

**LICENSING AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE  
29 JANUARY 2018**

**AMENDMENT OF STANDING ORDERS - NOTICES OF MOTION AND  
QUESTIONS**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 A potential amendment to Standing Orders was first raised at the Committee meeting on 27th November 2017 at the request of Cllr John Woolley. Following discussion, it was agreed that before any recommendation was made to full Council, Cllr Woolley would compile this short report to set out the current situation and potential amendment options.
- 1.2 The report provides material for further discussion at the meeting and recommends that an amendment is made to the Council Procedure Rules (Standing Orders) relating to Notices of Motion.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 The full Council meets on a limited number of occasions during the year and the meetings generally last for between one and two hours; time spent sitting as a full Council is therefore valuable. The agenda for an ordinary meeting of the full Council is set out in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules and consists of opening prayers by the Mayor's Chaplain, the Mayor's announcements, motions, questions and the presentation of reports by the Cabinet, committees and panels. Of these activities, debating motions can occupy a significant proportion of the meeting.
- 2.2 The Standing Order relating to notices of motion (Standing Order 9(6)), is currently worded as follows:

“Every motion shall be relevant to some matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the Borough directly.”
- 2.3 It was suggested at the last meeting that the clause be amended, perhaps by deleting the final words “or which affects the Borough directly” in order to ensure that all motions debated by the Council are relevant to topics over which the Council has some control.
- 2.4 It has also been suggested that a similar amendment be made to paragraph 8(3)(a) regarding questions, which currently is as follows:

“A Member of the Council may... (a) if ten clear working days' notice in writing has been given to the Head of Democratic and Customer Services, ask the Mayor, a Chairman or a Cabinet Member any question on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the Borough.”
- 2.5 In the case of Standing Order 8 questions, very few are submitted. There is no debate so they are dealt with quickly. Standing Order 8 questions are there to

give Members the opportunity to raise issues, which might otherwise not be raised through the agenda.

### 3. Motions Debated by Rushmoor Borough Council

3.1 The following are examples of motions, the subject matter of which Rushmoor Borough Council has no powers or duties.

<b>Meeting and Topic</b>	<b>Motion</b>
<p>Oct 2014</p> <p><b>Tax Avoidance by Multi-national Companies</b></p>	<p>Motion moved by Cr. A.M. Ferrier.</p> <p>“This Council expresses concern that some multinational companies are avoiding billions of pounds of tax from a tax system that fails to make them pay their fair share and, therefore, calls on the Government to act to end the injustice of aggressive tax avoidance by large multinational companies so that the revenue raised can be used to assist the improvement of public services, including those provided by local authorities such as Rushmoor.”</p>
<p>July 2010</p> <p><b>VAT</b></p>	<p>Motion moved by Cr. K. Dibble.</p> <p>“This Council resolves:</p> <p>(1) to write directly to the Chancellor of the Exchequer raising concerns about the impact of the proposed VAT increase on pensioners, other vulnerable groups and businesses in Rushmoor; and</p> <p>(2) to call on the Member of Parliament representing Aldershot and Farnborough to stand up for Rushmoor’s pensioners, businesses and wider community, to voice their opposition to this unfair increase in VAT and to vote against it in Parliament.”</p> <p>Amendment moved by Cr. G.B. Lyon and agreed by the Council:</p> <p>“This Council resolves to write directly to the former Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, raising concerns about the impact of the necessary VAT increase on pensioners, other vulnerable groups and businesses in Rushmoor resulting from his mismanagement of the economy”</p>
<p>Feb 2011</p> <p><b>Sale of Public Forests</b></p>	<p>Motion moved by Cr. M.J. Roberts.</p> <p>“This Council believes that, given the impact on Rushmoor’s residents, the Government’s intention for public bodies to sell off up to 100% of England’s public forestry is fundamentally unsound, flies in the face of public views, ecosystems, carbon reduction and calls on Government to rethink its decision to protect it for future generations.”</p>

	<p>Amendment moved by Cr. Roberts and rejected by the Council</p> <p>“This Council notes that Government, in response to its earlier proposal has modified its intentions but it still proposes to sell 100,000 hectares, it still proposes to make the Forestry Commission staff redundant and it still proposes to abolish the Forestry Commission</p> <p>Therefore, this Council wishes to record its dissatisfaction with the overall strategy as known.”</p>
<p>Dec 2013</p> <p><b>Armed Forces Pension Scheme</b></p>	<p>Motion moved by Cr. Jennifer Evans.</p> <p>“This Council considers that those military personnel who have been made redundant just before their pension rights would become operational have suffered a grave injustice. Bearing in mind the Rushmoor Military Covenant, we call upon the Government and the Ministry of Defence to compensate those servicemen and women who have lost out by being made redundant close to a pension point.”</p> <p>[NB The scope of the RBC Armed Forces Community Covenant does not include redundancy selection criteria or pension policy.]</p>
<p>Feb 2015</p> <p><b>VAT</b></p>	<p>Motion moved by Cr. G.B. Lyon.</p> <p>“Whilst the Council recognises that Rushmoor is working on proposals to provide greater protection for public houses through the planning system, it is concerned that pubs in Aldershot and Farnborough and throughout the country are under threat and therefore calls on the Government to play their part by levelling the playing field between pubs and supermarkets by reducing the VAT pubs pay on food and drink to that paid by supermarkets.”</p>
<p>Feb 2011</p> <p><b>EU Budget</b></p>	<p>Motion moved by Cr. G.B. Lyon.</p> <p>“The Council notes, due to the financial mess which the Westminster Government inherited, Rushmoor needs to play its part in balancing the books by making massive savings in its budget. This Council notes, despite opposition of some MPs and MEPs, the Government is likely to agree a further 2.9% increase in the overall EU budget.</p> <p>This Council believes the EU should be treated like other tiers of Government and should share responsibility, with central and local Government, for making savings in public spending.</p> <p>This Council therefore urges the Government and MEPs not to support an increase in the EU budget.”</p>

3.2 A significant amount of time is spent by the full Council discussing Motions.

## 4. Other Local Authority Rules

- 4.1 Some local authorities have a similar scope for motions as Rushmoor, but others take a different approach by focussing on issues on which the Council has a direct role.

Authority	Scope for Notices of Motion
Portsmouth	As long as the Notice of Motion is received before the 12 days [notice] it will be placed on the agenda unless... it is not a matter within the jurisdiction of Council.
Thurrock	A notice of motion must relate to a matter which affects the authority or the authority's area and must relate to a matter in respect of which the authority has a relevant function.
Kirklees	Every motion shall be relevant to some matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties and which affects the area of Kirklees.
Waltham Forest	Motions must be about matters for which the Council has statutory responsibility and that affect the community.

## 5. Conclusion

- 5.1 This report provides the background information regarding the relevance of Motions. I believe the following change to Standing Order 9 (6) will encourage a focus on local issues on which the Council may be able to take action:

“Every motion shall be relevant to some matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties ~~or which affects the Borough directly.~~”

- 5.2 If the Committee agrees the proposal it will be recommended to full Council on 23rd February, 2018. If agreed, the change in Standing Orders will stand adjourned without discussion until the meeting on 19th April.

## 6. Recommendation

- 6.1 The Committee is asked to recommend approval of the change to Standing Orders set out above.

CLLR JOHN WOOLLEY  
VICE-CHAIRMAN  
LICENSING AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE