

Standards Committee

AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Report Title	REVIEW OF COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION
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Date of Meeting:	17 December 2009
Directorate:	Borough Solicitor & Monitoring Officer
Ward(s)	All

1. Summary

This report informs members of an important governance work stream that is currently being undertaken by a cross party member group. It is good practice for changes to the constitution to be reported to the Standards Committee so that the Committees views, particularly in relation to aspects of the constitution that have a bearing on standards and ethical issues can have the Committees' input.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is requested to note the contents of the report and to:

- 2.1 Consider whether there are any elements of the Constitutional Review Working Party ("CRWPs") Work programme which the Committee would want to consider and make recommendations to the CRWP. A copy of the work programme is attached at appendix 1.
- 2.2 Delegate to the Monitoring Officer the power to make comments to the Constitutional Review Working Party on behalf of the Standards Committee, in consultation with the Chair and Vice chair, such power to only be exercised where it is not practicable for the Standards Committee to meet to make comments within the CRWP's work programme.

3. Report Background

- 3.1 Northampton Borough Council operates in accordance with a Constitution which is a key governance document and sets out how the **council functions**, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure **that these** are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. Some of these **processes are** required by the law, while others are a matter for the Council to decide.
- 3.2 The Council's Constitution was last revised in May 2008 and **Full Council** has asked for a further review which is underway. The review is being **undertaken** by a cross party

member group with a view to a revised constitution being presented to Full Council for adoption in April next year.

- 1.1 Best practice requires the Council's Standards Committee to input into relevant proposed changes to the constitution particularly but not exclusively in relation to elements that have a bearing on standards issues. A separate report to this Committee is seeking the Committee's comments on one specific element of work namely the terms of reference for the Standards Committee.
- 1.2 Members are asked to refer to the CRWP's work programme (appendix 1) and consider whether there are any elements of the work plan on which they would like to provide specific input. The Standards Committee's views will be reported to the CRWP who will ultimately decide on whether to recommend any proposed changes to full council for adoption.
- 1.3 The Monitoring Officer will report any specific proposals he thinks are relevant as well as an overall progress report to the Standards Committee. Either special meetings of the Standards Committee will be convened to fit the overall programme of the CRWP or the Monitoring Officer has requested delegated powers from the Committee to make the comments on behalf of the Committee, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Resources and Risk

There are none- apart from, the resources needed to arrange training for members on any points arising.

4.2 Legal

No direct consequences

4.3 Other Implications

5. Background Papers

CRWP File FJF.

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CONSTITUTION
GOVERNANCE WORKING PARTY
ACTION PLAN 2009-2010

30 November 2009

1. Review proposed **work plan** - (Working Party decision).
2. Discussion – **General principles on Constitution structure** - (Working Party decision).
3. **Opposition Group Business** - (Working Party decision).
4. **Member delegated decision** - (Working Party decision).
5. **Mayoralty Formula.**

14 December 2009

1. **Political Governance - Review including General Purposes role** (need minutes of General Purposes Committee).
2. **Code of Governance.**

11 January 2010

1. Discussion **paper re Minutes.**
2. **Substitutes for Planning and Licensing.**

25 January 2009

1. **Council procedures notes -- general review** (questionnaire to key officers).
2. **Order of Council business.**

8 February 2010

1. **Overview and Scrutiny Issues.**
 - **Protocols**
 - **Structure**
 - **Crime & Disorder**

- Councillor call for action.

22 February 2010

1. Officers Scheme of Delegations (set up working group).

15 March 2010

1. Officers/Members Protocol
2. General Issues e.g. Purdah.

29 March 2010

1. Miscellaneous/Mop up session.
2. Outside bodies – general advice

Council meeting 12 April 2010.