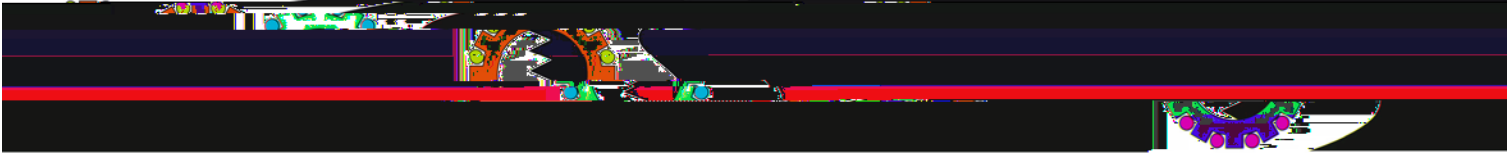
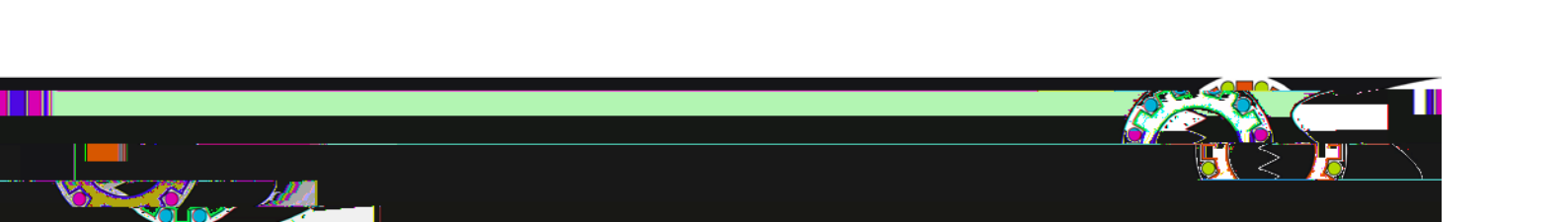



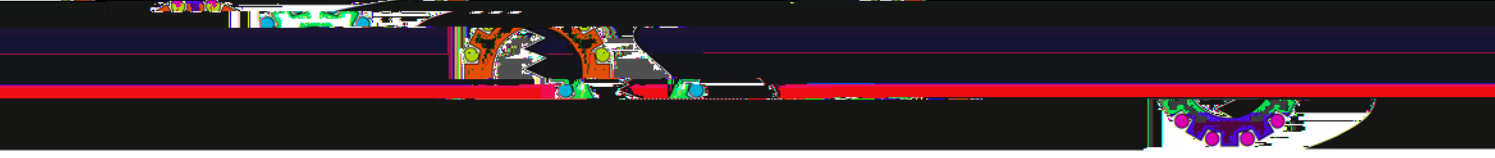
Assignment Questions



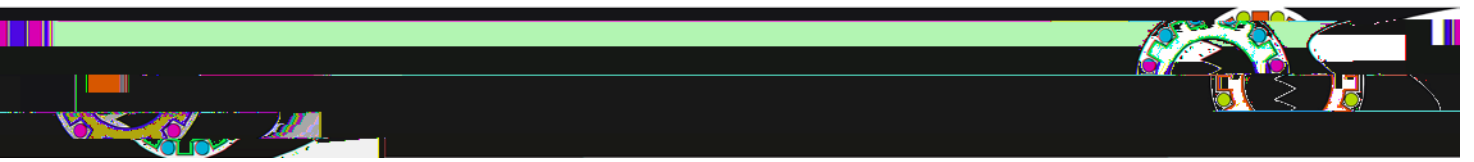


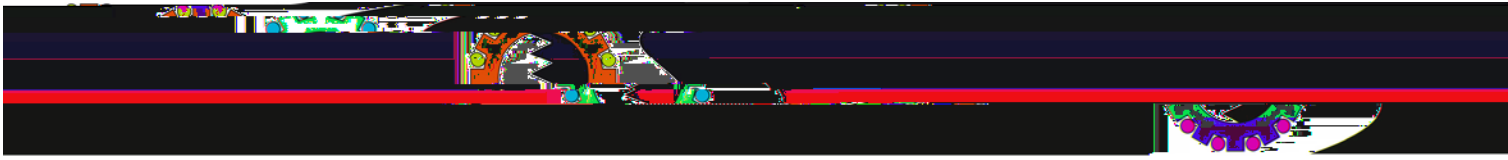
At the start of this municipal year, the Corporate Resources O&S Committee agreed to undertake a review of the arrangements for City Council meetings. This was in response to concerns expressed across the Chamber on the effectiveness of the meetings. We have talked to members and as>>BDC 0 scn /Tnd tth Z

