

## Part A

**Report to:** Constitution Working Party  
**Date of meeting:** 22 September 2016  
**Report of:** Democratic Services Manager  
**Title:** Length of motions

### 1.0 **Summary**

1.1 Following discussion at the Constitution Working Party meeting in June, work has been carried out for members to consider the length of time for motions or speeches during motions at a full Council meeting.

### 2.0 **Recommendations**

2.1 For Constitution Working Party to consider whether it wishes to make any recommendations to Council regarding motions.

#### **Contact Officer:**

For further information on this report please contact: Caroline Harris  
telephone extension: 8372 email: [caroline.harris@watford.gov.uk](mailto:caroline.harris@watford.gov.uk)

**Report approved by:** Carol Chen

### 3.0 **Detailed Proposal**

- 3.1 At the meeting of the Constitution Working Party in June there was a discussion around the re-ordering of Council business to allow for substantive items to be listed before motions in the agenda. This was subsequently agreed at Council on 5 July 2016.
- 3.2 As part of the discussion for the above a concern was raised about motions being talked out of time towards the end of the meeting and a request was made to review the length of time which members can speak on motions.
- 3.3 Subsequently research has been carried out across Hertfordshire authorities and also Elected Mayor authorities to see what time limits are in place for speeches. The full tables can be seen at Appendix A.
- 3.4 Watford Borough Council's current procedure rules on motions is:  
"No speech may exceed 10 minutes by a mover for a motion, with the exception of the speech moving the motion on the Council's budget in which case the mover may not exceed 20 minutes and no speeches by other Members shall exceed 5 minutes with the exception of speeches by leaders of opposition groups responding to the Budget in which case the speech shall not exceed 10 minutes. A Member may speak for longer than 5 minutes with the consent of the Council. The mover of an original motion in exercising the right of reply shall not exceed 5 minutes."
- 3.5 From the 24 councils looked at for comparison, six have 10 minutes for the councillor who is proposing the motion. For the remaining 18 councils 14 have 5 minutes for the proposer of the motion. The range of times is from 3-10 minutes.
- 3.6 For other speeches only one council allowed 10 minutes, 15 councils allow 5 minutes and eight councils allow 3 minutes.
- 3.7 Several councils make exceptions to these restrictions for the budget speeches at the annual budget setting meeting for both the proposer of the budget and leaders of opposition groups.
- 3.8 Some authorities place a restriction on the length of time allowed for the motions section. This has been done either through a blanket time allowed e.g., 30 minutes to deal with motions or as is the case at Liverpool City Council there are six 20 minute slots for motions.

### 4.0 **Implications**

#### 4.1 **Financial**

- 4.1.1 None

## 4.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

- 4.2.1 The Head of Democracy and Governance comments that there are no legal implications in this report. It is at Council's discretion as to the time it allocates for members to speak on business at council meetings.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A – Comparison table  
Appendix A1 – Elected Mayor Authorities  
Appendix A2 – Hertfordshire Authorities

## **Background Papers**

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report. If you wish to inspect or take copies of the background papers, please contact the officer named on the front page of the report

WBC Constitution

## **File Reference**

None