

## RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STANDARDS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

### Executive Summary

The Council is invited to consider the recommendations from the meeting of the Standards and Audit Committee held on 29 February 2024. The extracts from the minutes of the meeting are set out below.

### THE STANDARDS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE – 29 FEBRUARY 2024

#### A. AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION - EXCEPTIONS TO STANDING ORDERS - PROCUREMENT STA24-001

The Committee received the first of four reports which recommended changes to the Council's Constitution. The first was to amend the Exceptions to Standing Orders clause by removing part (ii) 'where the Executive so directs', which facilitated a provision for the Executive to override a procurement decision. It was added that clause 12.3 would need to be amended to re-number the exceptions referred to as a result, and to clarify clause 12.2 by referring to the procurement tendering system.

##### RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- That (i) **clause on Exceptions to Standing Orders (Appendix 1 to the report) be amended as set out within the report in the Council's Constitution under Section 6 of Part 5;**
- (ii) **the authority delegated to the Monitoring Officer to make minor amendments to the Constitution be noted, including amendments to references within the document and section numbering; and**
- (iii) **the Monitoring Officer be instructed to make the agreed changes to the Constitution.**

#### B. AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION - MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES STA24-002

(NOTE: As the Chairman had declared an interest under the Code of Conduct and had withdrawn from the Chamber, the item was chaired by the Vice-Chairman for the meeting, Councillor Brown.)

The Committee received the second report which recommended amendments to the Council's Constitution by removing two clauses in relation to Members surgeries due to usage and affordability, and the Co-optees Allowance which would fall under the remit of the Head of Paid Service alongside other pay decisions. Following a question by Councillor Brown it was noted that free car parking for Members would be included in the review of car park fees and charges due to be received by the Executive at its meeting in March.

##### RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

## Recommendations of the Standards and Audit Committee

- That (i) the clauses on 'Members Surgeries' and 'Co-optees Allowance' (Appendix 1 to the report) be removed from the Council's Constitution under Section 4 of Part 5;
- (ii) the authority delegated to the Monitoring Officer to make minor amendments to the Constitution be noted, including amendments to references within the document and section numbering; and
- (iii) the Monitoring Officer be instructed to make the agreed changes to the Constitution.

### C. AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION - RESPONSIBILITY FOR STANDARDS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE STA24-003

(NOTE: As the Chairman had declared an interest under the Code of Conduct and had withdrawn from the Chamber, the item was chaired by the Vice-Chairman for the meeting, Councillor Brown.)

The Committee received the third report which proposed amendments to the Council's Constitution by increasing the maximum number of Independent Co-opted Members who could be appointed to the Standards and Audit Committee from one to two, so that the Council would have greater flexibility to benefit from professionals' experience, which was supported by the Commissioners. The recommendation included a request from the Corporate Governance Working Group to lobby the Local Government Association to provide an off the shelf version of a Council Constitution which could be adapted as required.

#### RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- That (i) the clause on Responsibility for Standards and Audit Committee (Appendix 1 to the report) under Section 1 of Part 3, and Article 10 – Standards and Audit Committee (Appendix 2 to the report) under Section 1 of Part 2, in the Council's Constitution be amended as set out within the report;
- (ii) the authority delegated to the Monitoring Officer to make minor amendments to the Constitution be noted, including amendments to references within the document and section numbering;
- (iii) Monitoring Officer be instructed to make the agreed changes to the Constitution; and
- (iv) the Local Government Association be lobbied to provide an off the shelf version of a local authority Constitution that could be adapted by individual councils.

### D. AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION - ASSET DISPOSALS THRESHOLD STA24-004

The Committee received the final report which proposed changes to the Council's Constitution regarding the delegated authorities of the Strategic Director – Corporate Resources and Strategic Director – Communities, including imposing a limit of £1m beyond which approval would be required by the Executive. The Committee raised the issue of indexation to take account of inflation and it was stated that the limit would be kept under review and the vast majority of asset activity going forward would be disposals and not acquisitions.

## Recommendations of the Standards and Audit Committee

### RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- That (i) clauses on 'Sale of Land' and 'Land Management' in the Scheme of Delegations (Appendix 1 to the report) under Section 3 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution be amended as set out within the report;
- (ii) authority delegated to the Monitoring Officer to make minor amendments to the Constitution be noted, including amendments to references within the document and section numbering; and
- (iii) Monitoring Officer be instructed to make the agreed changes to the Constitution

**Background Papers:** None.

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