

Recommendation to Council on 18 April 2013	From: General Purposes Committee on 28 January 2013	Item 11 (a)
	Open Questions at Council – Special Provision for Leaders of Minority Groups	
1.	Council is asked to approve the following recommendation:-	
	that the Chairman of the Council be requested to henceforth provide for the minority group leaders to ask one Open Question each before other Council members put Open Questions at meetings of Council.	
	Background	
2.	The Committee considered a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which sought Members' views on amending the Constitution to give special provision to the minority group leaders so they could ask one Open Question each at the beginning of the Open Questions item at Council meetings.	
3.	The meeting noted that the Leader of the Independent Group had requested that this matter be considered due to the impact of the random nature of the current process by which questions were chosen to be answered. He referred to the failure by Council to consider one of his own Open Questions due to lack of time, although the issue he wished considered was, in his view, of greater importance in relation to the Council's business than his other questions which had been successfully raised.	
4.	The Committee was minded to agree that the minority group leaders should be allowed the opportunity each to ask a preliminary Open Question at Council meetings. However, a Member regarded the inclusion of this practice within the Council's Constitution as overly bureaucratic. He suggested that, instead, the matter be dealt with on a more informal basis through the authority of the Chairman of the Council. Although concern was expressed that such an arrangement could lead to inconsistency of application the Committee as a whole indicated its clear support for the Member's suggestion.	
Appendices	None	