

REPORT OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Governance Committee met on 9 September 2014. Attendances:

Councillor Elkin (in the Chair)
Councillors Bennett, Howson, Tutt and Webb

1. Reporting of Council Meetings – Amendment to Constitution

1.1 The Council's Constitution currently allows for the recording and filming by members of the public at Council meetings unless the Chairman decides otherwise.

1.2 The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 came into force on 6 August 2014. The Regulations allow any person attending a public local government meeting to "report" public meetings 'live' using social media of any kind. Reporting includes:

(a) filming, photographing or audio recording the proceedings;

(b) using any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear proceedings of a meeting as it takes place or later; and

(c) reporting or providing commentary on proceedings of a meeting during the meeting in writing, as well as oral commentary outside or after the meeting.

1.3 The new Regulations will apply to any public meeting of the Council, including full Council meetings, meetings of the Executive, Joint Committee, Committee and Sub Committee meetings. This means that members of the public will be entitled to record the meeting and subsequently share the recording, for example by uploading to social media websites. Members of the public will also be permitted to stream footage or audio recordings of County Council meetings 'live' from the public gallery. Similarly, members of the public will be permitted to commentate on the meeting for example by 'tweeting' or 'blogging' whilst the meeting is taking place. Notwithstanding this, those undertaking such activities can be excluded from the meeting if they act in a disruptive manner, for example by moving outside of areas designated for the public or excessive noise in operating or setting up any equipment.

1.4 The Regulations allow the Council to stop any recording wherever a resolution has been passed to exclude persons whilst exempt or confidential information is being considered.

1.5 It is proposed to replace the current Standing Orders (A)8.1 to (A)8.3 with the paragraphs set out below, to reflect the new requirements for all applicable bodies.

Admission of public and press and recording of proceedings

8.1 The press and public shall be excluded for the whole or any part of the proceedings if a motion under Section 100A (2) or (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 is moved, seconded and carried.

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8.2 The Chairman may give the Assistant Chief Executive directions as to arrangements for the admission of the public.

8.3 Any member of the public has the right to record, film, broadcast and report meetings of the Council that are open to the public.

1.6 The Committee **recommends** the County Council to

☆ agree to the Constitution being amended as set out in paragraph 1.5 above, to reflect the requirements of the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014.

9 September 2014

David Elkin
(in the Chair)