

**Minutes of the Meeting of the STANDARDS AND CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE
held at the Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall on 4 June 2024**

PRESENT -

Councillor Hannah Dalton (Chair); Councillor Rachel King (Vice-Chair); Councillors Chris Ames, James Lawrence, Robert Leach and Phil Neale (as nominated substitute for Councillor John Beckett)

In Attendance: Councillor Kate Chinn

Absent: Councillor John Beckett

Officers present: Andrew Bircher (Interim Director of Corporate Services), Piero Ionta (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer) and Tim Richardson (Democratic Services Manager)

1 QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

No questions or statements were received from members of the public.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made in relation to items of business to be discussed at the meeting.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Standards and Constitution Committee held on 5 December 2023 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

4 SUMMARY OF CWG'S WORK IN 2023-24 & DRAFT CWG WORK PROGRAMME IN 2024-25

The Committee received a report providing a summary of the work of the Constitutional Working Group (CWG) in 2023-24 and seeking to reconstitute CWG for the 2024-25 municipal year. The report also set out the draft work programme for CWG in 2024-25

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Thanks to former Chair.** The Chair and Members of the Committee expressed their thanks to the former Chair of the CWG, Councillor Liz Frost, for her work on behalf of the Group.
- b) **Officer support.** In response to a question, the Chair informed the Committee that the Monitoring Officer and administrative support would be in attendance at meetings of the CWG.
- c) **Paragraph 2.4.1.3 - Public questions.** The Committee debated the proposal in paragraph 2.4.1.3 of the report and noted that the recommendations of the CWG would be presented to the Committee for consideration.

The Chair proposed that the wording of paragraph 2.4.1.3 of the report be amended to read “Review Annexe 4.2 to explore delegating authority to the Head of Paid Service and Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of each Committee or the Mayor and Deputy Mayor (where it concerns full council), the power to triage public questions.”

The Committee unanimously agreed this amendment.

- d) **Paragraph 2.4.1.5 – Proper Officers list.** In response to a question from a member, the Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that there are a number of Statutes which require a proper officer of the Council to take action. It was proposed that a list of all relevant legislation be produced to detail the relevant officer post for each task required of a proper officer.
- e) **Paragraph 2.4.1.7 – Protocol for Managing Councillor / Officer relations.** In response to a question from a member, the Chair and Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that the Protocol for Managing Councillor / Officer Relations had been agreed by Council and was in place, but that that the CWG would be asked to consider amendments to its wording. The CWG’s recommendations would be considered by the Committee.
- f) **Paragraph 2.4.1.7 – LGA Corporate Peer Challenge recommendations.** In response to a question from a member, the Chair informed the Committee that work was underway to explore actions in response to the recommendations of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge report. The Chair informed the Committee that this work would include considering whether or not the Council wishes to implement changes in response to the recommendations.
- g) **Wording of recommendation 1.** In response to a question from a member regarding the wording of recommendation 1 of the report, the Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that the recommendation did not delegate any authority for decision making to the CWG.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) Establish a Constitutional Working Group for this municipal year as set out in paragraph 2.4 of the report to take forward the work of the Standards and Constitution Committee.**

the Committee resolved with 5 votes for and 1 abstention to:

- (2) Approve the draft work programme for CWG to progress in this new municipal year as set out in paragraph 2.4.1 of the report, subject to the amendment detailed in the Minutes above.**

the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (3) Agree to reschedule the next meeting of the Standards and Constitution Committee from 5 November 2024 to 30 January 2025.**

The meeting began at 7.30 pm and ended at 7.59 pm

COUNCILLOR HANNAH DALTON (CHAIR)