

HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

Held at The Council Chamber, The Symington Building, Adam and Eve St,
Market Harborough On Wednesday 25 January 2023, commencing at 6.30pm

Present:

Councillors: Champion, Dann, King (Chairman), Knowles, Modha, and
Mrs Simpson

Officers present: S. Hamilton and C.Pattinson

Officers remote: L. Elliott

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATIONS OF SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillor Robinson and from Councillor Johnson who was substituted by Councillor Knowles.

2. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS.

There were none.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Constitutional Review Committee meeting held on 30th November 2022 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

4. CORPORATE HEALTH CHECK

The Director of Governance and Law presented the report, the purpose of which was to set out an initial evaluation of corporate governance within Harborough District Council, which had been undertaken between July 2022 and December 2022. The review was undertaken in order to identify areas of strength, share good practice across the authority and address apparent areas of weakness. The report had been commissioned following receipt of an internal audit report by the Audit and Standard Committee in March 2022, which identified a number of areas to be addressed.

She stressed the need to undertake fundamental and timely changes to the governance and culture of the organisation in order to provide a solid foundation for the current, and future, challenging local government environment. Addressing the issues identified in the report will require changes throughout the Council to introduce and embed good practice, politically and managerially. In addition, the changes will require personal accountability for both members and officers, alongside a cultural change.

The Director of Governance and Law also highlighted the need to regularly review the Council's Constitution as this was a 'living document' – she recommended this is done on an annual basis.

The Committee raised questions on the report and discussed the following points:-

- The accessibility of Council policies and protocols. It was confirmed that these would be easily accessed via the intranet which is in the process of being updated.
- The mechanism by which the Committee would be engaged in the process for reviewing the Constitution. Given the timescale of April 2023 to complete the review and rewriting of the Constitution, the Chairman suggested that information for comment and review would be shared by email and Microsoft Teams by the Director of Governance and Law in order to expedite the process.

RESOLVED that :

- a. the issues identified in the report in respect of corporate governance be noted;**
- b. the following activities be approved:**
 - i. Re-write of the constitution to remove duplication, update it and make it more accessible;**
 - ii. Update the scheme of delegations to officers to match the current management structure and appropriate delegations;**
 - iii. Review the current executive arrangements and make proposals as to delegations to officers and portfolio holders, and the number and frequency of meetings;**
 - iv. Delivery of training for officers and members on governance principles and good decision making;**
 - v. Preparation of a comprehensive member induction package to ensure members are all aware of how the council runs.**

5. ANY URGENT BUSINESS

There was none.

The Meeting closed at 19.07