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Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities  
Council

18 June 2015  
23 June 2015

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities – Councillor P Townshend

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Executive Director of Resources

**Ward(s) affected:**

Not applicable

**Title:**

**Amendments to the Constitution – Proposed Amendments to the Petitions Scheme**

**Is this a key decision?**

No

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**Executive Summary:**

This report seeks approval to amendments to the Petitions Scheme, which forms part of the Constitution, in order to provide flexibility and to streamline current practice.

**Recommendations:**

- (1) The Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities is requested:-
  - (i) To recommend that the City Council approves the proposed amendments to the Petitions Scheme, as detailed in the Appendix to this report, and that Part 31 of the City Council's Constitution be amended accordingly.
  - (ii) To recommend that the changes to the Petitions Scheme be reviewed by the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities – Constitutional Advisory Panel 12 months from the implementation of the changes.

- (2) The City Council is recommended to approve the proposed amendments to the Petitions Scheme, as detailed in the Appendix to this report, and that Part 31 of the City Council's Constitution be amended accordingly.

**List of Appendices included:**

Appendix 1 – Part 31 of the City Constitution with proposed amendments underlined

Appendix 2 – Details of responses received to consultation

**Other useful background papers:**

None

**Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

No

**Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

Yes – Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities - Constitutional Advisory Panel – 9 June, 2015

**Will this report go to Council?**

Yes – 23 June, 2015

## **Report title: Amendments to the Constitution – Proposed Amendments to the Petitions Scheme**

### **1. Context (or background)**

- 1.1 The City Council operates a Petitions Scheme, which forms part of its Constitution and each year receives a significant number of petitions from its residents. In the Municipal Years 2013/14, 114 petitions were received, and in 2014/15 a total of 130 petitions were received.
- 1.2 Petitions which relate to Licensing and Planning issues are referred directly to those bodies and are mainly considered in conjunction with the relevant application. No changes are proposed in relation to these petitions.
- 1.3 A high proportion of the “other” petitions (ie, those not relating to Licensing or Planning matters) received by the Council relate to issues covered by the portfolio for the Cabinet Member for Public Services and include, for example, requests for traffic safety measures, road and pavement repairs and parking measures. In 2013/14, 39 petitions were considered by the Cabinet Member for Public Services. In 2014/15, this number rose to 52 being considered with 18 still waiting to be considered (making a total of 70)
- 1.4 The current custom and practice for dealing with “other” petitions has been that the petitions are formally considered by the appropriate Cabinet/Cabinet Member and officers produce a formal report as part of that consideration. Depending on when the petition is received in the Cabinet/Cabinet Member cycle of meetings, it can take up to two months for a report to be prepared and considered.

### **2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 2.1 With a view to give flexibility and to streamline this current practise, it is proposed that, **with the written agreement of the Councillor who is the Petition Organiser or who is acting as its Sponsor, (in which case, together with the Petition Organiser), or the Petition Organiser where there is no Councillor acting as a sponsor,** “other” petitions may be dealt with or responded to without the need for formal consideration by a City Council body.
- 2.2 An example of a petition which may be dealt with in this way is a request for the resurfacing of a carriageway, which had already been identified for repair and resurfacing in the Transportation and Highways Maintenance Capital programme for the coming year. In such case, the relevant Councillor/Petition Organiser may have been satisfied to receive a letter from the City Council confirming that the repairs would be undertaken.
- 2.3 Each petition would be dealt with on an individual basis. The Cabinet Member would consider advice from officers on appropriate action to respond to the petitioners’

request, which in some circumstances, may be for the petition to be dealt with or responded to without the need for formal consideration by a City Council body. In such circumstances and with the approval of the Cabinet Member, written agreement would then be sought from the relevant Councillor/Petition Organiser to proceed in this manner. In the absence of written agreement, the petition would be referred via the formal process.

2.4 Petitions would still be submitted to full meetings of the City Council if the relevant Councillor so wishes, as this meeting only hears the petition and takes no formal decision on its contents, other than refer it to the appropriate Cabinet Member/body.

2.5 A copy of the Petition Scheme is attached as Appendix 1 to this report with the proposed amendments underlined.

2.6 If the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities is minded to approve the amendments, his recommendations will need to be considered by full Council as this will be a change to the Constitution.

### **3. Results of consultation undertaken**

3.1 All Councillors were consulted on the proposed amendments. A total of 5 responses were received. Three of the responses either supported or indicated they had no issues with the proposals. Appendix 2 to this report details the other two responses received.

### **4. Timetable for implementing this decision**

4.1 The changes would take effect immediately after the Council meeting at which they are approved. It is proposed that the impact of the changes be reviewed by the Cabinet member for Policing and Equalities – Constitutional Advisory Panel 12 months after their implementation.

### **5. Comments from Executive Director of Resources**

#### **5.1 Financial implications**

There are no specific financial implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

#### **5.2 Legal implications**

There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

### **6. Other implications**

#### **6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?**

Not applicable.

#### **6.2 How is risk being managed?**

Not applicable

### 6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

If implemented, the amendment to the Petitions Scheme would enable, in some instances, petitioners' requests to be responded to more efficiently.

### 6.4 Equalities / EIA

There are no public sector equality duties which are of relevance.

### 6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None

### 6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None

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Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

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Councillor Townshend	Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities		8/6/15	8/6/15

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