

# Brighton & Hove City Council

## Council

## Agenda Item 76

**Subject:** Arrangements for Council Meetings

**Date of meeting:** 16 December 2021

**Report of:** Executive Lead Officer for Strategy, Governance Law

**Contact Officer:** Abraham Ghebre-Ghiorghis

**Tel:** 01273 291515

**Email:** [abraham.ghebre-ghiorghis@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:abraham.ghebre-ghiorghis@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**For general release**

### **1. Purpose of the report and policy context**

- 1.1 To seek Members' agreement to special arrangements for dealing with public engagement items currently dealt with at meetings of full Council and to seek agreement to draft guidance or protocol to apply to Council meetings.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Members agree the proposed revision to the Council Procedure Rules and the Petition Scheme to enable the special arrangements set out in the Appendix to this report to apply from the next full Council meeting until Annual Council, providing that Council may review the position earlier having regard to the experience of operating the new arrangements.
- 2.2 That Council agrees the draft protocol as set out in Appendix 1 as a general guide to arrangements for Council and Committee meetings.

### **3. Context and background information**

- 3.1 Given the continued risk posed by the Covid 19 pandemic and, in particular, the new Omicron variant, Officers have been reviewing arrangements for Member meetings. Most Committee and sub-committee meetings seem to be working reasonably well, but due to the numbers involved, there is concern about the safety and suitability of arrangements for meetings of full Council. It is therefore proposed to introduce the arrangements set out in the draft protocol in Appendix 1 to this report.

### **4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options**

- 4.1 The Council can continue without the arrangements in the draft protocol but this involves taking a significant risk, especially for full Council meetings, and is therefore not recommended.

## **5. Community engagement and consultation**

- 5.1 There has not been the opportunity to consult with the public on the proposed arrangements, but officers will be collating feedback on how the system, especially the public engagement part, works and report to Members any need for changes or modifications.

## **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 The proposals in the report will help the Council to maximize the health and safety of Members, Officers and members of the public who attend Council and Committee meetings.

## **7. Financial implications**

- 7.1 There are potential cost implications for improving facilities at Brighton Town Hall and/or using alternative venues if the proposed arrangements are not found to be workable. These will be reported to Members for consideration as the need arises.

Finance officer consulted: Nigel Manvell      Date consulted: 8/12/21

## **8. Legal implications**

- 8.1 The proposals in the report comply with Legal requirement relating to local authority meetings and would help the Council in discharging its obligations under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974.

Lawyer consulted: Abraham Ghebre-Ghiorghis      Date consulted (07/12/2021)

## **9. Equalities implications**

- 9.1 These have been taken into account, including, in particular, the need to protect people in vulnerable groups. An assessment of the arrangements will be done on an ongoing basis and reasonable adjustments implemented.

## **10. Sustainability implications**

- 10.1 There are no adverse sustainability implications arising from this report.

## **11. Public health implications**

- 11.1 The proposals in this report will contribute toward better protection of public health. They were developed with input from public health and health and safety officers.

## **Supporting Documentation**

### **Appendix 1: Protocol for Council Meetings**