

# **CONSTITUTION REVIEW WORKING GROUP - NOTES**

## **THURSDAY 26 MARCH 2026**

### **1. Attendance and Apologies**

#### Present:

Camilla de Bernhardt Lane (CfGS) (Chair)  
Councillors Bullivant, Clarence, Palethorpe, Sanders, Steemson and J Taylor

#### Apologies:

Councillor Dawson

#### Officers in Attendance:

Charlie Fisher, Democratic Services Manager and Monitoring Officer  
Kay Fice, Scrutiny Officer

### **2. NOTES OF LAST MEETING**

The notes of the meeting held on 12 January 2026 were received and approved.

### **3. ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

It was agreed that Planning Site Visits would not be revisited as it was agreed by Full Council in February 2026.

The Monitoring Officer informed the group that many actions raised have been implemented as technically not constitution changes e.g. changes to the public website regarding public participation.

The action regarding Members to introduce themselves at the start of the meeting is down to individual Chairs to include.

The action regarding the chat box to be investigated, the Monitoring Officer raised that the topic of public engagement will be raised with SLT and to enquire about mail processes of opening and scanning councillors mail.

### **4 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY AND CALL IN PROCEDURE**

The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny provided a recorded presentation of Call In procedures and best practice to include within the procedure.

Camilla highlighted some of the issues with the Council's current procedure including:

- No threshold

## Constitution Review Working Group (26 March 2026)

- No timescales
- Needs to have a specific reason – material fact
- No mention of 5 members
- Must involve the advice of key officers when Councillors are intending to request a call in

Camilla posed a number of questions to shape the discussion and form a new call in procedure.

- 1) What decisions are applicable e.g. key/delegated?
  - a. Executive Committee decision
  - b. Executive member decision
  - c. Key decision delegated by Executive Committee to an Officer.
- 2) Time frame – 5 working days from the decision notice.
- 3) How will you know? Decision notices for will be circulated by email.
- 4) Who, how and what evidence? A form will be provided (to be designed) for Members to complete and send to the Monitoring Officer to include validity check and the requirement to speak to the relevant senior officer.
- 5) When? The call in will be held at an Overview and Scrutiny meeting to be convened at the earliest opportunity by the Monitoring Officer.
- 6) Where does it go to? If recommended to reconsider, all call ins revert back to the original decision maker to reconsider their decision.

Other comments:

- Members wished for the rules to included that decisions can be called in by 5 Members of the Council or 3 members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from more than one political group.
- Requests need to be in 5 clear working days before implementation.
- With regards to process and procedure, the recent Lido call in meeting seen as excellent practice e.g. suspending standing orders and allowing public speakers.
- Key decisions are spelt out in the Constitution.
- External or Special witnesses can be called with the approval of the Scrutiny Chair.
- The meeting should seek opportunities for public to engage if appropriate e.g. suspension of standing orders and the consideration of alternative venues if a different location would be more suitable for the particular issue to encourage greater and more convenient public participation.
- The procedure must be specific on what members are voting on to avoid confusion:
  - a) Upholding the original decision or
  - b) Upholding the call in and making a recommendation back to the decision maker
- The language used would be permissive in tone rather that have a restrictive tone.
- The information (not allowed and progressed) would form part of the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report.

The Working Group also spoke about rewording the meeting procedure rules to change the public speaking arrangements for Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings to include:

- Representations to the Committee rather than submitting questions and having a supplementary question.
- These would be limited to items on the agenda only.
- Members of the public would still have 3 minutes to make their representation.
- Prior notice would need to be given to Democratic Services before the meeting
- Members of the public could speak under one agenda item or as part of the agenda item related, similarly to Planning Committee.
- The Chair would exercise discretion over the time allocated for representations.

## 5 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting date would be 16 April 2026 @ 2pm

- Review agreed actions and the draft call in procedure review
- Member Officer Protocol
- Access to Information
- Wrap-up and overview of the work of the Group.

*N.B. This will be the final meeting of this Group as it will revert to business of the Governance Committee or via another route e.g. Notice of Motion. It is quite timely as both Camilla (and Ed Hammond) will be leaving CfGS to take up new Director roles at Grant Thornton.*