

COUNCIL CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Council Constitution Committee held on Thursday, 17 February 2022 at 6.00 pm in The Telford Room, Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford TF3 4NT

Present: Councillors V A Fletcher, I T W Fletcher, V J Holt, H Rhodes, C F Smith (Vice-Chair) and W L Tomlinson

In Attendance: R Attwell (Democracy Officer (Democracy)), J Clarke (Senior Democracy Officer (Democracy)) and R Phillips (Service Delivery Manager, Legal & Democracy)

Apologies: Councillor M J Smith

CCC9 Declarations of Interest

None.

CCC10 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes held on 18th January 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

CCC11 Revised Constitution

The Service Delivery Manager Legal & Democracy presented the report on the revised Constitution. The aim of the revision had been to tidy up and make changes which reflected the way in which the council now worked and to reflect the new corporate branding for the Council. A reminder had now been given prominence at the beginning of the document, to remind people that the document was hyperlinked for ease of use.

The Service Delivery Manager confirmed that changes to job titles were reflected in the new updated version of the Constitution. Upon being asked if Members would be notified every quarter by delegated powers, as stated at the previous meeting on the 18th January 2022, the Service Delivery Manager responded that each time a revised version of the Council Constitution was available this would be circulated to Members.

The Service Delivery Manager then began to set out the changes which had been made to the Constitution. In relation to questions at meetings of the Council, a longer time was now allowed for public question responses and the time had changed from 3 minutes to 5 minutes. Members were required to be present for the whole debate of an item. If members were not present for the entirety of the debate they would not be allowed to vote. This was in the interests of probity. Taking note of this explicit change, Officers would now provide for a short recess in full council meetings to accommodate comfort

breaks. Members asked for it to be noted that natural breaks were vital and a right for officers and Members.

In terms of the conduct of business, the Service Delivery Manager set out that for the political balance calculation, a new clarification had been made clear that any future calculation would be done to two decimal points. In addition, non-aligned members would be allocated seats in accordance with the legislation.

In relation to Scrutiny Management Board some changes had been made to reflect the way in which the Council actually worked. These included the direction of scrutiny resources and information provided to Chairs regarding notice of key decision which were not publishable.

Following the UK's withdrawal from European Union, new legislation had been brought in with regards to procurement which now superseded European Union law. In relation to Code of Conduct, job roles had been amended together with the member/officer protocol in relation to the criticism of officers within public meetings.

The rules relating to public questions had also been updated to ensure that questions put were proper. Building upon the existing provisions within the Constitution, the changes would mean improper questions could not go before the meeting. It would still allow members of the public to ask pertinent questions.

The Service Delivery Manager advised Members that work would continue to condense the structure of document but this was something which would need to be undertaken on a rolling basis over a longer period of time. This process would involve the working group with Members being updated on a regular basis. The working group would continue to with its current membership but with Councillor V Holt joining.

Upon being put to the vote it was, unanimously:

RESOLVED – that

- a) The Council Constitutions Committee be approved**
- b) Full Council adopts the new draft Constitution**

The meeting ended at 6.26 pm

Chairman:

Date: Date Not Specified