

COUNCIL CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Council Constitution Committee held on Wednesday 5 October 2022 at 6.00 pm in The Telford Room, Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford, TF3 4NT

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

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

Apologies: Councillor M J Smith and W L Tomlinson

CCC12 Declarations of Interest

None.

CCC13 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2022 be agreed and signed by the Chair.

CCC14 Terms of Reference 2022/23

The Service Delivery Manager: Legal & Democracy presented the report of the Director: Policy & Governance which asked Members to review the Terms of References for the Council Constitution Committee.

The Constitution required that Full Council should agree at its Annual Meeting the Terms of Reference for each of its Committees to enable the Council to efficiently conduct its business.

At the Annual Meeting of the Council on 19 May 2022, Full Council delegated authority to each Committee to review its own Terms of Reference. The Terms of Reference forms part of the Constitution and was approved by Full Council in that context on 3 March 2022.

There was one minor change suggested to the Terms of Reference which provided clarity around the process for appointment of a Chair for the Committee in that the Chair was appointed by Full Council but set out that a Vice-Chair may be appointed by a majority decision of the Committee.

RESOLVED – that the Council Constitution Committee agree the amended Terms of Reference.

CCC15 Constitution Review - Update and Next Steps

The Service Delivery Manager: Legal & Democracy presented the report of the Director: Policy & Governance which updated Members on the review of the Constitution which took place during the last municipal year and it sought areas for review for the current municipal year and highlighted the proposed changes to formatting.

Members were reminded that a new version of the Constitution was approved at Full Council in March 2022. Since that time, a further version had been published on 12 July 2022, which corrected some numbering errors in the Full Council rules of debate, as well as the revision of some job titles.

As part of the ongoing review further changes to the Constitution were considered desirable in order to ensure that it was as accessible as possible and reflected the ways in which the Council worked. It was currently split into three parts; how the council worked; decision making and governance, scrutiny, oversight and transparency, which did not necessarily reflect the work Committees undertook, the information did not always sit with the Committee itself which made it difficult to follow. It was suggested that the Council's Constitution was ordered numerically, with more easily digestible sections for each Committee. Were the Council to adopt this way of ordering the Constitution, all of the parts which refer to individual committees would be in one place.

It was further suggested that the Constitution could be uploaded as a whole and also in smaller, downloadable sections, allowing just the relevant section which someone was working from to be open at one time.

The Director of Finance had expressed a wish to review and revise the Financial Regulations contained within the Constitution in order to ensure they were fit for purpose and reflect the way in which the Council operates. Legal Services would support this work.

The final element of the review would be to consider any recommendations made as a result of guidance due to be released by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny ('CGS').

Changes to the Constitution would be presented to the working group for discussion before the revised version of the Constitution was brought back to Committee for consideration and approval. A recommendation to Full Council to adopt the revised Constitution would then be required.

Members were asked to confirm the membership of the Constitution Working Group in order for the review to take place.

During the debate Members requested that an easier to use index was incorporated into the Constitution and that it be kept concise and exact and that a simple logical format would be welcomed. Members felt that it was appropriate to review financial arrangements in order to reflect any recent changes to regulations and ways of working.

With regards to the Working Group, Members confirmed that Councillors I Fletcher and C Smith remained on the Working Group and that it be agreed with Councillor V Holt that she wished to be a member of the Working Group as she was not in attendance at the meeting. Members requested that the Working Group Meetings be held virtually.

RESOLVED – that

- a) the review of the Constitution which took place in 2021 be noted;**
- b) the areas for the review of the Constitution for 2022 be noted; and**
- c) Councillors I Fletcher and C Smith form the working Group, together with V Holt (subject to agreement).**

The meeting ended at 6.19 pm

Chairman:

Date: Date Not Specified