

Constitution Sub-Committee

Minutes

21 July 2020 at 5.00 pm

Present: Councillors Abbas Hussain, Mahmood Hussain, S. Saleem, Skepelhorn and Young

1 Election of Chair (Ref 1)

Resolved: That Councillor Abbas Hussain be elected Chair of the Sub-Committee.

2 Constitution Review – A case for change (Ref: 6)

Members were reminded that Constitution Committee had, at its meeting held on 30th June 2020, agreed to establish this sub-committee to support the ongoing process of review of the council's constitution and to make recommendations to Constitution Committee for approval.

The sub-committee was presented with the 'Case for Change' which proposed a comprehensive evaluation and review of the organisation's processes, systems, practices and procedures, several of which formed part of the Council's Constitution.

Members' attention was drawn to paragraphs 32 to 35 of the case for change, which set out the approach to the review. It was planned to split the current constitution documents into two parts, those documents that needed to form the core of the constitution and those protocols that supported the decision making process but did not necessarily need to form part of the constitution document. The sub-committee were agreeable to this approach.

In relation to the rules set out in the constitution, members welcomed a plain English, clear and easily comprehensible document, so that both councillors and the public could understand the extent of decision making by committee, the types of decisions that needed to be made by members and the extent of authority to officers. This would provide clarity and accountability in the arrangements.

In terms of the role of the sub-committee, members were interested to receive back proposals for more detailed consideration and debate, prior to submission to the Full Constitution committee. It was agreed that a series of meetings be diarised and officers report back when there were specific proposals requiring consideration.

Resolved: (i) That the constitution review case for change and the approach to the review set out at paragraphs 32 to 35, be noted.

(ii) That a series of meetings be arranged by the democracy manager following consultation with members.

(iii) That the detail of proposals submitted to the sub-committee for debate in the first instance, with recommendations being made to Constitution Committee for consideration and approval.

(iv) That if any controversial matters arose in the development of proposals, those issues be communicated to the sub-committee in advance so that any challenges can be understood in advance and debated at a sub-committee meeting.

(v) That any straightforward proposals be circulated to members by e-mail.

(Note: The meeting ended 6.00 pm)