



## DEMOCRATIC AND ELECTORAL SERVICES

Dealt with by: Democratic Services Switchboard: 01895 837200  
e-mail: democraticservices@southbucks.gov.uk  
Date: 11 July 2017 Direct Line: 01895 837225/837224

Dear Councillor

## GOVERNANCE AND ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

The next meeting of the Governance and Electoral Arrangements Committee will be held as follows:

**DATE: TUESDAY, 18TH JULY, 2017**

**TIME: 6.00 PM**

**VENUE: ROOM 6, CAPSWOOD, OXFORD ROAD, DENHAM**

Only apologies for absence received prior to the meeting will be recorded.

Yours faithfully

Jim Burness

### Director of Resources

To: The Governance and Electoral Arrangements Committee

Mr Hogan  
Dr Matthews  
Mr Anthony  
Mrs Lowen-Cooper  
Mr Pepler  
Mr D Smith

### **Audio/Visual Recording of Meetings**

Please note: This meeting might be filmed, photographed, audio-recorded or reported by a party other than South Bucks District Council for subsequent broadcast or publication.

If you intend to film, photograph or audio record the proceedings or if you have any questions please contact the Democratic Services Officer (members of the press please contact the Communications Officer).



### **Declarations of Interest**

Any Member attending the meeting is reminded of the requirement to declare if he/she has a personal interest in any item of business, as defined in the Code of Conduct. If that interest is a prejudicial interest as defined in the Code the Member should also withdraw from the meeting.

## **A G E N D A**

1. **Election of Chairman**
2. **Appointment of Vice-Chairman**
3. **Apologies for Absence**
4. **Declarations of Interest**
5. **Review of the Council's Constitution** (5 - 8)  
*Appendix: Work Programme* (9 - 10)
6. **Polling Places Review** (To Follow)
7. **Exclusion of the Public (if required)**

To resolve that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

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<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Review of the Council's Constitution
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	Monitoring Officer
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</b>	Jim Burness, Director of Resources
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Joanna Swift, Head of Legal and Democratic Services
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED</b>	None

### 1. Purpose of Report

To agree the scope of the project to review the Council's Constitution and agree a work programme.

#### RECOMMENDATION

**That the scope of the review proposed in the report and the draft work programme attached at Appendix A be agreed, subject to any amendments made by the Committee**

### 2. Reasons for Recommendation

To ensure the Council's Constitution is fit for purpose and more user-friendly for members, staff and the public, to introduce harmonised procedures with Chiltern District Council where this will facilitate more effective running of shared services and to ensure the Council meets its statutory duty of publishing an up to date Constitution.

### 3. Content of Report

- 3.1 The Constitution records the Council's political management arrangements and sets out the fundamental principles on which the Council is governed. It includes details about how the Council operates, how lawful decisions are made and the procedures to follow to ensure that the Council conducts business efficiently and is transparent and accountable to local people.
- 3.2 The last review of the Constitution took place in 2014/15 and the current version of the Constitution came into force at the Annual Meeting on 26 May 2015. It does therefore need updating to incorporate changes agreed by Council since 2015, as well as legislative changes and new joint working arrangements with Chiltern District Council.
- 3.3 The Governance and Electoral Arrangements Committee has been established to monitor and review the operation of the Council's Constitution, as well as dealing with electoral issues. The final approval of any changes to the Constitution is reserved to Full Council. The intention of this project is for the Committee to work towards recommending a revised Constitution for approval at Full Council in February 2018.
- 3.4 The Constitution is currently divided into the following 7 parts each with a number of sub-sections :-

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- the Framework of the Constitution with an overview of the various roles, functions and decision-making processes;
  - Procedural Rules covering the operation of full council, cabinet and overview and scrutiny, together with contract and financial procedures (now jointly adopted with CDC)
  - Codes, Protocols and Procedures such as the members' Code of Conduct, protocol on member/officer relations and guidance on Planning Matters
  - the Scheme of Members Allowances
  - Schemes of Delegation to committees, cabinet and officers
  - Partnerships including details about the Chiltern and South Bucks Strategic Partnership and Buckinghamshire and Thames Valley LEP
  - A Decision Structure Chart

3.5 In view of the volume and complexity of these documents it is proposed to divide the project into manageable stages to ensure that issues and required/proposed changes can be fully considered. A suggested timetable is attached at Appendix A for members' consideration and comment. As well as reviewing the content it is proposed that the format of the document is reviewed to make it more accessible to those reading on-line via the intranet, iPads and Council website

3.5 Members are asked to consider and agree what is in and out of scope of this project and the principles for the review. Suggestions are set out below :-

#### **In Scope**

- ensuring the Constitution reflects the Council's current political management arrangements and meets all necessary legislative requirements
- harmonising rules of procedure, key definitions, local codes, protocols and officer delegations with CDC where appropriate for the effective running of joint services
- to decide how and when the Constitution should be reviewed and amended in future to ensure it continues to be kept up to date

#### **Out of Scope**

- changes to the Council's current political management arrangements (i.e. to the number and size of committees and to the cycles of meetings)

#### **Principles**

- to avoid jargon and make the Constitution easy to read and understand;
- to create a document that is easy to navigate via the intranet and internet;
- to reduce the length of the Constitution where practicable
- to make the Constitution more interactive, making better use of the Council's website and hyperlinks to live documents;

**4 Consultation**

The Committee is asked to consider whether, and if so how, they wish to consult with members more widely, either via committees/cabinet or individually.

**5 Options**

Members may wish to suggest changes to the scope of the review and draft work programme.

**6. Corporate Implications**

Financial – There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Any implications arising out of specific revisions will be brought to the Committee's attention during the course of the project

Legal – As set out in the report

Risks issues – The lack of an up to date Constitution could increase the risk of governance failures

Equalities - None specific

**7. Links to Council Policy Objectives**

There are no direct links to the policy objectives. But the Council has a statutory duty to maintain an up to date Constitution and publish this on the website.

**8. Next Steps**

As set out in the agreed work programme.

<b>Background Papers:</b>	None except those referred to in the report
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**SOUTH BUCKS DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**GOVERNANCE & ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS**  
**COMMITTEE**

**Review of the Constitution Work Programme**  
**2017/2018**

	2017			2018	
	18 July	September	November	January	27 February
<b>Meeting 1</b> <b>18 July</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree scope and principles of the review and a work programme</li> </ul>					
<b>Meeting 2</b> <b>September</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Framework of the Constitution</li> <li>• Procedural Rules</li> </ul>					
<b>Meeting 3</b> <b>November</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Codes , Protocols and Procedure Rules</li> <li>• Roles and responsibilities and terms of reference of the executive</li> <li>• Schemes of Delegation to committees and cabinet</li> </ul>					
<b>Meeting 4</b> <b>January</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scheme of Delegations to Officers</li> <li>• Partnerships and Decision Structure Chart</li> </ul>					
<b>FULL COUNCIL on 27 February</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full Council considers recommended revisions, together with arrangements for future amendments and review</li> </ul>					