached at Annex A, be adopted as a Document Which Supports the Constitution

Annexes	The Protocol for the Recording of Council, Executive and Committee meetings is attached at Annex A
Background Papers:	None
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