

Constitution Working Group

1.Context

Part 1.1(4) of the council's constitution sets out the duty of the Monitoring Officer to review the constitution to ensure that the aims and principles of the constitution are given full effect. A key role for the Monitoring officer is to make recommendations for ways in which the constitution could be amended to improve the operation of the Council. The Monitoring Officer has delegated power to ensure that minor amendments and updates are made to the constitution.

The Audit and Governance Committee has requested that the Monitoring Officer reconvene this cross-party working group to continue the review of the constitution to ensure that it is fit for purpose. Changes to the constitution require approval by Council, proposals to improve the constitution will therefore be developed and brought forward to the Audit & Governance Committee and then to Council for consideration in due course. The Constitution Working Group will be key in order to ensure appropriate member engagement in this process.

2.Purpose

The Constitution Working Group will:

- a) Receive the proposals of, and provide thoughts, feedback and guidance on areas for inclusion or amendment within the Constitution (or on the authority's constitutional arrangements) to assist the Monitoring Officer in developing recommendations for the Audit and Governance Committee to recommend to Council as it sees fit.

3. Outputs

The Constitution Working Group, where possible by consensus, will:

- a) Make recommendations to the Monitoring Officer on matters brought before it as part of the review into the constitution;
- b) Make recommendations to the Monitoring Officer on proposed content as part of the review into the constitution;
- c) Make recommendations to the Audit and Governance Committee on proposed content as part of the review into the constitution.

4. Appointment to the Constitution Working Group

Membership of the Constitution Working Group has been set where applicable by each Political Group Leader and shall be limited to this review.

5. Membership

The Constitution Working Group shall comprise six members with appointment from each political group as agreed by Group Leaders. The membership is not limited to Audit and Governance Committee membership and can come from across the Council. The membership shall consist of:

- 2 Liberal Democrat
- 1 Oxfordshire Alliance
- 1 Labour & Cooperative Group
- 1 Green
- 1 Non-Grouped Member

Additionally, officers will attend as appropriate depending on the area of the constitution being discussed.

The Chair and Deputy Chair of the Constitution Working Group will be appointed at the first meeting of the Constitution Working Group.

For a meeting to be quorate, there must be three representatives present. This can be a representative from three different groups – or a representative from two different groups and a representative from a non-grouped member.

If a member of the working group cannot attend a meeting, they can appoint a substitute in their place. The substitute must be well briefed on the working group business.”

6. Frequency of Meetings

The Constitution Working Group is expected to meet three times to undertake this review with an anticipated report to Council in July 2026, with additional meetings arranged as necessary to address urgent or complex constitutional issues requiring prompt attention.

The Constitution Working Group is not a formal decision-making body and will not meet in public. The dates and times of meetings will be determined in consultation with members of the working group to accommodate the group’s work programme, availability of members and any arising needs.