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| <b>Report for:</b>   | Council   |
| <b>Title of report:</b>  | Constitutional update and procedural change at Full Council |
| <b>Date:</b>   | 12 July 2023  |
| <b>Report on behalf of:</b>  | Leader of the Council, Councillor Ron Tindall               |
| <b>Part:</b>   | I   |
| <b>If Part II, reason:</b>   | N/A   |
| <b>Appendices:</b>   | none  |
| <b>Background papers:</b>  | none  |
| <b>Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:</b> | none  |

### Report Author / Responsible Officer

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| <b>Corporate Priorities</b>   | A clean, safe and enjoyable environment<br>Building strong and vibrant communities<br>Ensuring economic growth and prosperity<br>Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need<br>Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery<br>Climate and ecological emergency |
| <b>Wards affected</b>         | All   |
| <b>Purpose of the report:</b> | 1. To seek approval for changes to the Council's Constitution in respect of the format of minutes of committee meetings.  |

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|  | 2. For Council to note the proposed change to Portfolio Holder updates at meetings of the Full Council, which will be provided as written updates and published as part of the agenda.  |
| <b>Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That Council agrees to the proposed revisions to minute taking as set out in Section 2 of this report, and;</li> <li>2. That Council authorises the Assistant Director (Legal and Democratic Services) to make the required changes to Part 4 of the Constitution to reflect these changes.</li> <li>3. That Council notes the proposed change to Portfolio Holder updates being submitted and published as part of the meeting agenda, and not verbally presented at the meeting.</li> </ol> |
| <b>Period for post policy/project review:</b>        | The Constitution and meeting procedural rules are under continuous review by the Monitoring Officer and updates are proposed to Council when required.  |

## **1 Introduction/Background:**

- 1.1 The Monitoring Officer is under a continuous duty to review the Constitution to ensure that it is up to date and provides an appropriate governance framework for all Council decision making.
- 1.2 Proposals for change may be prompted not only by formal internal reviews, but also by the Monitoring Officer, the Cabinet, other Members or officers and by public opinion.
- 1.3 The changes proposed in this report have been proposed by the Leader of the Council and agreed by the Leader of the Conservative Party and the Leader of the Labour Party and will assist the operational effectiveness of the Council and provide improved public access and transparency.

## **2 Changes to the format of minutes of committee meetings:**

- 2.1 The technological changes in The Forum now allow the Council to record meetings and publish them to the Democratic Services YouTube site, which in turn is linked to the meeting pages on the Dacorum Website. It is therefore considered that lengthy detailed minutes are not required as the recording can be published with the minutes, allowing members of the public to view the full debate.
- 2.2 In line with the Council's Constitution, going forward, for meetings of the Cabinet and all other committees, written minutes will be limited to a record of decisions. For meetings of Full Council, minutes will also note motions and amendments thereto. In the case of all meetings, where a question is asked that cannot be answered and a written response is offered, this will be noted as an action within the minutes and added to a log that will be updated & maintained by the Democratic Services Team and brought forward to the next meeting for monitoring.

- 2.3 To support these measures, meetings of the Cabinet, Full Council and all committees will be recorded, the recording reviewed and, if Part I, it will be time stamped and published on the Council's democratic pages of the website, linked to each agenda item of the corresponding meeting, allowing the reader to easily locate the correct section of the recording to view any discussion and/or debate should they wish.
- 2.4 The current practice is that only Full Council is live streamed to YouTube. This will continue and all other Cabinet and Committee meetings will be video recorded and published, but not initially live streamed until further testing is complete. Once officers are satisfied that live streaming of all meetings can commence, a start date will be agreed with the Leader of the Council and opposition group leaders.

Live streaming will be limited to only those items being considered under Part I, and any live stream will end prior to a meeting moving into Part II.

### **3. Changes to Portfolio Holder updates to Full Council**

- 3.1 Moving forward, Portfolio Holder updates will be submitted in writing and published as part of the agenda, removing the requirement for time allocation at the meeting for the verbal update.
- 3.2 Portfolio Holders will continue to receive questions at the meeting, at the current time allocation of 10 minutes for questions to be posed to each Portfolio Holder.
- 3.3 The Constitution as currently drafted allows for written or verbal updates by Portfolio Holders and therefore no formal change is given to the Constitution to give effect to this change.

### **4. Consultation**

- 4.1 The proposals in this report relating to future format of minutes have been agreed by the Leader of the Council and Leader of the Conservative Party and Leader of the Labour Party and it is understood that further consultation has taken place with Members via political group meetings and discussions.
- 4.2 The Information Security Team Leader has been consulted and retention implications and policies will be reviewed to ensure GDPR compliance.
- 4.3 The proposals in this report relating to changes to Portfolio Holder updates at Full Council have been proposed by the Leader of the Council and agreed by the Leader of the Conservative Party and Leader of the Labour Party and it is understood that further consultation has taken place with Members via political group meetings and discussions.

### **5 Financial and value for money implications:**

- 5.1 There are no financial implications.

### **6 Legal Implications**

- 6.1 The Constitution will be updated to reflect the agreed change in procedures and there are no other legal implications arising from the report.
- 6.2 All minutes produced in accordance with above process will be completed in house. In exceptional cases, if a full verbatim minutes or a comprehensive record of discussion is requested and agreed by the Monitoring Officer, minutes will be audio transcribed via external transcription service. This approach is ordinarily only agreed in cases where matters might be taken forward to judicial review or statutory appeal (such as matters considered by the Development Management Committee).

## **7 Risk implications:**

7.1 This report proposes minor changes to meeting procedures and there are no risks associated.

## **8 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:**

8.1 There are no Equalities, Community Impact of Human Rights implications arising from this report.

## **9 Sustainability Implications**

9.1 There are no Sustainability Implications arising from this report.

## **10 Council infrastructure (including Health and Safety, HR/OD, assets and other resources)**

10.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

## **11 Statutory Comments**

### **Monitoring Officer:**

The proposed changes to meeting procedures will improve public access to meetings which will assist the efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of Council meetings. The final decision will still be recorded in written form and the debate will be viewable on the Council's web-site for full transparency.

### **S151:**

No financial implication on these proposals.

## **12 Conclusions:**

12.1 The proposed change to minute taking will not only streamline published minutes, allowing easy identification of key decisions, but also offers the advantage of transparency; the full debate on any matter will be linked and available to view alongside the published record of decisions.

12.3 The procedural changes to Portfolio Holder updates to Full Council as set out in this report will ensure the effective running of Council meetings.