

Title of Report	ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION	
Presented by	Emma Lant Legal Team Leader - Governance	
Background Papers	Current Constitution Working Group Minutes 18 September 2025 Working Group Minutes 16 December 2025 Working Group Minutes 22 January 2026	Public Report: Yes
Financial Implications	There are no direct financial implications arising. Signed off by the Section 151 Officer: yes	
Legal Implications	The Monitoring Officer has reviewed the Constitution to ensure that members and officers can make robust effective decisions. The proposed changes are based on legal advice and best practice. Signed off by the Deputy Monitoring Officer: yes	
Staffing and Corporate Implications	There are no direct staffing or corporate implications arising. Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: yes	
Purpose of Report	To ask the Committee to consider the work of the Governance Working Group on the 25/26 review of the Constitution and to recommend its adoption to Council.	
Recommendations	THAT AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE: 1. NOTES THE WORK OF THE CROSS-PARTY WORKING GROUP IN CONDUCTING THE ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION; 2. CONSIDERS THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION, SUMMARISED IN THE REPORT AND AT APPENDIX A, ILLUSTARTED AT APPENDIX B, AND THE CHANGES SET OUT IN APPENDICES C, D, E, F AND G;	

**3. RECOMMENDS THE CHANGES TO THE
CONSTITUTION TO COUNCIL AT ITS MEETING ON 19
FEBRUARY 2026 FOR ADOPTION WITH EFFECT
FROM 1 MARCH 2026 (EXCEPT FOR THE AMENDMENTS
TO THE APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE WHICH WILL
COME INTO FORCE IN MAY 2026).**

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Local Government Act 2000 requires each local authority to prepare, keep up to date and publicise the document known as the Constitution.
- 1.2 The Constitution should be logical, integrated and accessible to members, officers, the public and anyone else interested in the way a local authority makes its decisions. There is also a statutory requirement on the Council's Monitoring Officer to keep the Constitution up to date, and accordingly the updating of the Constitution is an on-going process.
- 1.3 Full Council considers reports on the annual review of the Constitution. The updates are generally required due to legislative and organisational changes or to clarify and improve processes within the Council to reflect best practice. The proposed changes are considered by Audit and Governance Committee before Council.

2.0 METHOD OF REVIEW

- 2.1 The review of the Constitution was led by Legal Services and involved consultation with officers on areas of the document which needed to be updated/amended for the purposes of clarity, to reflect any changes in the law and incorporating any feedback raised by Members.
- 2.2 As with the previous reviews and the interest expressed by Members in this area of work, a cross-party Member working group was established to feed into the work on the Constitution. The Governance Working Group comprised of Councillors Cooper, Moult, Simmons (Chair), Smith and Johnson, and met on the following dates:

18 September 2025 (also attended by the Strategic Director of Resources)
16 December 2025
22 January 2026 (also attended by the Strategic Director of Resources and Head of HR)

- 2.3 The Working Group had agreed its terms of reference at an earlier meeting which was convened to review the Arrangements for Dealing with Complaints against Councillors. At the meeting of the Group held in September 2025, the Group agreed the timetable for the review of the Constitution and the way that it wished to see information presented to it. The appendices to this report reflect the approach agreed by the Working Group. Appendix A shows the proposed changes in a summary schedule of changes. Appendix B takes extracts from each relevant section of the Constitution and shows the proposed changes as tracked changes. This enables Members to see the proposed changes in one place and in the context of the Constitution document. Further appendices show larger scale amendments to standalone parts of the Constitution.

3.0 SUMMARY OF MAIN CHANGES PROPOSED

- 3.1 A schedule summarising the proposed changes to the Constitution and their rationale is provided at Appendix A. An extract from the Constitution showing the changes in tracked changes is provided at Appendix B. A hyperlink on the first page helps navigate to the relevant sections.
- 3.2 Proposed changes to the Budget Framework Policy are set out in Appendix C.
- 3.3 Proposed revisions to the current Petition Scheme are set out in Appendix D.
- 3.4 Suggested amendments to the Financial Procedure Rules are set out in Appendix E.
- 3.5 Proposed changes to the Staffing Committee and Officer Employment Procedure Rules are set out in Appendices F and G respectively.

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	A well-run Council which is trusted by customers to provide its services.
Policy Considerations:	The Constitution sets out how the Council makes decisions and its governance arrangements.
Safeguarding:	N/A.
Equalities/Diversity:	N/A.
Customer Impact:	A clear yet comprehensive Constitution will enable customers to understand the functions and responsibilities of the Council and hold the Council to account.
Economic and Social Impact:	N/A.
Environment, Climate Change and Zero Carbon	N/A.
Consultation/Community/Tenant Engagement:	N/A.
Risks:	An up-to-date Constitution is a legal requirement.
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