



REPORT OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Conferment of civic awards

The Council Procedure Rules (CPRs) provide for the conferment of civic awards at certain meetings. Other than in the year of municipal elections, the Council is invited to consider the conferment of the Honorary Freedom of the Borough at the Annual Meeting. The CPRs currently specify that this be done as part of the ordinary business of the Council, following the completion of the civic business and receipt of the Leader's Statement.

The conferment of the Honorary Freedom is, however, clearly a civic matter rather than one for ordinary business and, accordingly, the Committee recommend that the order of business at the Annual Meeting be altered, so that the conferment is dealt with immediately before the Leader's Statement.

Arrangements for the Annual Meeting

In January 2011, the arrangements for the meetings of the Council were reviewed and it was agreed, among other things, that the arrangements for the Annual Council should be changed. For some years, the Annual Meeting had been concerned solely with civic and "housekeeping" matters but this had led to a four-month gap in dealing the Council's ordinary business, as Council did not otherwise meet between the end of March and the end of July.

It was therefore agreed that the Annual Meeting should revert to dealing with ordinary business as well as civic business and that, to facilitate doing so, the meeting should start at 7pm rather than 7.30pm, with a break between civic and other Annual Meeting business and ordinary business. In the event, the volume of ordinary business presented at the Annual Meeting in 2011 was such that the debate of Members' motions was delayed until after 10pm, leaving insufficient time in some Members' view to ensure that a proper debate would follow (and those motions were therefore withdrawn and debated at the July meeting). This prompted the Committee to look again at the Annual Meeting arrangements.

The holding of the Annual Meeting is a statutory requirement. It is the meeting at which the Mayor must be elected and other appointments are dealt with. It is more of a civic event than other Council meetings. The Committee acknowledged, however, that there was need for an ordinary meeting to be held between March and July in order to ensure that there was no undue delay in dealing with the Council's business; and that it might be appropriate to provide opportunity for debate of the Leader's statement to the Annual Council.

The Committee therefore proposes that, as an experiment for 2012 only, in order to test whether the proposed changes are worthwhile, the business before the Annual Meeting should be restricted to civic and other Annual Meeting business and that an additional ordinary meeting be held a short time following the Annual Meeting, by no later than mid-June at which ordinary business, including any motion arising out of the Leader of the Council's statement to the Annual Meeting, would be dealt with.

Note of the Chief Executive - *Having regard to the need to give due notice of business at the proposed additional meeting and to the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations at the beginning of June, the earliest practicable date for that meeting is Wednesday 13 June and it is proposed therefore that the meeting be held that day.*

The Committee therefore RECOMMENDS to the Council:

- 1 That the conferment of awards at the Annual Meeting of the Council be considered civic business and dealt with before the statement by the Leader of the Council, and that the Council Procedure Rules (CPR) be amended by moving paragraph (h) of CPR 1 to follow immediately after paragraph (e), and re-numbering the current paragraphs (f) and (g) accordingly.**
- 2 That, for 2012/13, the following adjustments be made:**
 - (a) That the business of the Annual Meeting of the Council in May be confined to civic business (Part 1 of CPR 1) and other business appropriate to the Annual Meeting (paragraphs (h) and (i) of Part 2 of that CPR), that the meeting commence at 7.30pm rather than 7pm, that the Leader's statement be taken as the final item of business and that the meeting terminate on conclusion of the statement;**
 - (b) That an additional ordinary meeting of the Council be held on 13 June to consider the remaining business specified in Part 2 of CPR 1 (ordinary business at the Annual Meeting) and that there be opportunity for debate about the Leader's statement;**
 - (c) That the Mayor be authorised to determine the timetable for the submission of any motion or amendment relating to the Leader's statement as if the final paragraph of CPR 4.1 (arrangements for extraordinary meetings) applied to the meeting; and**
 - (d) That so far as necessary to achieve the purposes of these proposals, Part 2 of CPR 1 be suspended for the 2012 Annual Meeting but be applied to the additional ordinary meeting (rather than CPR2 (ordinary meetings)).**