



Democracy and Standards Committee

6th June 2023

Report Title	Constitutional Working Group (CWG)
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Executive Member	N/A

Are there public sector equality duty implications?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972	N/A

List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. For the Committee to confirm membership of the Constitutional Working Group for the Municipal Year 2023/24.

2. Executive Summary

2.1. The Democracy and Standards Committee at its meeting on 15th June 2022 approved the terms of reference of the Constitutional Working Group (CWG) and its membership.

2.2. There is a requirement to review the membership of the Group.

3. Recommendations

3.1. That the Committee; -

- (i) Agree membership of the Constitutional Working Group for 2023/24 (4 Conservative councillors, 1 Labour councillor and 1 Green Alliance councillor); and

- (ii) Agree that the Chair of the Democracy and Standards Committee be appointed as Chair of the CWG for 2023/24.

3.2. *(Reason for Recommendations – To ensure representation on the Constitutional Working Group (CWG) is reviewed on an annual basis, recommending cross party participation).*

4. Report Background

4.1. There is a requirement to review the membership of the Constitutional Working Group (CWG) on an annual basis. The Chair of the Democracy and Standards Committee usually chairs the CWG. The current membership of the Group consists representatives from all recognised political groups. The cross-party group currently has 4 Conservative, 1 Labour and 1 Green Alliance members.

4.2. Officer representation on the Group consists of the Monitoring Officer and representatives of Democratic Services.

4.3. The three main functions of the Group are: -

- (i) To review areas of the Constitution to ensure that they are fit for purpose and put forward appropriate recommendations for change or amendment;
- (ii) Receive requests from members, officers and committees to consider changes and amendments; and
- (iii) Formulate recommendations for change(s) to the Constitution for consideration by the Democracy and Standards Committee.

4.5 Membership of CWG is drawn from Democracy and Governance Committee.

5. Issues and Choices

5.1. There is a requirement for the Committee to consider membership of the CWG on an annual basis, based on a cross-party principle previously agreed.

6. Next Steps

6.1. Any changes in CWG membership will take immediate effect.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources and Financial

7.1.1. There are no specific resource or financial implications.

7.2. Legal and Governance

7.2.1. Full Council has responsibility for approving any significant changes to the Constitution. The creation of the CWG allows for informal discussion and debate between the Monitoring Officer, councillors and other officers prior to any specific recommendations for amendment to the Constitution being considered by the Democracy and Standards Committee.

7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

7.3.1. The Council and the Monitoring Officer has responsibility to review the Constitution to ensure it remains “fit for purpose” and applies all relevant statute and best practise.

7.4. Risk

7.4.1. Failure to keep the Constitution under review may result in unlawful or poor governance of the authority. It is particularly important for this Council, given that it was only created on 1st April 2021, that processes and procedures are kept under review and amended and/or refined in light of experience and best practise.

7.5. Consultation

7.5.1. None specific to this report. Membership of the CWG would be a matter for the recognised political groups subject to their allocation.

7.6. Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel

7.6.1. Not specific to this report.

7.7. Consideration by Scrutiny

7.7.1. Not specific to this report.

7.8. Equality Implications

7.8.1. Not specific to this report.

7.9. Climate Impact

7.9.1. The CWG meets using virtual technology thus reducing the need for on-site meetings and not adding to the Council’s carbon footprint. The working group is not covered by the requirement to meet on site.

7.10. Community Impact

7.10.1. Not specific to this report.

7.11. Crime and Disorder Impact

7.11.1. Not specific to this report.

8. Background Papers

8.1. North Northamptonshire Council's Constitution

8.2. Constitutional Working Group Terms of Reference (approved 15th June 2021)