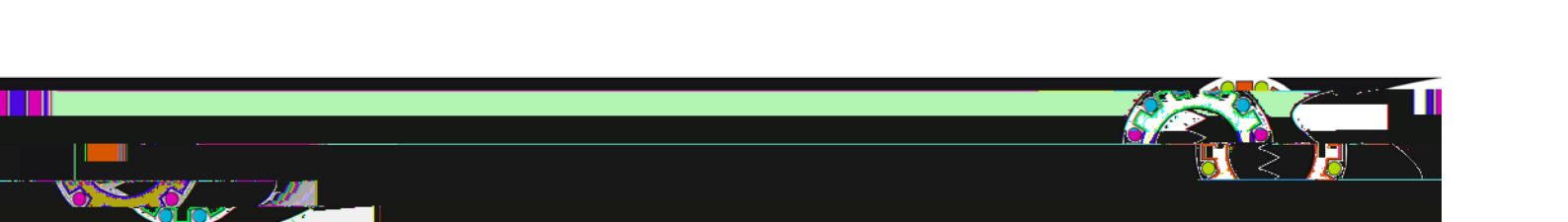
- 
- 1.1.1 At the City Council meeting on 12th January 2016, the Leader was asked by Cllr Paul Tilsley about his plans to bring back items of substance to the City Council meeting. Cllr Tilsley asserted that the current meetings were a pale imitation of what they had been and that more discussion should be brought to give council ownership of important issues.
- 1.1.2 The Leader agreed that there was a need to work cross-party to address the content of full council meetings. He quoted Cllr John Alden, who had said that “this is the premier debating chamber in this country outside Westminster”. The Leader agreed with that and said that there was a need to ensure that City Council meetings have real honest debates and bring items of substance for discussion, such as skills and the economy, and child poverty.
- 1.1.3 This followed earlier comments by the Leader and others, and discussions at Council Business Management Committee (CBM), about how we might improve the effectiveness of the City Council meeting. Indeed, the Corporate Resources O&S Committee had identified the need to review the arrangements for City Council meetings at the start of the municipal year.
- 1.2.1 Therefore, following discussions with the Leader at our January Committee meeting, members of the Committee
- 



1.2.5 The reason for this is that the evidence in this report will contribute to the annual review of the Constitution taking place in time for the May AGM. In addition, the intention is that the debate held when this report is discussed at the City Council meeting on the 5th April will provide further information for the Leader and CBM to consider.







questionnaire had asked a question at City Council previously. Nonetheless the facility was felt to be useful by three of the respondents.

2.2.8 Ten of the members who responded to the survey agreed that questions from members of the public to any Cabinet Member or District Committee Chairman should remain without modification; three thought this should be modified, and four that this should not remain on the agenda.

2.2.9 Those in favour of retaining public questions said that having all Councillors hear the concerns of citizens was important “as it puts the public in the room and at the forefront of our minds as we make decisions.” Comments included:

- As it takes place during the day, this limits people from taking part: “Most working people cannot take time off during the working day to come”. One suggestion was that “people should be allowed to send us a short video of them asking question if they can't be there in person”;
- Having the questions vetted in advance and answers prepared is ineffective and “stage managed”;
- Party political points are often made as part of the questions (and there is a suspicion that they are sometime planted).

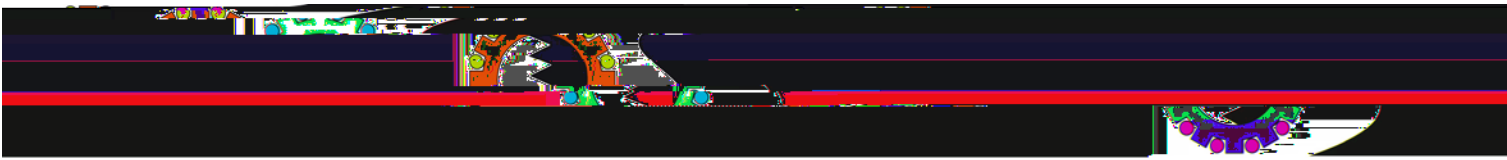
2.2.10 It was suggested that questions could “be [put] in writing and together with responses circulated to members.”

2.2.11 These findings reflected the discussions of the Committee, where there was some disagreement as to whether they were an important opportunity for citizens to question political leaders and that to remove it would undermine City Council as a means of engagement; or whether they really did represent good engagement.

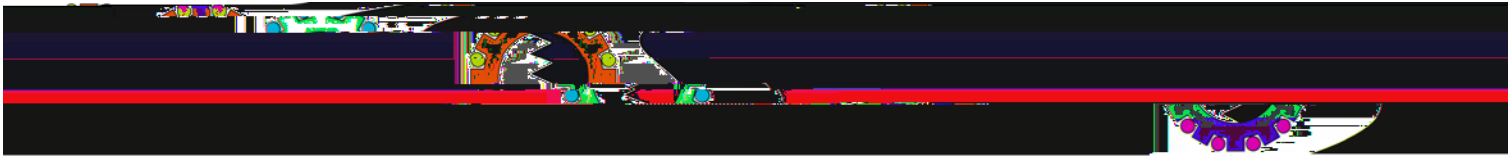
2.2.12 If public questions were to be removed, the Committee was clear that it should be replaced by more meaningful engagement, and so explored alternative means of engaging with the public. One idea put forward prior to the survey was that the Leader and Cabinet have a special dedicated webcast session (where members of the public can also attend in person), perhaps monthly. Respondents were asked whether they thought this would be a better or less effective way of enabling members of the public to engage with the Cabinet and ask questions. Over half (nine) members said that it would be a better way of enabling members of the public to engage with the Cabinet and ask questions; and two that it would be less effective. Six thought it would make no difference.

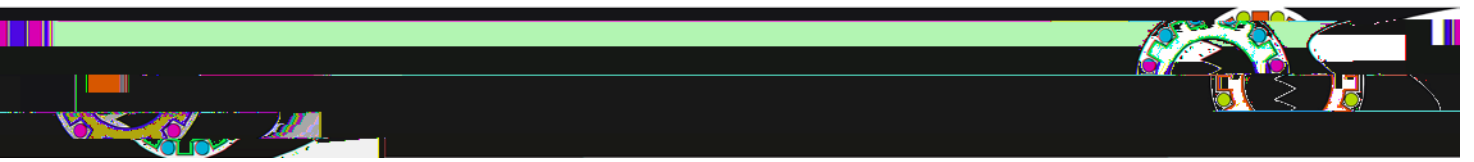
2.2.13 The mix of views was reflected in the comments:





2.2.22 The timings associated with questions from councillors was the main issue; when members were







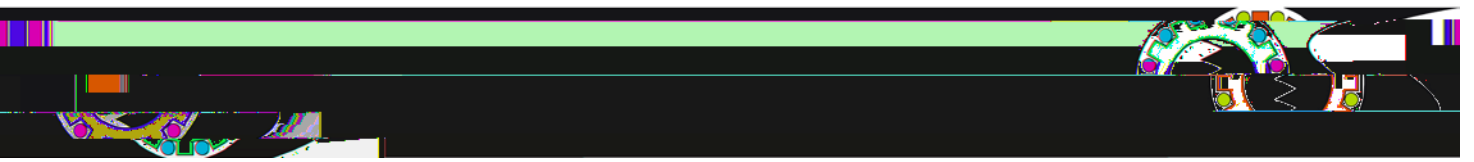
Suggested Action

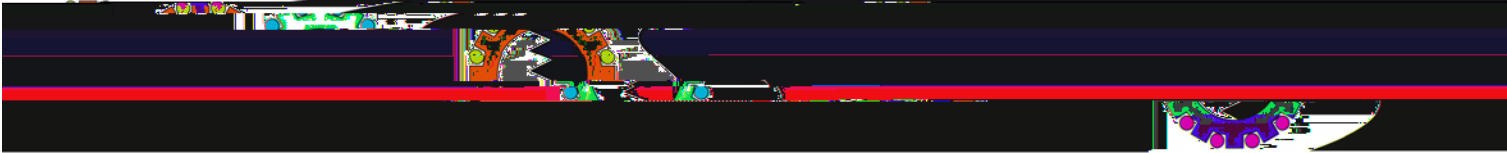
2.2.38 Whilst there was unanimous agreement on retaining motions for debate, there were a number of comments which focused on the time available for this item, the content of motions and the style of debate.

2.2.39 With regards to the time available, respondents to the survey were evenly split on whether more, less or the same amount of time should be spent on this:

Motions	5 (29%)	4 (24%)	5 (29%)	3 (18%)

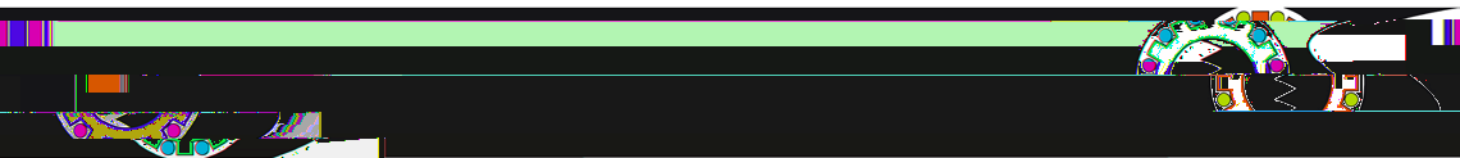
2.2.40 The following comments were made:

