

Report to:	Council
Relevant Officer:	Mark Towers, Director of Governance and Regulatory Services
Relevant Cabinet Member	Councillor Simon Blackburn, Leader of the Council
Date of Meeting	8 July 2015

EXECUTIVE, AUDIT COMMITTEE AND COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY REPORTS TO COUNCIL

1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To consider proposed changes to the Council's Procedural Standing Orders on Executive, Audit Committee and Combined Fire Authority reports to Council.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 To adopt a revised a procedural standing order for Council meetings to replace Council Procedural Standing Order 10 as attached at Appendix 11(a) to the report.
- 2.2 To reaffirm the processes for holding the Executive to account through the challenge of corporate, policy and strategic matters at Council and the performance of Executive and Cabinet Member areas of responsibility through the scrutiny process.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

- 3.1 To take account of the new Executive and scrutiny structures and to ensure that the Executive is held to account at the appropriate levels.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

One option is to remain with the current reporting procedure or adopt an alternative.

4.0 Council Priority:

- 4.1 The relevant Council Priority is “Deliver quality services through a professional, well-rewarded and motivated workforce.”

5.0 Background Information

- 5.1 Following the recent restructure of the Executive and Cabinet Member areas of responsibility, it is considered appropriate to review how Executive reports are submitted to Council and how Executive Members are held to account.

- 5.2 The full Council has responsibility for corporate, policy and strategic matters and as such it is proposed that Executive Members are held to account at the Council meeting in these areas. More recently, there have been written responses to questions raised at Council relating to ward issues or where detailed technical information, which is not always readily known by the Executive Members, has been requested. This information is available through other channels and can be provided within a normal enquiry route to officers or Cabinet Members, without the need for time to be spent on these issues at Council meetings.

5.3 Proposals

In view of the above, it is proposed that Executive Member reporting at Council meetings, should comprise three Executive reports to Council at a senior level on corporate, policy and strategic matters. These would be presented by the Leader of the Council, the Deputy Leader and the Cabinet Secretary and which would cover the full range of Executive functions and would encourage question and comments of a corporate, policy or strategic nature.

- 5.4 The proposals also include provision for the Chairman of the Audit Committee to report to Council on an annual basis in a similar way to Senior Executive Members. This is in line with the revised powers and duties of the Audit Committee that were agreed at the Annual Council meeting on 22 May 2015.
- 5.5 The proposals for reports from the Combined Fire Authority representatives are in line with current practice and the process for operating would operate similar to the Chairman of the Audit Committee.
- 5.6 At Annual Council on 22 May, it was agreed that the two scrutiny committees would have an enhanced performance management focus around the two proposed Council priorities. This will help direct resources and ensure that targets are met. It is therefore expected that the members on the two scrutiny committees will hold the relevant Executive Members to account on the targets and performance within their areas of responsibility at each meeting.

5.7 The arrangements set out above, would mean that the process for holding Executive Members to account is strengthened through the challenge of corporate, policy and strategic matters at Council and the performance of their areas of responsibility through the scrutiny process.

5.8 A revised procedural standing order is attached at Appendix 11(a), which gives further details of how the reporting process would operate at Council.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

List of Appendices:

Appendix 11(a) – Draft revised Procedural Standing Order

6.0 Legal considerations:

6.1 Any changes to the Constitution require Council approval.

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

7.1 None

8.0 Equalities considerations:

8.1 None

9.0 Financial considerations:

9.1 None

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 The proposals ensure that Executive Members are held to account at the right level.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 One of the Council's values is accountability and these proposals help enforce this principle.

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 None.

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 None