

CONSTITUTION REVIEW WORKING GROUP

THURSDAY, 31 JULY 2025

Present:

Councillors Bullivant, Clarence, Palethorpe and J Taylor

Apologies:

Councillors Daws, Dawson, Sanders, Steemson and Thorne

Officers in Attendance:

Charlie Fisher, Democratic Services Team Leader and Deputy Monitoring Officer

Abbie Cook, Legal Assistant

Camilla de Bernhardt Lane, Director of Practice Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CFGs):

7. ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

Camilla De Bernhardt Lane (Director of Practice, CFGs) opened the meeting and gave overview of the agenda. This was the final meeting of this part of the work, with an additional tranche of work being set up to commence in Autumn 2025.

Apologies were received from Councillors Daws, Dawson, Sanders, Steemson and Thorne.

8. ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was noted that a question had been received via email from Cllr Sanders regarding Town and Parish Council attendance at site visits. Members commented that not every Town and Parish Council has a separate Chair of a Planning Committee, and that the wording should be reflected to state a representative of a Town and Parish Council could attend site visits as an observer

Action: Agreed to change to “representative of a Town or Parish Council” as an observer.

9. MINOR AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Charlie Fisher (Democratic Services Team Leader) began by sharing a number of parts of the Constitution which needed minor amendments to be made to either reflect changes that had been made already, clarifications and a general read-through. These were discussed in turn with Councillors to ensure there was clarity around the changes proposed:

- The Council's staff structure and job titles (including in the Scheme of Delegation)

- Removing the old comsec email address for Democratic Services
- Members Allowance Scheme – adding the Audit Independent Member's fees and Amending the agreed Standards Independent Person's Fees
- Members Allowance Scheme – amending the new 2025/26 rates once the pay award has been agreed. This had been agreed by the time of the meeting.
- General SPAG check of the document
- Updating the Audit Committee and Governance Committee's Terms of Reference to reflect the changes made at Full Council on 29th July 2025
- Updating the Overview and Scrutiny TOR to include reference to the Crime and Disorder Committee

The Democratic Services Team Leader commented that in reviewing the Constitution, he would report back to the CRWG with any further amendments he felt could be made that fell outside of "minor" amendments within the scheme of delegation that needed to be discussed by the CRWG.

It was discussed that the CRWG would still submit amendments to the Constitution to Full Council within their agreed workstrands/topics but that the Governance Committee would be sent the notes from the CRWG to ensure they remained aware of the proposals.

The Director of Practice appraised Members of a review undertaken by her colleague at CFGS to ensure that the Constitution includes the correct legal terminology, references and sources of power.

These included:

- The description of Executive powers and their source of powers coming directly from legislation rather than Full Council
- Statutory reporting mechanisms
- Statutory references for Overview and Scrutiny
- Reporting arrangements for delegated powers and member consultation
- Sources of delegated powers including Full Council, Executive and Statutory Officer functions.

Action: Members were content for the Democratic Services Team Leader to proceed with the minor amendments and the clarifications suggested by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny.

10. CONSTITUTION REVIEW WORKING GROUP FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

The Director of Practice highlighted that this meeting was the final meeting of this scheme of work and it was the Council's intention to commission another tranche of work. It was her intention collect views from Members to create another work plan.

Members were appraised with the original survey showing which areas of the Constitution Members felt worked well, has room for improvement or needed to be replaced.

Full Council on 20th May 2025 made a number of changes to the Constitution as a result of the CRWG's work.

A number of suggestions from Members, Officers and the Director of Practice were raised and plotted on to a "roadmap". The full list is included at the end of the notes, as categorised/synthesised by CFGS.

Members used the time to discuss their ideas and proposals. Members suggested holding another survey to collect further information and ideas from Members and suggested an all Member Briefing to share the analysis from the survey and further review the potential topics. Members felt it was important that the whole Council had an opportunity to be involved in the work of the CRWG.

Actions:

- 1. The Director of Practice agreed to collate the topics from the meeting into one list and share this with Members to ensure there was agreement.*
- 2. The Director of Practice agreed to hold a further survey to gather Member feedback and present her analysis at an All-Member briefing.*

11. ROLE PROFILES

This was agreed to be added to the list of future topics.

12. CLARIFICATION OF THE CONSTITUTION REGARDING "CLOSED" MEETINGS

This was agreed to be added to the list of future topics regarding Public Meetings.

13. NEXT MEETING

Members agreed to hold the next meeting on Thursday 25th September 2025 at 10am.