

Meeting: COUNCIL
Date: 14 OCTOBER 2020

AMENDMENT TO TEMPORARY STANDING ORDERS

Author - Jackie Cansick Ext No.2216
Lead Officer – Matt Partridge Ext No. 2456
Contact Officer - Jackie Cansick Ext No. 2216

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To consider an amendment to the Council's 'Temporary' Standing Orders for voting at Council meetings.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Temporary Standing Orders approved in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panels Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 be amended to provide an alternative method for voting at Council meetings as set out in paragraph 3.3 of this report.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panels Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ('the Regulations') came into force on 4 April 2020. As a result of these regulations Council at its Annual Meeting approved Temporary Standing Orders.
- 3.2 These temporary amendments included a method of voting for Council meetings that required a roll call of all 39 Members to be taken for each vote. In practice this has proved to be very time consuming and officers have been asked to put forward an alternative, more expedient method of voting for virtual meetings.
- 3.3 For the Council meeting in July Members agreed to suspend the Temporary Standing Order regarding Voting and when a vote was taken the Mayor asked for any Members who were voting against a Motion or an Amendment to indicate using their 'Zoom' raise hand facility. The number of Members voting against was noted. Then Members who wanted to abstain from the vote were asked to 'raise' their hand. Again this number was noted. It was then deemed that any other Members present, who had not voted against or abstained, had voted in favour of the Motion/Amendment. The Mayor could then announce the results of the vote.

- 3.4 This revised method of voting was preferred to the 'roll-call' method and it is therefore recommended that the Temporary Standing Orders' for Council meetings be amended accordingly.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- The Council's Constitution <http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/about-the-council/councillors-and-democracy/17074/>
- The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panels Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/392/contents/made>
- Constitutional Issues Report to Council – 20 May 2020
<https://democracy.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/s25164/20200420%20Constitutional%20Issues%20Report.pdf>