

REPORT TO	ON
Governance Committee	20 September 2018



TITLE	REPORT OF
Review of the Committee Terms of Reference and Governance Committee Development Plan	Assistant Director of Scrutiny & Democratic Services

Is this report confidential?	No
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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to review the terms of reference for the Governance Committee and agree a development plan to ensure the Governance Committee continues to fulfil its role in the most effective way possible and demonstrates best practice. The Governance Committee Task Group met on Thursday, 6 September 2018 to consider these issues.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Governance Committee consider and approve the draft Part 2D – Governance Committee terms of reference at Appendix B prior to submission to Full Council for their final approval.
- 2.2 That the Governance Committee approves the development action plan for implementation.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

Excellence and Financial Sustainability	✓
Health and Wellbeing	
Place	

Projects relating to People in the Corporate Plan:

People	
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4. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

4.1 At its meeting on 1 February 2017, the Governance Committee agreed to review the Council's constitution. This process has been continuing. The latest task is to review the terms of reference for the Government Committee. The Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review in March 2017 made some helpful suggestions of issues to consider as part of this review.

4.2 This report reviews the existing terms of reference and recommends changes to be forwarded for Full Council to agree. The report also includes a brief development plan of activities that the Governance Committee will undertake to ensure it continues to fulfil its important role in the most effective way possible and demonstrates best practice.

5. PROPOSALS

5.1 Members agreed to adopt the following “House Style” to ensure the Constitution was an easily accessible document:

- ▶ Use of plain English
- ▶ Clarity of expression
- ▶ Consistency of terminology
- ▶ Streamlining and simplification of sections
- ▶ Improvement of interactive links to allow ease of access within the document itself.

5.2 The existing terms of reference for the Governance Committee – Part 2D are set out in Appendix A.

5.3 The terms of reference have been reviewed and a number of issues were discussed around budget monitoring information being presented to the Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee in future rather than the Governance Committee. The Committee’s role in taking an overview of the constitution has been added and formalised. The opportunity was also taken to clarify some of the wording within the terms of reference.

5.4 The amended proposed terms of reference for the Governance Committee – Part 2D are set out in Appendix B.

5.5 The Governance Committee strives to continually improve and fulfil its important responsibilities as effectively as possible. As part of this continuous improvement and ensure it demonstrates best practice, the Committee has developed the following action plan for the remainder of this municipal year, to be reviewed in future years:

Action	Timescale
1. An induction programme be developed for when new Members first join the Committee	5 December 2018
2. A whole committee training session be arranged with CIPFA	31 December 2018
3. Governance Committee Members undertake the audit committee knowledge and skills framework	31 October 2018
4. A feedback system for those who work with and attend the Governance Committee be put in place	5 December 2018
5. An annual good practice self-assessment be carried out on an annual basis	August 2019

6. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT AND OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION

6.1 Governance Committee Members were engaged and consulted in the review of the terms of reference and action plan at the Governance Committee Task Group on Thursday, 6 September 2018.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The training costs will be met from existing member development training budgets.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Please see Monitoring Officer comments

9. COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

9.1 As set out in the financial implications, these proposals have no impact on the Council's budgets.

10. COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

10.1 The council's Governance committee has worked effectively for many years. However, we must always be looking at how we can improve further.

10.2 The existing terms of reference for Governance committee do not completely reflect its current practices. In particular there is no mention made of the committee's vital work in reviewing the Constitution. This has now included in the proposed new terms of reference.

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

▶ HR & Organisational Development	There are no specific implications.
▶ ICT / Technology	There are no specific implications.
▶ Property & Asset Management	There are no specific implications.
▶ Risk	There are no specific implications.
▶ Equality & Diversity	There are no specific implications.

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

There are no background papers to this report.

13. APPENDICES

- ▶ Appendix A – Part 2D Governance Committee Terms of Reference
- ▶ Appendix B – Updated Part 2D Governance Committee terms of reference

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