

Somerset County Council
Constitution and Governance Committee
– 18 July 2022

Constitution and Governance Committee Terms of Reference

Lead Officer: Scott Wooldridge, Monitoring Officer and Strategic Manager–Governance & Democratic Services

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1. Summary

1.1. The Constitution and Governance Committee was formed following the Annual General Meeting in May 2022. Its functions include responsibility to maintain an effective, up to date and legally compliant Constitution, considering proposals from Council Committees for changes to the constitutional arrangements of the Council, take all required decisions in respect of the County Council elections, overseeing the Council's input and response to boundary or electoral reviews as required by the Boundary Commission and developing the Constitution for the New Somerset Council.

2. Recommendations

2.1. That the Committee notes the Terms of Reference as attached in Appendix 1.

3. Background

3.1. At the Annual General Meeting on 25 May 2022, the Council approved to dissolve the existing Constitution and Standards Committee and establish a new Constitution and Governance Committee.

3.2. With the establishment of a new committee, the first order of business for the committee to consider is its Terms of Reference that were approved at the Annual General Meeting on 25 May 2022.

4. Consultations undertaken

4.1. The Committee meetings are open to all County Councillors to attend and contribute to its meetings.

5. Background papers

5.1. Further information can be found in the agenda pack for the Annual General Meeting held on 25 May 2022 and the Council's Constitution, both published on the council's website.

Note For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author

CONSTITUTION AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
(13 elected members)

Groups / Seats

Chair: Theo Butt Philip

Vice Chair: Simon Carswell

Membership – elected members:

Steven Pugsley Barry Clarke Christine Lawrence Sue Osborne	Con (4)
Helen Kay (Green) Hugh Davies (Independent)	Green/Labour/ Independent (2)
Theo Butt Philip Simon Carswell Dawn Johnson Martin Lovell Mike Murphy Richard Wilkins Alex Wiltshire	Lib Dem (7)

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FUNCTIONS: In summary, the Committee's main responsibilities relate to reviewing and updating the Council's Constitution and its governance framework.

Constitutional matters:

The Committee is responsible for:

- a) Maintaining an effective, up to date and legally compliant Constitution.
- b) Considering proposals from Council committees for changes to the constitutional arrangements of the Council.
- c) Approving in-year changes to individual parts of the Constitution and submitting an annual report to the Council recommending a revised Constitution for approval to the Council's Annual General Meeting. See notes below.
- d) Taking all required decisions in respect of the County Council elections.
- e) Overseeing the Council's input and response to boundary or electoral reviews as required by the Boundary Commission.
- f) Developing the Constitution for the new Somerset Council.

Notes: The delegation set out in (c) above excludes approval of:

- Any changes to the operational arrangements of the Council including the Committee structure – which will be referred to Council for approval as a recommendation
- The Scheme of Members' Allowances which is approved by the Council on the recommendation of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel.
- The Council's executive arrangements, which are the responsibility of the Leader of Council.
- Any change to the Council's model of democratic governance under the Localism Act 2011.

FORM AND COMPOSITION:

The Constitution and Governance Committee comprises 13 elected members. Substitutes will be permitted for the elected members appointed to the Committee. The Chair is appointed by the Council on an annual basis.

QUORUM:

A minimum of 5 elected members is required for a valid meeting of the Committee.