

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Constitution Sub-Committee**
held on Wednesday, 23rd August, 2017 at West Committee Room -
Municipal Buildings, Earle Street, Crewe, CW1 2BJ

PRESENT

Councillors G Baxendale, B Burkhill, M Deakin, S Hogben, N Mannion,
A Martin and J Weatherill (as substitute for Cllr Edgar)

Officers

Dan Dickinson, Acting Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Brian Reed, Head of Governance and Democratic Services
Julie Gregory, Solicitor
Martin Middleton, Business Improvement and Change Manager
Chris Allman, Senior Manager, Project and Change
Paul Mountford, Executive Democratic Services Officer

External Adviser

Bethan Evans of Bevan Brittan

Apologies

Councillors S Edgar and H Gaddum

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Councillor A Martin be appointed Chairman of the Sub-Committee.

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Councillor B Burkhill be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Sub-Committee.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor S Hogben declared a non-pecuniary interest as a director of ANSA in relation to the consideration of governance arrangements for the Council's ASDVs.

4 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present.

5 REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION

The Sub-Committee had been appointed by the Constitution Committee on 4th August 2017 to take forward a full review of the Council's constitution.

The report proposed a work programme and timetable to achieve a timely adoption of a new constitution. The report also set out a proposed outline format and general principles for a new constitution to guide the proposed work programme.

The work programme comprised five work packages, each focussing on a different section of the constitution as follows:

Work Package 1 – The overall style and presentation of the Constitution

Work Package 2 – Decision-making – Terms of Reference of Member Bodies

Work Package 3 – Decision-making – Officer Scheme of Delegation

Work Package 4 – Procedure Rules

Work Package 5 – Codes/Protocols and Members' Allowances

Details of each work package were set out in the report.

The Sub-Committee gave consideration to Work Package 1. The proposed content and structure of a new constitution were set out in Appendix 2 to the report. Members agreed on the need for any future constitution to be available in a digital format with hyperlinks to assist navigation both within the document and to provide links to related documents and websites. It was suggested that an ICT officer attend a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.

It was proposed that each of the other four work packages would be dealt with by a small working group of members and officers, with a lead member drawn from the membership of the Sub-Committee and a lead officer being appointed to each group. The groups would report back to the Sub-Committee as appropriate.

It was suggested that there would be merit in the working groups reviewing member and officer decision-making commencing with a joint workshop, facilitated by the Council's external advisers, Bevan Brittan, to ensure a co-ordinated approach to member and officer decision-making.

RESOLVED

That

1. the overall style and presentation of the constitution as set out in Work Package 1 be agreed;
2. the proposed work packages 2 to 5 be agreed;

3. joint member and officer working groups be appointed to deliver each of work packages 2 to 5 with a view to submitting recommendations via the Sub-Committee to a meeting of the Constitution Committee in October;

4. the member leads for the working groups be appointed on a cross-party basis (2 Con; 1 Lab; 1 Ind) as follows:

Work Package 2 – Councillor G Baxendale

Work Package 3 – Councillor N Mannion

Work Package 4 – Councillor A Martin

Work Package 5 – Councillor B Burkhill

5. the working groups reviewing member and officer decision-making commence with a joint workshop, facilitated by Bevan Brittan, in order to ensure that a co-ordinated approach is taken to reviewing member and officer decision-making, the workshop to be held at 10.00 am on 31st August 2017.

6 NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

To be confirmed following consultation with members.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 11.14 am

Councillor A Martin (Chairman)