

## **AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

### **22 SEPTEMBER 2023**

## **DRAFT ACTION PLAN FOR REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL CONSTITUTION**

---

### **Recommendation**

- 1. The Assistant Director for Legal and Governance recommends that the action plan for the review of the council constitution plan for 2023/24 be noted.**

### **Background**

2. At the meeting on 21 July 2023 the committee was advised of draft plans to review the following standing orders of the Council constitution as part of the annual governance action plan:

- Member/ Officer Relations protocol
- Contract Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations
- Scheme of Assignment of Responsibility for Functions

3. This report sets out the timetable leading up to a report for the Council meeting on 16 May 2024 for Council to consider the proposed changes.

### **Content**

4. A constitution is a living document which should be periodically reviewed to ensure it stays both relevant and consistent. A good constitution is one that is used by councillors and officers alike. The sections of the constitution referenced in paragraph 2 have been flagged at previous committee meetings as areas of the constitution which should be reviewed to ensure that they continue to be fit for purpose.

5. The Council adopted the LGA Code of Conduct at the Council meeting on 18 May 2023. The relationship between members and officers is a critical element of the governance framework, so it makes sense to review the member/ officer relationship protocol now.

6. A review of the contract standing orders and the financial regulations will help further strengthen commercial activity around contracting and procurement.

7. A review of the Scheme of Assignment of Responsibility for Functions will promote transparency of decision making and ensure anyone can easily identify who can make decisions and why.

8. An officer working group will undertake the review. Any review of the constitution needs to be overseen by members, including the parameters of the exercise. A report will be prepared for members of the Audit and Governance Committee at its meeting in March 2024 to consider any proposed amendments. Committee members will be asked to recommend a report is presented at the Council meeting in May 2024.

9. The table below sets out the timetable for the review of the report. The timetable allows for time to reflect on plans and to iterate, and it makes it easier to manage a review and revision of the constitution around other ongoing work.

### Timetable

	<b>Standards and Ethics Committee (Speak to Chair)</b>	<b>Audit and Governance Committee</b>	<b>Council meeting – decision maker for changes to constitution</b>
<b>Member/ Officer Protocol</b>	Deadline for papers to be published 09.01.24  Date of meeting 17.01.24	Deadline for papers to be published 29.02.24  Date of meeting 08.03.24	Deadline for papers to be published 08.05.24  16.05.24
<b>Contract Standing Orders</b>		Deadline for papers to be published 29.02.24  Date of meeting 08.03.24	Deadline for papers to be published 08.05.24  Date of meeting 16.05.24
<b>Finance Regulations</b>		Deadline for papers to be published 29.02.24  Date of meeting 08.03.24	Deadline for papers to be published 08.05.24  Date of meeting 16.05.24
<b>Assignment of Functions for Responsibility (scheme of delegation for officers)</b>		Deadline for papers to be published 29.02.24  Date of meeting 08.03.24	Deadline for papers to be published 08.05.24  Date of meeting 16.05.24

## **Contact Points**

Specific Contact Points for this report

Hazel Best, Assistant Director for Legal and Governance

Tel: 01905 765609

Email: [hbest@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:hbest@worcestershire.gov.uk)

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report)