

CONSTITUTION REVIEW WORKING GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE 2023 – 2027

1. Introduction

The Constitution Review Working Group was established in 2019, to review the Constitution and ensure that it is fit for purpose. In those four years the Council has enhanced its governance arrangements through a thorough review of the Constitution.

The Local Government Association’s Peer Challenge (October 2022) recommended that “the Council needs to reassure itself that its governance arrangements are robust”. One of the actions in response to that recommendation is to “ensure the Constitution continues to reflect robust governance processes and arrangements via timely updates”.

The Constitution is a framework that enhances and supports elected members and officers to make effective, lawful and timely decisions in a transparent and accountable way.

The Constitution Review Working Group, in reviewing the Constitution, should ensure that written documents forming the Constitution are up to date, easy to read (where possible) and accessible to all, but also to have a system of governance that provides appropriate devolution to officers to take and implement decisions (within the schemes of delegation framework), that elected members are comfortable with and confident in.

Against the backdrop of financial austerity measures, a sharp focus on all processes and procedures, ensuring they are as cost-effective as possible is required.

2. Purpose

The Constitution Review Working Group will:

- a) Review areas in the Constitution to ensure that they are fit for purpose and propose appropriate changes;
- b) Receive requests to review certain areas of the Constitution;

c) Consider changes proposed by Members, Officers and Committees, as well as other stakeholders such as audit;

d) Recommend proposed changes to Council for approval.

e) Wherever possible increase the use of technology to support our processes.

3. Membership

The Constitution Review Working Group shall comprise of 7 members, made up of 4 x Liberal Democrats; 2 x Conservatives, 1 x green. Others members will be invited to the meetings as required.

4. Substitutions

Substitutions will be accepted from within each political grouping, or within the non-aligned Members (as per Part D5, paragraph 3.6.1 of the Constitution) and when members give notification of their substitute to officers ahead of the meeting.

5. Chair

The Chair of the Constitution Review Working Group will be appointed at the first meeting.

6. Voting

Any vote will be subject to a simple majority. In simple majority voting the Chair will have a casting vote.

7. Quorum

The quorum of a meeting of the Constitution Review Working Group will be three as per the Constitution

8. Frequency of Meetings

The Constitution Review Working Group will meet as and when required. All meetings will be held in private and dates and times of meetings will be agreed by the Working Group. Meetings will held remotely where possible.

9. Minutes of Constitution Review Working Group Meetings

The Working Group shall agree the minutes at the next suitable meeting.

July 2023

Updated May 2024