



## CONVENTIONS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF COUNCIL BUSINESS

### 1. **Introduction**

- 1.1 These Conventions have been agreed by the Leader of the Council to assist in the management of business.
- 1.2 Where difficulties of interpretation or unforeseen circumstances arise, the matter will be discussed by the Leader and the Chief Operating Officer to determine a way in which they might be handled.

### 2. **Procedure for Urgent and other Business**

- 2.1 Any urgent matter arising between meetings which cannot await a decision at the next meeting and which has not been formally delegated to an Officer or Portfolio Holder, shall be considered by the Chief Operating Officer or relevant Corporate Director; under their emergency powers, in consultation with the Leader and relevant Portfolio Holder or the Chairman of the appropriate Committee, where it is in the interests of the Council and it is impracticable or inappropriate to call a meeting.

### 3. **Access to Information**

- 3.1 Factual information relating to a matter before Cabinet, a Committee, Sub-Committee or Working Party that has been provided on request to a member, whether a member of Cabinet, that Committee, Sub-Committee or Working Party or not, shall be provided to all members of the Cabinet, Committee, Sub-Committee or Working Party concerned where the information is relevant to the decision to be made.
- 3.2 If the Chief Operating Officer or Corporate Director consider that meeting a request for factual information would involve a substantial commitment of resources, he/she may refer the matter initially to the Leader of the Council and, in the event of the

matter not then being resolved, it will be referred, as appropriate, to Cabinet or Committee.

- 3.3 Written information on a substantive matter which goes beyond recorded facts (e.g. relating to policy matters) will only be sought by the Leader of the Council, relevant Portfolio Holder, relevant Chairman, Shadow Portfolio Holder or Group Spokesman on the relevant Committee or Sub-Committee (“the relevant Councillor”). If he/she indicates that the matter is to be regarded as confidential, then there shall be no disclosure of that information to any other member without permission. That does not preclude the same information being provided to another “relevant Councillor” if it is sought independently. The principle is, therefore, not that the information itself is to be kept confidential, but more that “relevant Councillors” are entitled to pursue their own lines of enquiry without other Members being told. This is subject to the proviso that this information can be provided within existing resources.
- 3.4 Nothing in this Section shall inhibit the rights of Members to seek and receive information and advice relevant to their duties and responsibilities.

#### **4.0 Briefings**

##### **4.1 Cabinet Briefing**

The briefings of Cabinet Members are linked to the cycle of Cabinet Meetings approved by the Council. These are usually held on a Tuesday from 5.15p.m. to 6.30p.m., prior to reports being published with the Executive Overview & Scrutiny agenda. Cabinet Members will receive draft papers for comment and will be briefed as required on the final papers for the Cabinet Meeting together with other appropriate matters. The Chief Operating Officer or relevant Corporate Director and Heads of Services will brief Portfolio Holders regularly, as appropriate, on emerging issues.

##### **4.2 Conservative & Our West Lancashire (OWL) Briefings**

Regular briefings for the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Conservative & Our West Lancashire (OWL) Groups will be held with the Chief Operating Officer. Group Leaders will advise the Chief Operating Officer of items they wish to discuss on each occasion and, where appropriate, Heads of Service will attend the Briefings. Regular Briefings for Shadow Portfolio Holders and Group Spokesmen are also held with Heads of Service on request.

##### **4.3 Overview and Scrutiny Committee Briefings**

The Chairman of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be briefed on final papers for the meeting which he/she is to Chair 2/3 days before the meeting. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman will be consulted on the draft Agenda.

##### **4.4 Planning Committee and Licensing Committees**

In view of the non-political nature of the issues before the Council’s Regulatory Committees, and in order to demonstrate transparency in the decision making

process, it is best practice not to have Group Meetings on the Agendas and it is preferable for Officer Briefings for these Committees to be given to Group representatives together on final papers. For Planning Committee the Chairman's briefing usually occurs on the Monday of the week of the meeting. A Conservative and OWL Briefings are also held. For the Licensing Committees a joint briefing occurs on the Monday of the week in which the meeting is to be held or immediately prior to the meeting.

- 4.5 No briefings will be given in relation to "Appeal" type items, other than on the management of the business and necessary training. This is to reduce the possibility of the Council's arrangements for dealing with such appeals being challenged on the grounds of bias.

#### 4.6 **Council**

The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and the Leader will be briefed prior to each Council Meeting by the Chief Operating Officer, The Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Democratic Services Manager. Cabinet Members and Shadow Cabinet Members will be briefed by Report Authors on significant items.

- 4.7 There is no obligation on an Officer to consult Members on the contents of a report to be placed in his/her name before Cabinet, a Committee, Sub-Committee, Commission or Working Party. However, an Officer may choose to obtain views on a draft report, but it must be appreciated that any recommendations are those of the Officer.

- 4.8 Briefings for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of a Commission or Working Group are held at the discretion of the lead Corporate Director.

#### 5.0 **Requests for the Preparation of Reports**

- 5.1 Formal requests for a report on a particular issue to be prepared will only come from the Leader of the Council, the relevant Portfolio Holder or Chairman of the Committee or the Leader of the Conservative Group. If, in the opinion of the Chief Operating Officer, the contents might be politically sensitive, involve a considerable effort or have significant financial implications, she will discuss the request with the Leader of the Council in order to determine the degree of support it enjoys. If necessary the matter will be referred for consideration by Cabinet or the appropriate Committee or Sub-Committee where a final resolution can be made. If it is deemed necessary, the Cabinet, Committee or Sub-Committee can be requested to indicate where within the current work programme resources for the additional work should be made available.

#### 6.0 **Cabinet, Council and Committee Meetings**

- 6.1 If Members intend to propose a motion or amendment that is either long or complicated, they should, wherever possible, put it in writing. This will assist the clarity of debate and accuracy of the minute. Officers will give assistance if so requested before the meeting.

- 6.2 Seating arrangements for each meeting are different and Members should familiarise themselves with the arrangements.

**Notes**

1. Separate media liaison procedures deal with press releases and publicity.
2. Details of the Shadow Cabinet Members and Group Spokesmen are attached.

**Shadow Cabinet/Conservative Group Spokesmen 2023/24**

		<b>Conservative</b>
Council	Conservative Group Leader and Legal & Democratic Services, Human Resources, Regeneration, IT & Green Growth	Councillor D Westley
Cabinet functions	Deputy Group Leader and Finance	Councillor Whittington
	Leisure	Councillor Bailey
	Planning	Councillor Pope
	Housing	Councillor Jukes
	Communities	Councillor A Blundell
	Street Scene	Councillor I Eccles
	Health & Wellbeing	Councillor M Westley
Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee		Councillor D Westley
Corporate and Environmental Overview & Scrutiny Committee		Councillor Jukes
Planning Committee		Councillor Pope
Licensing & Appeals Committee/Licensing & Gambling Committee		Councillor Eccles
Audit and Governance Committee		Councillor Pope
Standards Committee		Councillor D Westley
Investigating Committee		Councillor Gordon
Chief Officers Committee		Councillor Whittington
Employment Appeals Sub-Committee		