

A motion in note or a note in motion?

28 May 2026



Dear Editor,

Thank you as always for your coverage of last night's council meeting.

You correctly report that the mayor refused to allow councillors to debate my motion on the constitution, falsely framing it as an attempt to change the constitution, and that I denied this.

As both councillors and the public were prevented by the mayor from even seeing the motion, I thought your readers might like to. It was not a motion to amend the constitution but to amend the recommendation in the report, to add two unarguable factual points. Both were framed as to "note", meaning that no action was required.

Had they been allowed, councillors would have been invited to:

- Note that, while the constitution states at paragraph 2.1: "The Code of Conduct for councillors is available in Appendix 1 and the arrangements for making a complaint and dealing with complaints can be found in the council's Operating Framework", no such arrangements exist in the Operating Framework.
- Further note that while the live register of delegations and the Terms of Reference for the Full Council and other Council Committees, Sub-Committees, Advisory Panels and Joint Arrangements delegate to hearings panels the determination of complaints referred by an Investigating Officer regarding alleged breaches of the councillors' Code of Conduct, neither document provides any authority for such panels to issue any sanction.

It was my intention to draw the attention of councillors and the public these deficiencies in the constitution that councillors were being asked to approve, but with no attempt to amend it, as claimed by the mayor.

To be fair to Cllr McIntyre, it was obvious that she was merely reading from a script given to her by the administration, probably by those who are responsible for ensuring that the constitution is fit for purpose and who have a vested interest in concealing its failings. It was her first meeting as mayor and we might hope that she will learn from the incident.

My mistake was not that I submitted the amendment to the recommendation "late", as there was no requirement to submit it in advance, but that I submitted it in advance at all, giving the administration the opportunity to engage in procedural shenanigans. I will learn from this.

Of course, as Cllr Lawrence eloquently and movingly attested, the absence of a proper procedure for complaints against councillors has real world consequences. The administration has targeted a number of opposition councillors, including myself, with code of conduct complaints while shielding senior Residents Association councillors.

Finally, you are right that the underlying problem with the meeting was that many councillors regard a meeting where matters of such importance as the council's constitution are considered as a purely "civic" event, and any discussion to be keeping them from the refreshments provided at council tax payers' expense.

Cllr Chris Ames

Labour, Court Ward

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