

**Date: 25 March 2008**

**Report: STANDING ORDERS**

**Purpose of the report**

1. To invite Members' to endorse a recommendation from the Audit and Review Committee on amendments to the Authority's Standing Orders.

**Strategic Planning Framework**

2. The information and recommendation(s) contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and its approved strategic planning framework.

**Background**

3. Standing Orders currently include provisions that deal with the ability of members to speak at meetings. Recent changes in the Members' Code of Conduct, however, now mean that members with a prejudicial interest may speak at meetings and it is considered that Standing Orders should be revised to clarify how this would be dealt with in practice.
4. There are also two anomalies in the current standing orders with regard to the length of time for which members are allowed to speak, and this would be a convenient opportunity to address these also. The anomalies are, firstly, that the current five minute limit on speaking only applies if a member is speaking on a motion or amendment (so there is no limit on how long a member may speak if nothing has been moved); and secondly that there is no limit on the time for which members may speak (if the Chairman permits them to speak at all) when attending a Committee of which they are not a member.
5. It is considered that clarification is required in respect of
  - members speaking when they have a prejudicial interest; and
  - members' existing rights to speak, including at Committees they are not a member of.
6. At its meeting on 15 February 2008, the Audit and Review Committee considered a report which set out proposed changes that would address the issues referred to above. The Committee agreed to recommend to the Authority that changes, as set out in the Appendix to this report, be made to the current Standing Order(s).

## **RECOMMENDATION**

7. That the Authority endorses the recommendation of the Audit and Review Committee to approve the proposed changes to Standing Orders set out in the Appendix to this report.

**Richard Daly**  
**Solicitor / Monitoring Officer**

10 March 2008

Background documents: None.

Existing wording	Proposed change
<p><b>2.4 Proceedings of Committees and Sub-Committees</b></p> <p>(a) Any Authority Member may attend as an observer at meetings of Committees and Sub-Committees or Groups (except those Committees and Sub-Committees and Groups, which the Authority may from time to time determine for the purposes of this Standing Order) to which he/she has not been appointed a Member, including meetings or items of business from which the public has been excluded. If given permission by the Chairman of the meeting, a Member attending as an observer may speak (but not vote) on any matter.</p>	<p><b>Add (at the end)</b></p> <p>"subject to Standing Order 2.6(f)"</p>
	<p>Introduce a new provision as SO 2.4(b) and renumber SO 2.4(b) to (d) to become (c) to (e)</p> <p>"(b) A member who has a prejudicial interest in any matter and who wishes to exercise their right under the Code of Conduct for Members to speak on that matter must give notice in accordance with the Authority's scheme for Public Question Time or the Planning Committee's procedure for public speaking at Planning Committee meetings (as the case may be). The member may then speak on the matter for up to three minutes. Members speaking under this provision will do so before any speakers who are not members of the Authority, and having spoken will leave the meeting for the remainder of the consideration of the matter."</p>

Existing wording	Proposed change
<p>2.6(f) A Member shall direct his/her speech to the question under discussion, or to an explanation, or to a point of order. Except with the consent of the Authority, a Member shall not speak for more than five minutes on any motion or amendment, except for the mover, who may speak for not more than 10 minutes. There shall be no limit on the length of time the Chairman may speak.</p>	<p>Replace the second sentence of SO 2.6(f) with the following:</p> <p>"Except with the consent of the Authority, a member shall not speak for more than five minutes, except for the mover of a motion, who may speak for not more than ten minutes."</p>