

# MATLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Meeting: 22 May 2006

Report by: Mrs Susan Smith (Town Clerk)

## **REDUCING THE AGENDA**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The agenda at Town Council meetings has become overly long. In order to alleviate lengthy meetings in the future, action must be taken to reduce their length.

### **2. INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS**

Working with the Mayor, the Clerk has explored various possibilities as to how this reduction could be implemented.

**Committees:** Committee meetings bring together a smaller number of councillors to concentrate on a specific function of the council and share the workload. Committee meetings are open to the public.

- i) The permanent Committee – for example, a planning committee, having delegated powers to make decisions on behalf of the Council.
- ii) The advisory Committee – a committee without delegated powers. The committee makes recommendations to full council, which then makes the decisions.

**Delegation to the Clerk:** The Clerk can be given permission to make routine decisions without having to take matters to full Council. It is unlawful for a Council to delegate decision making to any individual councillor. They can delegate decisions to the Clerk because they are professional officers whose independence allows them to act on behalf of the Council. (*advice - The Good Councillor's Guide*)

***Any decision to delegate needs to be incorporated into Standing Orders.***

### **3. OFFICER COMMENT**

**Committees:**

In the past, this Council has commented that they would not wish for Planning decisions to be made outside of full Council. They value the fact that **all** Councillors and members of the public are given the opportunity to comment on applications before them.

Whilst most financial aspects of the Council can be dealt with at committee level,

they take very little Council time, as do Environmental matters (however both could increase in the future).

In discussion with the Mayor, it was felt that the most benefit would be gained by delegation of items to the Clerk, who could work on projects (adhering to strict guidelines) with Councillors who had special responsibility or who were 'Champions' of the Council. These projects could then be presented, complete, to the Council for their decision. Routine correspondence could also be dealt with in the same manner, being reported to Council in the normal listings.

#### 4. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There would be no financial implications for the Council should either of these methods be implemented, however the Council should be aware that both the Clerk and staff could be working on projects 'behind the scenes' that had major time implications to those involved.

#### 5. RECOMMENDATION

**To delegate the following to the Clerk (working in conjunction with the Mayor (or Deputy in their absence), Councillors with Special Responsibilities and the designated 'Champions' as outlined in the Business Plan):**

**Routine correspondence and projects** (*Matlock in Bloom, Sunflower Competition, Christmas weekend etc.*) – Correspondence to be dealt with on receipt, with advice sought from the Mayor or Deputy as thought necessary. All letters will continue to be reported to Council in the normal manner.

##### **Council Projects –**

- Instructions received from Council to be actioned by the Town Clerk working in conjunction with the designated Councillor with Special Responsibilities. Should a Councillor not having those responsibilities instigate the project, they too would work with the Clerk and Councillor concerned.
- A strict project plan would be adhered to. Only when the plan was complete would it be presented to Council for approval.
- On no account should Councillors instruct the Clerk or office staff to implement projects without the Council's prior authority.
- In the case of larger projects, a regular report to be made, in writing, to the Council.

Signed:   
Town Clerk

Dated: 14 May 2006