

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Council
Date: 9 October 2019
Report for: Noting
Report of: Corporate Director of Governance and Community Strategy and Monitoring Officer

Report Title

Motions and Amendments Protocol for Council

Summary

The Council's Constitution Working Group has considered the practicalities of handling motions at Council meetings, particularly when a large number of Motions are submitted for one meeting. Without wishing to make changes to the Constitution, the Working Group recommended a protocol be devised to aid the debate at meetings. Following consultation with the Political Group Leaders, the protocol appended to the report is to be introduced.

Recommendation(s)

That the introduction of a Protocol for handling Motions at Council Meetings, effective from 9 October 2019, be noted.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Ian Cockill
Extension: 1387

Background Papers: None

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	None
Financial	None
Legal Implications:	None
Equality/Diversity Implications	None
Sustainability Implications	None
Resource Implications e.g. Staffing / ICT / Assets	None
Risk Management Implications	None
Health & Wellbeing Implications	None
Health and Safety Implications	None

1. Background

- 1.1 The Constitution Working Group has reviewed the process for considering motions at Council meetings as a result of concerns about the number of motions being submitted and time constraints impacting upon the debate.
- 1.2 The Working Group was not minded to make any Constitutional changes regarding the submission of Motions for Council, however, advocated inter-party co-operation prior to meetings to determine the order of proceedings and aid the Mayor's management of the business to be conducted.
- 1.3 In respect of Amendments and again, without amending the Constitution, the Working Group did feel that the practice could be structured so that Members have time to absorb the changes and the impact of any proposed decisions.
- 1.4 This protocol, therefore, suggests that an informal process be initiated in advance of the meeting, to enhance the transaction of business and strengthen the Council's decision-making process.
- 1.5 The Group Leaders have provided their endorsement to the principles appended to the report and this approach will now be tested to determine whether they will facilitate more efficient debate at Council meetings.

Motions and Amendments Protocol for Council (2019)

1. Motions – Order of Business

- 1.1 Although the Constitution states that Motions will be considered in the order that they were received, the Mayor, as Chair of the Council meeting has the ability to vary the Order of Business. Once the Council Summons has been published, it may become apparent that some Motions are less contentious than others listed.

The Mayor may liaise with the Group Leaders to agree an order of priority for the Motions and consequently vary the order of business at the meeting where all Group Leaders agree to the proposed order of priority.

- 1.2 On certain occasions it can be predicted that the Council will be fully supportive of a Motion and others where there will be contention. It is reasonable to expect that controversial matters are afforded more time for debate and to draw to a conclusion those where there is a consensus. It may sometimes be possible to signify that a matter has the full support of Council without the need for debate which will allow more time to debate other items on the agenda.

The Mayor may liaise with the Group Leaders and where all Group Leaders are in agreement, agree an expected timeframe for the level of debate for each of the Motions due to be debated.

2.0 Amendments to motions

- 2.1 The Constitution states that an amendment to a motion must be relevant to the motion and will either be:

- (i) to refer the matter to an appropriate body or individual for consideration or reconsideration;
- (ii) to leave out words;
- (iii) to leave out words and insert or add others; or
- (iv) to insert or add words.

as long as the effect of (ii) to (iv) is not to negate the motion.

- 2.2 Sometimes amendments are lengthy and it is not always obvious what changes have been made. The submission of amendments in advance would provide Members with sufficient time to read and comprehend the changes. Amendments received in advance could also be published on the website allowing the public to gain an understanding.

- (a) Amendments should be submitted by 4.00 p.m. one clear day before Council, unless the situation has changed within that time-frame and so this is not possible.**
- (b) Amendments from the floor should only be minor textual changes.**
- (c) Amendments to be circulated at the start of the meeting with all deletions and/or additions shown, for example displayed in 'tracked changes' format.**
- (d) Amendments from the floor should only be minor textual changes and similarly detail what is being changed.**

2.3 It is acknowledged that there are times when a situation is fast-changing and a motion needs to be amended at short notice. Amendments, themselves may also be amended, however, at all times amendments must be fully understood and examined before being voted upon.

The Mayor will have discretion to allow an amendment at shorter notice than prescribed above and allow further amendments.