

# Report to Constitution Working Group



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Subject: Programme 2025 Workstream – What the Constitution should look like?**

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## **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

- (1) That the Working Group consider if the Constitution is fit for purpose and if not, to suggest how the Constitution could be improved and/or streamlined, in addition to providing some guidelines on how best to proceed to complete this project in 2025.**

## **Report:**

- 1.1 Democratic and Electoral Services are undertaking a review of their ways of working to enable a fundamental review of the roles, responsibilities, systems, and structures so that the Teams can meet their future challenges together, which is known as Programme 2025.
- 1.2 Seven Programme 2025 workstreams encompass the following areas:
  1. Electoral Review
  2. Election Planning
  3. Developing our IT
  4. Shape of Meetings and Behaviours
  5. What should the Constitution look like?
  6. Our new ways of working
  7. What should our Structure and Roles look like?
- 1.3 Under the ongoing Electoral Review (workstream 1), the outcome of the Local Government Council Size and Boundary Ward Review, will lead to revisions of the Constitution and a review of governance arrangements, which the Working Group will be involved with in due course.
- 1.4 Workstream (5) – What the Constitution should look like? – will require the involvement of the Constitution Working Group, to ensure the Constitution is fit for purpose by 2025.
- 1.5 Democratic and Electoral Services have identified and suggested some improvements to facilitate user ability of the Constitution by members, officers, and the public. These are listed below and include the following:

### Outcomes

Reduction in size of Constitution.

More use of plain English.

More delegation to Officers to reduce the number of meetings.

Increased agility, e.g: by use of generic job titles rather than names of officers to minimise constant updating.

### Constraints

Inclusion of sections, such as the 'Financial Regulations' in the Constitution – could such sections be put in a separate document with a link to that document in the Constitution?

Link to the Constitution on the website displays too many sections and is unwieldy to use.

### Risks

Constitution considered difficult to use / impenetrable to all but Legal and Democratic Services staff.

- 1.6 The Constitution Working Group is asked to consider if the Constitution is currently fit for purpose. If it is not, members are asked for their suggestions on how the Constitution could be improved and/or streamlined, in addition to providing some guidelines on how best to proceed with this workstream project that is due for completion in 2025.

### **Resource Implications:**

The purpose of this report seeks to ensure that the Council's Constitution remains fit for purpose.

### **Legal and Governance Implications:**

The Council's Constitution sets out procedures and rules for the operation of its functions and responsibilities.

### **Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:**

There are no implications arising from the considerations of this report in respect of the Council's commitment to the Climate Local Agreement, the corporate Safer, Cleaner, Greener initiative, or any crime and disorder issues within the district.

### **Consultation Undertaken:**

None – the report is seeking to start consultations with the Working Group for its views on how best to improve the Constitution.

### **Background Papers:**

None

### **Risk Management:**

The Council's Constitution sets out procedures and rules for the operation of its functions and responsibilities.

### **Equality:**

There are no equality implications arising from the recommendations of this report.