

APPENDIX A – Constitution Refresh method and timeline

Method

The constitution is a complex document which the Council is required to publish, however improvements can be made to its usability with relative ease. To assuage concerns about changes to the constitution, the refresh will be wholly transparent for all Members of the Council, not just those who are part of the Constitutional Review Committee. The process will be undertaken in stages with a view to the wholly updated constitution being recommended for adoption at annual council in 2024.

Members will be able to directly engage with the refresh process. They are most affected by changes to the constitution, and will have the most knowledge as to how the constitution has worked (or not) in the past.

Staff will also be consulted about the refresh to the constitution to ensure that it is a living and relevant document for them also.

Given all Members are to be consulted in relation to the refresh of the Constitution, it is not proposed that the final proposed version of the constitution is considered formally by scrutiny.

The methods of engagement that are proposed are:

Documents A bespoke template has been created by ICT colleagues that enables respondents to see the existing text of the constitution, an explanation as to why changes are required, and a proposed solution. The final text will then be able to be transferred back into one document format for publication once approved.

This document is a word document and the text will be locked for editing. However, the document will allow respondents to make comments on the current text (such as examples as to when they consider it has not worked properly) and the proposed solution (particularly any issues they foresee with the proposed text).

Respondents will be able to endorse comments by other respondents, thus reducing duplications of comments. They will also be able to log alternative views on the proposed text, or the comments of other respondents.

All comments will be retrieved from the document to ensure that they are captured with comments via other mediums and presented back

to the Constitutional Review Committee, along with a response to the comment where appropriate.

There will be one document per section of the constitution to ensure that the document is manageable for all concerned.

Benefits

Respondents can comment on the document where they identify issues and communicate their views to all.

The identify of the person making the comment will be automatically logged by the system.

The date and time of each comment will be available to enable a chronological record to be maintained.

Disadvantages

The comments will be free text and therefore require individual processing and evaluation.

Comments on the document will be visible to all.

Forms

Forms (or questionnaires) allow respondents to provide responses to the consultation in a standardised way.

Benefits

Allows standardised reporting of responses.

Allows pictorial depictions of responses (pie charts etc).

Facilitates comprehensive analysis of the standard responses.

Disadvantages

Forms reduce the ability to personalise how comments are made.

Videos

It is intended that the Monitoring Officer and her Deputy Monitoring Officer will, if time allows, record short video explanations of issues and proposed solutions for each part of the constitution that is reviewed. This will be of particular importance when proposed changes to the constitution in one section impact upon another. Whilst interdependencies will be limited as far as possible, they cannot be removed entirely.

Benefits

It is often easier, and quicker, to explain something in person than to write it.

Disadvantages

It is harder to collect responses to videos – Members will still need to provide their views either via Forms or via the comment facility either in the document or via the Teams chat.

Teams

A Teams channel has been created which will allow staff and Members to leave comments on the process and easily access all of the various sections of the constitution.

Benefits

Respondents will be able to choose from this channel which method of response to utilise, or a mix of methods should they choose, including the chat function.

Respondents will be able to access the text of the documents via the website

Disadvantages

The management of responses will be more intensive for officers as each will need to be collected and processed manually.

Members will be able to comment on each section of the constitution as it is released or provide examples of areas of concern within the constitution in advance of the release of a proposed update.

Timelines

Three possible timelines are proposed below with commentary as to the consequential impact of each. Members are requested to indicate which timeline they prefer to adopt or propose an alternative timetable.

Timeline A

N.B. This timeline reflects the broadly sequential issuing of the constitution. It does not allow Cabinet to comment on the proposed constitution refresh (last scheduled Cabinet Meeting being 25 March 2024, nor does it align with the currently scheduled CRC meeting (4 April 2024) though an update on responses to Part 5 could be

provided as a supplementary item to the addenda and added prior to the meeting.
Alternatively, either:

- additional Cabinet and or CRC meetings can be scheduled to accommodate the end of the constitution refresh process prior to Annual Council; or
- an update report be taken to the 26 February 2024 Council setting out the proposals for Parts 1,2,3,4,6,and 7, and delegation sought to address the amendment of Part 5.

Timeline A also makes no allowance for Cabinet consideration of the recommendations to Council, or take account of the outcome of the Scrutiny Review, which will particularly impact the drafting of parts 2 – 4 of the Constitution.

May – Jun 23	Consider the scope of the work to be undertaken
Jul – Sep 23	Plan how the work can be undertaken
Oct 23 – Mar 24	Implement the plan and secure feedback from those interested in providing their views on the refresh of the constitution: w/c 2 Oct – explain the response options to Members w/c 9 Oct – issue consultation on Parts 1, 6 and 7 of the constitution w/c 6 Nov – close consultation on Parts 1,6 and 7 and CRC consider the responses w/c 13 Nov - issue consultation on Part 2 of the constitution w/c 11 Dec – close consultation on Part 2 of the constitution and CRC consider the responses w/c 18 Dec – issue consultation on Part 3 of the constitution w/c 15 Jan – close consultation on Part 3 of the constitution and CRC consider the responses w/c 22 Jan – issue consultation of Part 4 of the constitution w/c 19 Feb – close consultation on Part 4 of the constitution and CRC consider the responses w/c 26 Feb – issue consultation on Part 5 of the constitution w/c 25 Mar – close consultation on Part 5 of the constitution and CRC consider the responses w/c 4 Apr – CRC consider the entirety of the review and make final adjustments with a view to recommending adoption and immediate implementation of the refreshed constitution at Annual Council

Timeline B

N.B. This timeline reflects different time periods for the various sections of the constitution depending on the anticipated issues in each section being reviewed. It also takes account of the existing scheduled meeting dates and re-prioritises the order of consideration of the Parts to allow for the potential determination as to whether the Scrutiny Commission is retained by December 2024. By issuing more than one Part for consideration in tranche 1 and tranche 2 (instead of just tranche 1), a longer period of time is allowed for consideration (5 weeks) of the most complex sections of the Constitution (Parts 2 to 4).

As with Timeline A however, while Timeline B allows Cabinet to comment on the final refreshed document, it, like Timeline A, requires the decision whether to adopt the refreshed constitution to be taken in Annual Council and implemented forthwith. By that stage the municipal year will have started and the Council will need to communicate any changes to the changes to Council and ensure it is adequately presented to Council and implemented as quickly as possible in year.

May – Jun 23	Consider the scope of the work to be undertaken
Jul – Sep 23	Plan how the work can be undertaken
Oct 23 – Mar 24	Implement the plan and secure feedback from those interested in providing their views on the refresh of the constitution: w/c 2 Oct – explain the response options to Members w/c 9 Oct – issue consultation on Parts 1, 6 and 7 of the constitution w/c 6 Nov – close consultation on Parts 1,6 and 7 and CRC consider the responses w/c 13 Nov - issue consultation on Parts 2 and 5 of the constitution w/c 18 Dec – close consultation on Parts 2 and 5 of the constitution and CRC consider the responses w/c 1 Jan – issue consultation on Part 3 of the constitution w/c 22 Jan – close consultation on Part 3 of the constitution and CRC consider the responses w/c 29 Jan – issue consultation of Part 4 of the constitution w/c 26 Feb – close consultation on Part 4 of the constitution and CRC consider the responses w/c 25 Mar – Cabinet comment on the draft constitution w/c 4 April – Constitutional Review Committee finalise recommendations to Council

Annual Council – Council consider the proposed constitution

Timeline C

N.B. This timeline reflects different time periods for the various sections of the constitution depending on the anticipated issues in each section being reviewed. It also takes account of the existing scheduled meeting dates and re-prioritises the order of consideration of the Parts to allow for the potential determination as to whether the Scrutiny Commission is retained by December 2024.

It facilitates a decision on the constitution being taken in advance of Annual Council so that the consequences of the same can be actioned and reported to the Annual Council (e.g. calendar of meetings if there are more or less Cabinets, more or less Councils, 2 scrutiny panels or 3). This is particularly important if the Scrutiny Commission is removed as that removal necessitates a more fundamental change to the constitution to reallocate the responsibilities which currently sit with the Chair of the Scrutiny Commission.

May – Jun	Consider the scope of the work to be undertaken
Jul – Sep	Plan how the work can be undertaken
Oct – Jan	Implement the plan and secure feedback from those interested in providing their views on the refresh of the constitution: w/c 2 Oct – explain the response options to Members w/c 9 Oct – issue consultation on Parts 1, 6 and 7 of the constitution w/c 23 Oct – issue consultation on Part 2 of the constitution w/c 30 Oct – issue consultation on Part 3 of the constitution w/c 6 Nov – issue consultation on Part 4 of the constitution w/c 20 Nov – issue consultation on Part 5 of the constitution w/c 11 Dec – Constitutional Review Committee meet as a task and finish group to review all consultation responses and determine any areas of conflict or dispute w/c 18 Dec - 4 week public consultation commence on the draft constitution w/c 15 Jan – Cabinet comment on the draft constitution w/c 29 Jan – Constitutional Review Committee finalise recommendations to Council w/c 26 Feb – Council consider the proposed constitution

Annual Council – confirm the revised meetings calendar and the terms of reference for council bodies reflecting the changes to the calendar of meetings.