

Council

17 July 2025

Use Of Urgency Provisions

Report from: Bhupinder Gill, Assistant Director Legal and Governance

Author: Wayne Hemingway, Head of Democratic Services

Summary

This report provides details of a recent usage of urgency provisions contained within the Constitution.

1. Recommendation

- 1.1. The Council is asked to note the use of urgency provisions as set out in section 4 of the report.

2. Budget and policy framework

- 2.1. The Council's Constitution provides for a report to be submitted to Council following the usage of urgency provisions contained within the Constitution.

3. Background

- 3.1. Rule 17 (special urgency) of the Council's Access to Information rules, as set out in the Constitution, permits the Cabinet to make decisions when compliance with Rule 15 (The Forward Plan of Key Decisions) and Rule 16 (General Exception) is not possible.
- 3.2. On such occasions, a report to Council on the Cabinet decisions taken in the circumstances set out in Rule 17 (Special Urgency) will be submitted, in accordance with paragraph 18.3 of the Access to Information rules.
- 3.3. Paragraph 3.2 of the Responsibility for Cabinet Functions permits the Leader of the Council to make urgent decisions (which would ordinarily be a matter for Cabinet) subject to compliance with the Council's Access to Information rules, as referenced in paragraph 2.2 above. As such, all reports (unless exempt) and decisions (as well as an entry on the Forward Plan) are published on the Council's website on the day any urgency decision is made.
- 3.4. Leader and Cabinet – urgency. Paragraph 15.11 (call-in and urgency) of the Overview and Scrutiny rules, as set out in the Council's Constitution, states that a decision will be urgent if any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interests. The record of the decision and notice by which it is made public shall state

whether in the opinion of the decision making person or body, the decision is an urgent one, and therefore not subject to call-in. The chairperson (or in their absence the vice-chairperson) of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee must agree both that the decision proposed is reasonable in all the circumstances and to it being treated as a matter of urgency.

- 3.5. Decisions taken as a matter of urgency must be reported to the next available meeting of the Council, together with the reasons for urgency.
- 3.6. Council – urgent action. Paragraph 4.1 of the Employee Delegation Scheme states that in relation to Council responsibilities, subject to consultation with the Leaders of all the groups which comprise at least 1/10th of the membership of the Council (or their nominees), and the provisions for urgent decisions which are contrary to any plan or strategy which has been approved or adopted by the Council or which are contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the budget approved by the Council (set out in Chapter 4, Part 3 of the Constitution), the Chief Executive and Directors shall have the power to act on behalf of the Council in cases of urgency only where the urgent matter is of such a nature that it may be against the Council's interest to delay and where it is not practicable to obtain the approval of the Council.
- 3.7. Following the decision, the decision taker will provide a full report to the next available Council meeting explaining the decision, the reasons for it and why the decision was treated as a matter of urgency.
- 3.8. A summary of the recent use of these provisions is set out in the following section.

4. Council (non-executive decisions)

- 4.1. The Director of Place made an urgent decision on 30 May 2025 on an HR matter, following consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Conservative Group on 30 May and 28 May respectively, as attached as an exempt appendix. This related to a proposal to finalise a settlement agreement with a member of staff. Please note that some of the information has been redacted to ensure that the identity of the employee cannot be revealed.
- 4.2. Given that delays in making this type of decision can lead to periods of stress for the individual and continued uncertainty for the team involved it was considered necessary to utilise urgency provisions to bring matters to a swift conclusion to avoid prolonging matters unnecessarily.

Lead officer contact

Wayne Hemingway, Head of Democratic Services, T: 01634 332509,
E: wayne.hemingway@medway.gov.uk

Appendices

Exempt Appendix 1 – Director of Place Urgency Report, 30 May 2025

Background papers

Exempt Appendix