

PUBLIC Minutes of the Meeting of the General Services Committee held on 5 July 2023 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Andrew Jefferies (Chair), Deborah Arnold, Kairen Raper, Graham Snell, Luke Spillman, Sara Muldowney (Substitute) (substitute for Lynn Worrall) and Lee Watson (Substitute) (substitute for John Kent) (*arrived at 7.03pm*)

Apologies: Councillors John Kent and Lynn Worrall

In attendance: Dr Dave Smith, Chief Executive and Managing Director
Commissioner
Asmat Hussain, Director of Legal and Governance and
Monitoring Officer
Matthew Boulter, Democratic Services Manager and Deputy
Monitoring Officer
Elizabeth Roy, Senior HR Business Partner
Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

8. Items of Urgent Business

There were no urgent items of business.

9. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

10. Constitution Review Process

The report presented set out the proposed way forward with regards to reviewing the Constitution, setting out a new internal review process in line with Improvement and Recovery Plan requirements.

The following points were highlighted:

- A work plan would be created that both the Member and Officer Constitution Working Groups would agree on.
- To add to the Member Constitution Group terms of reference, the minimum requirement to meet quarterly throughout the year.
- Review would take place and would require collaborative input from members, officers and external bodies.
- It was recognised the Constitution Working Group had previously undertaken good work.

- The Best Value Inspection had highlighted the expectation to corporately review the constitution.
- Members welcomed continuity between the working groups via the Monitoring Officer and the Strategic Head of Democratic, Scrutiny and Member Services sitting on both groups.
- It was agreed the current constitution required a comprehensive update as identified from the Best Value Inspection.
- One difference in approach would be that officers would be asked how they could use the constitution more effectively for their daily duties via their working group.
- There would be dialogue and a collaborative effort between both groups and external bodies who would provide best practice advice.
- Costs incurred relating to LGA and CfGS support would come from a budget agreed with the LGA with no costs directed to Thurrock Council. This had been agreed at the Recovery Governance Board and presented to the Improvement Recovery Board.

The Committee agreed the following amendments to the documentation going forward:

1. Add a box into the flow chart to refer to the Governance Recovery Board before the Officer Constitution Working Group.
1. Amend the Members Constitution Working Group terms of reference to include the requirement to meet quarterly.

RESOLVED

1. **That the committee endorse the process for the forthcoming review of the constitution, including the involvement of external organisations for aspects of the constitution.**
2. **That the two amendments relating to the flowchart and terms of reference for the Member Constitution Working Group, as detailed above, be incorporated into the final documents.**

11. Employment Matter - Senior Management Arrangements

At 7.13pm, the meeting went into exempt session.

The meeting finished at 8.01 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk**