

Council business

Cllr Bard has given notice that he wishes to propose that Members (particularly recently co-opted Members) should be given more time to “fully research and scrutinise the budget” to enable them to table “meaningful amendments.”

If passed, this motion would have the effect of closing the budget-setting meeting (without the Council having considered the budget or precept). The motions to approve the budget and precept would reappear on the agenda for the scheduled Council meeting of 25 January. This would be an ordinary meeting, so the Standing Orders for budget-setting meetings (attached) would not apply. This means that Members could then propose amendments during the meeting on 25 January adding new lines to the budget (whether or not their proposals had been subject to any scrutiny) and they would be under no obligation to submit these amendments in writing before the meeting. Similarly, any Members wishing to propose the deletion of, or reduction in, specific budget lines would be able to do so without any obligation to have given any prior notice.

Suspension of Standing Order 11

This Council’s Standing Orders – which were largely derived from national model standing orders – include a provision that precludes a Member from proposing more than one amendment to a motion. This was included in the national model standing orders in an attempt to prevent any councillor ‘talking out’ a motion by simply tabling dozens of amendments and then talking for as long as possible on each one until the meeting closed – thereby preventing a vote on the motion.

The motion to agree the budget for 2023-24 is a single motion but the budget is made up of 58 separate proposed budget lines. Suspending this standing order will enable an individual Member to propose amendments to more than one budget line.