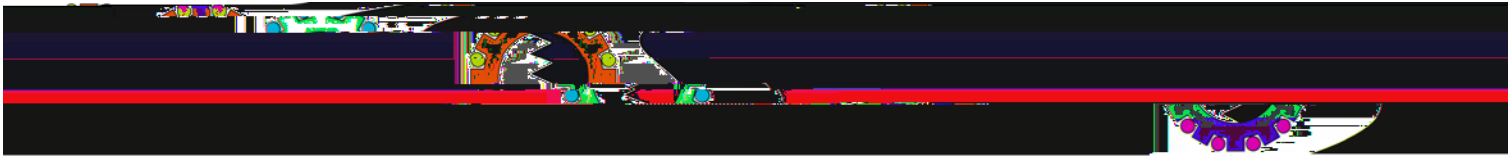


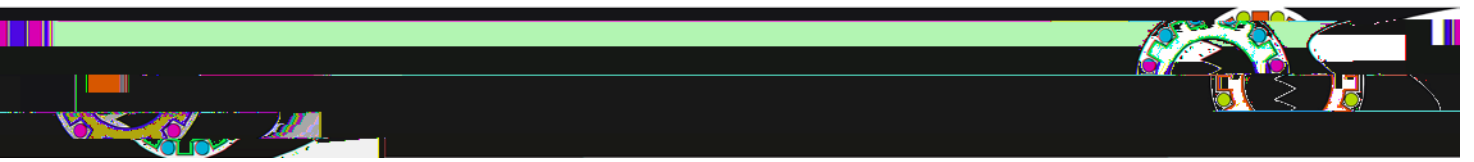


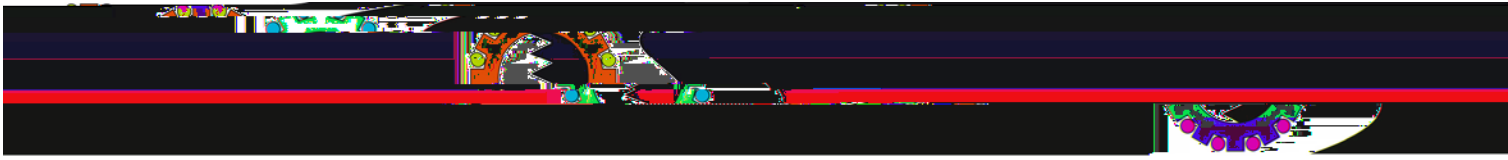
Option	Total	Percent
Far too long	2	12%
A little bit too long	0	0%
Mostly about right	6	35%
A little bit too short	7	41%
Far too short	2	12%

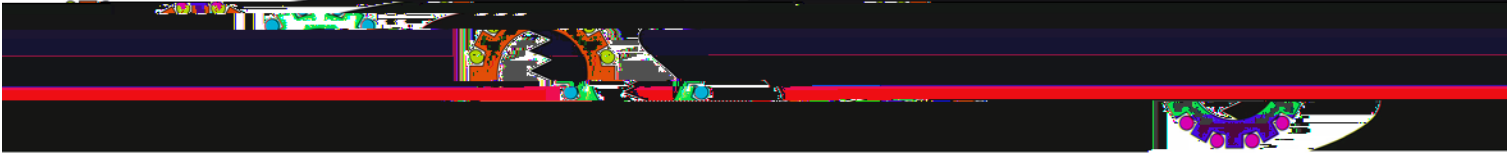
2.5.2 Those in favour of a shorter



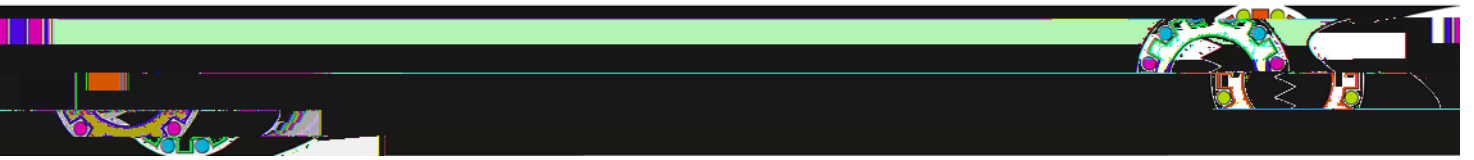








members not on the Committee to contribute and improving the time allocation for motions.
(Suggested actions 1, 4, 8 and 9)



That the suggested actions above be approved and forwarded to the Leader for inclusion in the annual

