

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

**EXECUTIVE
10 FEBRUARY 2009**

**COUNCIL
24 FEBRUARY 2009**

AMENDMENT TO STANDING ORDERS – ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND DEPUTY CHAIRS

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider a reference back to Executive from Council on 16 December 2008 in respect of Standing Order 39, relating to the election of Committee Chairs and Deputy Chairs at the Annual Meeting of Council.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Following a review by the Standing Orders Working Group, Executive recommended to Council on 14 October 2008 a number of changes to the Council's Standing Orders. Council unanimously agreed Executive's recommendations in respect of the majority of proposed amendments.
- 2.2 In relation to Standing Order 39 (Election of Leader and Chair and Deputy Chair of Committees), two options were presented to Council, as set out in the Appendix attached. Of the 37 Councillors present, twenty Councillors voted in favour of Option (ii), to change the Standing Order to allow the Chairs and Deputy Chairs of each Committee to be elected by Council itself at the Annual Meeting in future. An interpretation of the wording of Standing Order 47 (Variation and Revocation of Standing Orders by Council) at the time indicated that the vote to change Standing Order 39 was lost since the twenty votes fell short of the two-thirds majority understood to be required to change the wording. Option (i), to retain the current wording of the Standing Order whereby Chairs and Deputy Chairs are elected by each Committee at the Annual Meeting, was therefore agreed.
- 2.3 In response to a view expressed by some Councillors that the vote should have been decided on the basis of a simple majority and that the outcome did not fairly represent the wishes of the majority of Councillors present, Council on 16 December 2008 referred the issue back to Executive.
- 2.4 For reasons of practicality, in recent years it has often been the practice at the Annual Meeting of the Council for the appointment of Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Committees to be undertaken by the whole Council rather than individual Committees. The practice of holding separate meetings of Committees within the Annual Meeting tends to be disruptive and to create confusion, particularly given the large number of guests and public present.

3 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 Following the reference back from Council, Executive is requested to make a specific recommendation to Council in respect of the possible amendment of Standing Order 39, on the basis of the options set out in Appendix 1.

4 RECOMMENDED

- 4.1 That Executive makes a recommendation to Council on whether or not to change the current practice in relation to the appointment of Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Committees at the Annual Meeting of Council or alternatively that Executive makes no proposal and requests Council to resolve the issue on the basis of a straight majority.

ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE

05.01.09

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)
Background papers used in compiling this report:

None