

**REVIEW OF COUNCIL CONSTITUTION – ADDENDUM
(Report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services)**

10A CONSTITUTION OF PANELS, COMMITTEES ETC.

10A.1 In response to the invitation issued to all Members to propose any changes to the Constitution (paragraph 1.3 refers), Councillor N J Guyatt has requested that the Panel give consideration to both the Constitution of Panels and Committees generally and specifically to the terms of reference of the Corporate Governance Panel and Standards Committee. At the same time, Councillor Guyatt has suggested that the Panel might wish to initiate a review of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel Rules which provide for the appointment of two co-opted persons to each of the three existing Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

10A.2 In terms of composition, Councillor Guyatt has proposed that the membership of Panels be rationalised such that they either should comprise 12 or 8 Members bringing the total number of seats to 84. In his view, this would result in a better balance of skill and expertise across all Panels.

Currently, the Constitution provides for Overview and Scrutiny Panels to comprise no more than 16 Members. The membership of the Scrutiny Panels can, therefore, be adjusted without constitutional change. However, were this rationale to be applied to other Panels it would result in changes to the number of Members appointed to the Corporate Governance and Development Management Panels and the Standards Committee. These changes would need to be reflected in the Constitution. The Employment Panel and Licensing & Protection Panel/Licensing Committee already comprise 8 and 12 Members respectively and it would be the intention that the membership of the Overview & Scrutiny Panels would similarly be increased to 12.

10A.2 As is the practice elsewhere and in view of the increase in the responsibilities and workload of the Panel, Councillor Guyatt also has suggested that consideration be given to varying the terms of reference and title of the Corporate Governance Panel, perhaps to an Audit and Accounts Committee, so that its functions relate solely to risk management, audit, accounts and resources, for example with the governance, constitutional and possibly complaints responsibilities transferred to the Standards Committee or a re-named governance and standards panel for instance?

10A.2 As these suggestions have arisen after the despatch of the Panel Agenda and given that the timescale before the meeting has not permitted any opportunity either to consider carefully their impact on the practical operation of the District Council's democratic arrangements, or to work up the proposals by reference to the experience of other authorities, it is

RECOMMENDED

- (a) that the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised , after consultation with the Chairman of the Panel, to report to Council, at its meeting to be held on 24th April 2013, on proposals to vary the constitution of Panels/Committees and the terms of reference of the existing Corporate Governance Panel and Standards Committee; and**
- (b) that, in the longer term, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be requested to undertake a review of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules and specifically the need for the continued involvement of external co-opted persons.**

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Huntingdonshire District Council's Constitution

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