

**CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERS' DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

A meeting of the Constitution and Members' Development Committee was held on Wednesday 15 June 2022.

**PRESENT:** Councillors J Hobson (Chair), S Dean, C Hobson, L Mason, M Smiles, M Storey and S Walker

**OFFICERS:** C Benjamin, J McNally and S Reynolds

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Councillors A Bell, A Hellaoui, T Higgins, D Rooney, M Saunders and Z Uddin

22/1 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received at this point of the meeting.

22/2 **MINUTES CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERS' DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE - 13 MAY 2022**

The minutes of the Constitution and Members' Development Committee held on 13 May 2022 were approved as an accurate record.

22/3 **UPDATE ON CONSTITUTION REPORT TO COUNCIL**

The Chair explained to the Committee that at the last meeting of full Council on 22 May 2022 he received a number of requests from Elected Members and the Executive Member for Finance and Governance to defer the report on the update of the Constitution to a future meeting.

The Executive Member for Finance and Governance was in attendance and explained that concerns were raised regarding the Monitoring Officer being able to make changes to the Constitution without member's approval. The Head of Democratic Services explained that there was an administrative error in the report submitted to full Council and that it was already in the Constitution that the Monitoring Officer could make minor changes. It was felt that any future changes should be agreed in conjunction with the Chair of the Council and the Executive Member for Finance and Governance.

The Chair suggested to the group that it would be beneficial to hold Constitution and Members' Development Committee meetings closer to full Council meetings to ensure that reports were up to date. The Head of Democratic Services suggested that the committee meetings should be held quarterly and that a bi-monthly working group be established to work on the parts of the Constitution that needed reviewing. It was agreed that an email be sent to all members of the Constitution and Members' Development Committee inviting them to be part of the working group.

Agreed as follows:

- Future changes to the Constitution by the Monitoring Officer to be made in conjunction with the Chair of the Council and the Executive Member for Finance and Governance
- Email to all members of the Committee inviting them to be part of the Constitution working group.

22/4 **MEETING FORMAT - VIRTUAL/FACE TO FACE MEETINGS**

The Head of Democratic Services asked the committee to consider whether some meetings should continue virtually or if all meetings should return to face to face now that all of the Covid restrictions had been lifted.

The committee were advised that all decision making meetings had to be held in person however non decision making meetings such as scrutiny investigation meetings and Corporate Parenting Board for example were not bound by legislation and could still be held virtually. Members were also advised that hybrid meetings were being considered where people from outside of the local authority could join meetings virtually. The Committee heard that some demo's had been undertaken of hybrid meetings and they had worked well. Costings for hybrid meeting equipment had been obtained as part of the project to update the sound system in the Council Chamber and would include providing the equipment to be able to hold hybrid meetings in both the Council Chamber and the Mandela Room. It was advised that the budget for this had been secured from the ICT Capital budget prior to Covid.

Members were in agreement that decision making meetings should be held in person and felt that it was important for committees such as Overview and Scrutiny Board and Audit meetings to be held in person. Concerns were also raised regarding technology issues such as loss of connection, loss of relationship building and also the impact on town centre businesses if meetings continued to be held virtually.

Following discussions members agreed that it should be down to individual non-decision making committees to determine whether their meetings should be held virtually or face to face and that a report should be taken to full Council to approve this.

Agreed as follows:

- That a report be submitted to full Council to seek permission for committee's to hold virtual meetings if agreed by the full committee

22/5

#### **PAPER-LITE MEETINGS**

The Head of Democratic Services presented the results of the Paper-lite and Remote Meeting survey that Elected Members had completed. Members were asked to consider submitting a report to full Council proposing a trial of paper-lite meetings and to encourage all members to use technology.

Members expressed some concerns and agreed that it was preferred to receive some specific committee documents such as reports to Overview and Scrutiny Board and Audit in paper format.

The Head of Democratic Services advised members that paper copies would still be available for members that requested them but all members would be encouraged to use the Modern.gov app to access papers with support and training provided by Democratic Services if needed.

Agreed as follows:

- A report will be submitted to full Council proposing a 4 month trial of paper-lite meetings

22/6

#### **UPDATE TO OFFICER EMPLOYMENT PROCEDURE RULES**

The Committee were asked to agree the following change to the Officer Employment Procedure Rules. The committee were advised that provision was already included under the Chief Officer Appointment Committee Terms of Reference but needed to be replicated in the Officer Employment Procedure Rules. The changes to the Officer Employment Procedure Rules were outlined in bold.

Appointment of Executive/Strategic/Assistant Directors, Monitoring Officer, and Chief Finance Officer

- (a) The appointment of Executive/Strategic/Assistant Directors, the Monitoring Officer, and the Chief Finance Officer will be made by the committee referred to in Rule 3 above, **unless the appointment is on an interim basis (6**

months or less).

- (b) **Interim appointments of Directors, for 6 months or less are delegated to the Head of Paid Service. Longer and permanent appointments to be reserved to the Chief Officer Appointments Committee.**
- (c) An offer of employment to these posts shall only be made where no well-founded objection has been received from any member of the Executive.

Agreed as follows:

- That the amendment to the Officer Employment Procedure Rules be made approved

This page is intentionally left blank