



Subject:	Proposed approach to enable the strategic consideration of Notices of Motions and Issues Raised in Advance by Members
Date:	20 March 2020
Reporting Officer:	John Walsh, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Sarah Williams, Governance & Compliance Manager; Christine Robinson, Strategic Policy & Partnership Manager;

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is: <ul style="list-style-type: none">to seek approval for a proposed approach to monitoring and tracking of Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance by Members
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	It is recommended that Members: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Approve the proposed approach to enable the strategic consideration of Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance by Members within the Council's corporate planning and policy frameworks.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider whether they would like to amend Standing Order 13 so that that Notices of Motion which fall within the remit of a Committee are automatically referred to the relevant committee for consideration without appearing on the Council agenda
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that under Standing Order 13(l) (set out in full in Appendix 1) no Notice of Motion seeking to commit the Council to expenditure not previously agreed through the Committee process will be considered but shall instead stand referred to the appropriate Committee for consideration and report.</p>
3.2	<p>Since 2016, the Council has agreed over 250 Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance by Members, of which around 95 are yet to be considered in terms of their resource implications, with an average of 12 being agreed at Council each month.</p>
3.3	<p>The Council has a four-year Corporate Plan with agreed Committee Plans and budgets set during the Revenue Estimates process in the February before the new financial year. . A process is needed to ensure that issues being raised by Members can be fully considered in order to incorporate them into the Council’s corporate planning and policy process and subsequently lead to implementation and realisation of the members / committee ambition.</p>
3.4	<p>This report proposes a process, in line with the Standing Orders, to ensure that the motion / issues raised in advance are considered in full by the appropriate Committee and advice is provided to Members by officers on the timing, options and costs associated with implementation.</p>
3.5	<p>This approach is recommended in respect of meeting our legal and financial responsibilities in ensuring a balanced budget. A corporate planning process is fundamental to achieving a balanced budget and achieving those objectives which the Council has corporately and democratically endorsed as priorities for the district and the organisation.</p>
3.6	<p>Incorporating Notice of Motions into the corporate planning process</p> <p>At present, any notices of motion that are agreed in year and have resource implications can only be implemented where an identified underspend exists or at a direct opportunity cost to staff-time allocated against an existing corporate workstream. This also impacts on staff who may be diverted from other planned work being undertaken.</p>

Members will be aware that a six monthly progress update of the corporate plan will be brought to SP&R committee – and once a year this will result in the development of a one-year update of the corporate plan. Alongside this, both the CG&R and P&C Committees complete committee planning workshops. This in turn enables resources to be realigned and highlight the potential areas for growth in the revenue estimating process.

Recognising the strategic importance of a range of issues raised through notices of motion, it is proposed that notices of motions will be considered as part of this annual corporate and committee planning process. Officers from the Strategic Hub and across the policy network will work to ensure that key themes or issues are ‘pulled through’ into this discussion; considered fully in terms of resource requirements; and subsequently reflected in the council’s planning and delivery processes.

3.7 **Process of Managing Motions / Issues**

It is proposed that a three-stage process (see Appendix 2) is introduced for the consideration of notices/issues:

- **Stage 1:** Report taken to refer Notice of Motion to Committee or the issue is raised by member in advance at Committee as per the usual process (Notices of Motion will have a revised cover report outlining that the motion will follow this new process (and indicating if it will commit Council to additional expenditure (as outlined in paragraph 3.1 above).

If the committee rejects the motion or issue, then no further action will be taken. If the Committee request a further report, the notice of motion or issue will be assigned to a lead department.

- **Stage 2: Initial Scoping Report** will subsequently be brought to relevant committee, ideally within three months, which will detail the range of options for initial consideration of the motion, for example it could reference (depending on the nature of the motion / issue):
 - Immediate implementation
 - Set out initial policy or best practice considerations
 - Add into an existing programme of work as already agreed in the Corporate Plan and Committee Plans

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Request approval and funding to carry out a scoping exercise to determine the potential strategic, financial, legal or resource implications of the issue ○ Recommendations on the timing of Stage 3 Report to committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stage 3: Options Report depending on the outcome of Stage 2, this stage would involve the development of more detailed policy considerations - where the motion / issue would be considered in terms of its priority, options for implementation, legal and resource implications, strategic fit, monetary and non-monetary benefits, sources of funding, longer term financial planning etc. The recommendation of this stage would be presented to the relevant committee. <p>If the above approach is adopted, guidance will be issued to officers to ensure that the process is consistently applied and that reports are to a high standard. This will also provide members with the assurance that all motions/issues are fully considered.</p>
3.8	<p>Existing Notices / Issues</p> <p>It is proposed that the current notices/issues database is fully reviewed in light in the above. Officers are currently working on this and a progress update on Notices of Motion will be brought to Committee in March or April.</p>
3.9	<p>Reporting to Members</p> <p>Following the review of current notices of motion/issues a quarterly progress report on notices/issues will be brought to each Committee. SP&R will receive an update on all Notices of Motion.</p>
3.10	<p>Feedback from Party Group Briefings</p> <p>Members should be assured that this process will not prevent flexibility in the Council being able to deal with urgent matters. The Standing Orders have provision for dealing with matters of urgency.</p>
3.11	<p>Standing Orders</p> <p>Members may wish to consider if they would like to amend Standing Order 13: Notices of Motion so that Notices of Motion which fall within the remit of a Committee are automatically referred to the relevant committee for consideration without appearing on the Council agenda. At present around half of the notices of motion are referred to committee.</p>

3.12	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There are potentially significant resource implications for departments assigned to carry out the scoping of potential strategic, financial or resources implications of individual notices/issues.</p>
3.13	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>The equality, good relations and rural needs implications of each notice/issue would need to be assessed.</p>
4.0	<u>Appendices – Documents Attached</u>
	<p>Appendix 1 - Standing Order 13 (I)</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Overview of proposed process</p>