

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer (Introduced by Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member (Strategy and Reform))	Council	22 September 2021

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	Not applicable
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## **Changes to the Council's Constitution - Substitute Committee Members**

### **Purpose of the Report**

1. This report proposes changes to the Council's constitution to extend the provision allowing substitute Members to be appointed to relevant committees and to agree substitute Members put forward by the respective political group leaders.

### **Recommendations to Council**

2. The Council's constitution be changed to allow substitute Members to be appointed to relevant committees as outlined in the report.
3. The Council's Monitoring Officer be authorised to make the consequential changes to the Council's constitution.
4. The substitute Members put forward by Group Leaders listed in Appendix 1 be agreed until the next annual meeting of the Council.

### **Reasons for recommendations**

5. To ensure continued efficient and effective decision-making.

### **Other options considered and rejected**

6. Not applicable

### **Corporate priorities**

7. The report relates to the following corporate priorities: (please bold all those applicable):

<b>An exemplary council</b>	Thriving communities
A fair local economy that works for everyone	Good homes, green spaces, healthy places

### **Background to the report**

8. During the Covid-19 pandemic the Council was able to meet virtually and hybrid meetings were held ensuring decision-making continued.
9. Since the legal regulations allowing virtual and hybrid meetings came to an end in May, Members have had to attend meetings in person to be able to vote.
10. This has increased the risk that meetings might not be quorate or able to make decisions if Members contract COVID-19, have to self-isolate or unable to attend in person.
11. Should there be further COVID-19 outbreaks as some predict in the winter-time it is important that we have contingencies in place to ensure the continued efficient and effective decision-making moving forwards.

### **Allowing Substitute Members**

12. In order to help mitigate the risk of meetings not being quorate and to allow the continuance of decision-making in the future it is proposed to change the Council's constitution to allow substitute committee Members.
13. Extending the provision of substitute Members has been suggested over recent years as there are other benefits in ensuring a high attendance at meetings and also reflecting that no political party has overall control of the Council.
14. It is proposed that each political group appoints up to two substitute Members in case any of the substantive committee Members be unable to attend for whatever reasons.
15. Substitute Members would be allowed for the following committees of the Council:
  - Planning Committee
  - Licensing and Public Safety Committee
  - Standards Committee
  - Scrutiny Committee
  - Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel
  - Governance Committee
  - Appeals Committee
16. The Shared Services Committee and Appointment and Employment Panel have both had substitution arrangements in place for a number of years, which has assisted in effective decision-making and felt to work well.
17. Substitute Members would be appointed by Full Council and where mandatory training is required to sit on committee this must also be undertaken by the substitute Members.
18. In practice it would be up to the relevant Member to contact the committee's appointed substitute member if they wish them to attend on their behalf and advise the committee Chair and Democratic Services.

19. Substitute Members would have full voting rights and must attend for full meetings and not just for selected agenda items or part meetings.
20. The Council is asked to agree these changes to the Council's constitution and that the Monitoring Officer be authorised to make the consequential changes to the constitution.
21. It is envisaged that substitute Members would be appointed at the annual council meeting and that the nominations put forward by Group Leaders at Appendix 1 be agreed until the next annual council meeting scheduled for May 2022.

### **Climate change and air quality**

22. There are no implications as a result of this report.

### **Equality and diversity**

23. There are no implications as a result of this report..

### **Risk**

24. Should the proposed changes to the Council's constitution allowing substitute Members not be agreed there is a risk that meetings may not be quorate and this would have an adverse impact on the Council's decision-making.

### **Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer**

25. There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

### **Comments of the Monitoring Officer**

26. Allowing substitutes ensures that where possible committee have full membership when being asked to make decisions which enables more informed and robust resolutions.

### **Background documents**

There are no background papers to this report.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – List of proposed substitute Members nominated by Group Leaders.

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## Appendix 1

### Proposed Substitute Members put forward by Group Leaders

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat</b>
Planning Committee	To follow	To follow	1. Cllr D Shaw 2. Cllr D Howarth
Licensing & Public Safety	To follow	To follow	1. Cllr H Hanock 2. Cllr A Turner
Standards Committee	To follow	To follow	1. Cllr D Howarth 2. Cllr D Shaw
Scrutiny Committee	To follow	To follow	1. Cllr H Hancock 2. Cllr A Turner
Scrutiny Budget & Performance Panel	To follow	To follow	1. Cllr H Hancock 2. Cllr A Turner
Governance Committee	To follow	To follow	1. Cllr D Shaw 2. Cllr D Howarth
Shared Services Joint Committee	To follow	To follow	1. Cllr D Howarth 2. Cllr A Turner
Appointment & Employment Panel	To follow	To follow	1. Cllr D Shaw 2. Cllr H Hancock
Appeals Committee	To follow	To follow	1. Cllr R Blow 2. Cllr D Howarth