

# EXETER CITY COUNCIL

## EXECUTIVE

1 OCTOBER 2013

## COUNCIL

15 OCTOBER 2013

### RECORDING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To consider the possibility of allowing the recording of all Council and its committee meetings

#### 2. THE ISSUES

- 2.1 The Plain English Guide to the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Meetings and Access to Information)(England)Regulations 2012 impose new requirements on Local Authorities with regards to Public Access to meetings and information relating to decisions being made.
- 2.2 This includes a statement within the regulations to “require Councils to provide reasonable facilities for any member of the public to report on meetings. Councils should thus allow the filming of councillors and officers at meetings that are open to the public.”
- 2.3 At present, this is expressly forbidden by our Standing Order 30 which states “No tape, electronic or other audio or visual recording of the proceedings of any Council, Committee, Sub-Committee or Executive meeting shall take place during the course of the meeting other than the official recording of the proceedings by the Corporate Manager Democratic/Civic Support.”
- 2.4 As can be seen, this is totally contrary to our current arrangements and as such will require Council to amend the Standing Orders accordingly. If it is the Executive’s intention to allow a greater ability for the Council’s proceedings to be recorded, and so as to allow this to occur at the earliest opportunity, and in compliance with our Standing Orders, Executive needs to recommend to Council the removal of Standing Order 30 (if not done this way, then the matter will be reported to Council on 15th October and then stand immediately adjourned to the next meeting of Council on 17th December – Standing Order 47 applies).

#### 3. THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR REPORTING OF MEETINGS

- 3.0 Members will be aware that the Council has recently made wi-fi available in its committee rooms which will allow those interested persons attending meetings to report on the subjects under discussion via all aspects of social media. Investigations are currently in hand to find a suitable wi-fi facility for the Guildhall so that the reporting of full Council’s debates can also be undertaken via the use of social media.
- 3.1 This matter has been the subject of discussion at the Councillor Development Steering Group. Those discussions concluded that Councillors who attend meetings as interested persons can use social media to relay the topics of debate as the meeting is going on, whereas those Members who serve as a member of the committee should not use social media until such time as the meeting has finished.

4. **RECOMMENDED** to Council:-

- (1) to remove Standing Order number 30, so as to allow for the recording of the Council's meetings and the constitution be amended accordingly;

**RECOMMENDED** that Executive:-

- (2) note the convention with regards to the use of social media by Councillors during meetings; and
- (3) instructs officers to draw up the necessary protocols to protect the wishes of members of the public during the recording/filming of meetings of the Council and its committees.

CORPORATE MANAGER DEMOCRATIC AND CIVIC SUPPORT