

**Minutes of the Meeting of the STANDARDS AND CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE
held at the Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall on 15 January 2026**

PRESENT -

Councillor John Beckett (Chair); Councillor Rachel King (Vice-Chair); Councillors Chris Ames (items 1-6 only), Darren Talbot (as nominated substitute for Councillor Shanice Goldman) and Alan Williamson

Absent: Councillor Julian Freeman and Councillor Shanice Goldman

Officers present: Piero Ionta (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), Simon Taylor (Head of Development Management and Planning Enforcement) (items 1-4 only), Jon Sharpe (Interim Assistant Head of Service and Transport & Waste Services Manager) (items 1-4 only), Will Mace (Corporate Governance & Strategy Manager) (items 1-5 only), Oliver Nelson (Public Protection Manager) (items 1-4 only) and Dan Clackson (Democratic Services Officer)

1 QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

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

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Review of Code of Conduct Complaints:

Councillor Chris Ames, Other Interest: Councillor Chris Ames declared that he was the subject of complaints listed in the report, and stated that he would withdraw from the meeting prior to the Committee's consideration of the item.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee confirm as a true record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 16 April 2025 and authorised the Chair to sign them.

4 UPDATE TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Committee received a report proposing an update to the Council's Scheme of Delegation, for adoption at Full Council in February 2026.

The Committee considered the following matters:

- a) **Proposed Removal of Appendix 2 to the Report.** A Member enquired as to the reasoning behind the proposal put forward within the report's addendum to remove Appendix 2 from the report.

At this point in the conversation, the direction changed to include details regarding changes to the Constitution on a broader level. The Chair stated that following a discussion with Group Leaders at the Constitution Working Group, in which the Chair mentioned Cllr Chinn by name, the Group Leaders had agreed not to undertake any further major changes to the Constitution as a result of Local Government Reorganisation.

Subsequent to the meeting the Chair wished to clarify that his comment was made in reference to Appendix 2 to the Constitution – not regarding Appendix 2 to the report currently before Members – and wished to offer his apologies to the Members of the Committee and to Cllr Chinn for any misunderstanding and confusion caused.

- b) **Proposal of Additional Recommendation.** Further to the proposal contained within the report's addendum to recommend to Full Council to update wording to Appendix 2, paragraph 4.1 (i) of the Constitution, in respect of the scrutiny process for urgent decisions, Councillor Chris Ames proposed the following additional recommendation to the report:

Recommend to Full Council to reword Appendix 2, paragraph 4.1 (ii) of the Constitution as follows: "Any councillor may request that (with the exception of decisions made by the Planning Committee and licensing hearings) decisions taken by officers under delegated powers are scrutinised by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, and such a request shall be met at the next meeting of the Committee."

The proposal did not receive a seconder and the proposal was lost. With advice having been received from the Monitoring Officer, the Chair stated that the matter, at the request of Councillor Chris Ames, would be taken to Constitution Working Group for consideration.

Following consideration, the Chair proposed amendments to the report and to the report's recommendation, as set out in the published addendum to the report, as follows:

1. *Replace Para 2.3-2.5 of the report as follows:*

"2.3 - Further to the Decision Making and Accountability 2024/25 Internal Audit Report, the progress of which was noted before Audit and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 13 November 2025, there was a proposed management action as follows:

To reword Appendix 2, paragraph 4.1 (i) of the Constitution, as follows: "A report should be presented annually to the Audit & Scrutiny Committee setting out urgent decisions taken by officers under delegated powers in the previous year."

2.4 – It is proposed to capture this update to Appendix 2 within the proposed list of updates to the Council's Constitution as set out within this report"

2. Remove Appendix 2 & reword the recommendation as follows:

“Recommend to Full Council to approve and adopt the updates to the Council’s Constitution, as set out within Appendix 1 & the addendum to this report.”

The proposal was seconded by the Vice-Chair. The Committee voted unanimously in favour of the proposal.

Subsequently, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

(1) Recommend to Full Council to approve and adopt the updates to the Council’s Constitution, as set out within Appendix 1 and the Addendum to the report.

5 CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS 2025-26 UPDATE

The Committee received a report proposing amendments to the Council’s Contract Standing Orders (‘CSOs’).

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

(1) Recommend Full Council approve the revisions to the Contract Standing Orders, attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

6 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE UPDATE

The Committee received a report outlining the progress made on the Council’s 2025-2027 Strategic Priority 1.

Following consideration, the Committee resolved (4 for, 1 abstaining) to:

(1) Note the update and progress made as set out in the report below.

7 REVIEW OF CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

Further to his declaration, Councillor Chris Ames withdrew from the meeting prior to the Committee’s consideration of this agenda item.

The Committee received a report providing an update on complaints made under the Code of Conduct for Members from 5 December 2023 to 17 December 2025.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

(1) Note the update set out within paragraph 2.6 of the report.

The meeting began at 7.30 pm and ended at 8.09 pm

COUNCILLOR JOHN BECKETT (CHAIR)