

**PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEES IN
HUNTINGDONSHIRE****(Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being))****1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to revisit the proposals made by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) on the establishment of Local Joint Committees (LJCs) in Huntingdonshire. The Panel agreed that the Chairman would consult with Senior Officers and Members on the terms of the proposals and this has now been undertaken. This report outlines the result of those discussions.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Cabinet will be aware of the review previously undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) of the former Neighbourhood Forums in Huntingdonshire. The review was undertaken at the Cabinet's request. The Panel's report was considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 19th July 2012, where the following resolutions were made:-

- (a) that the Constitution for Local Joint Committees in Huntingdonshire attached as an Appendix to the report now submitted be adopted;
- (b) that the County Council and relevant Parish Councils involved in the Pilot scheme be consulted on adopting the Constitution;
- (c) that a pilot Local Joint Committee be trialled in the Norman Cross County division for 12 months period;
- (d) that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) be requested to undertake a review of the pilot scheme during its twelve months of operation; and
- (e) that the Executive Deputy Leader be authorised to review urgently the format of the existing Neighbourhood Forums, with a view to them continuing during the trial in those areas that have expressed a wish that they remain.

- 2.2 Since then, one informal meeting of the pilot LJC in the Norman Cross County Division has been held. Members' concerns over the absence of a face to face neighbourhood engagement mechanism within the District prompted discussions at the May 2013 meeting of the Executive Leader's Strategy Group and the following principles were agreed:-

- **that the proposed LJCs be recognised as a legitimate body with which the District Council and other partner authorities such as the County Council, Police and Fire and Rescue Service can engage;**

- **that the establishment of LJsCs be permissive on local communities' part. It will be up to local communities to organise, pay for and service the LJsCs themselves provided there is a wish amongst groups of Parishes to establish such a forum within their communities; and**
 - **that the opportunity for local democratic decision making to take place on a range of possible matters where appropriate continue to be supported.**
- 2.3 The proposals have previously been subject to public consultation with Town and Parish Councils, District and relevant County Members, Partners of the former Neighbourhood Forums and members of the public back in September 2011 and April 2012. A summary of the consultation responses received was included within the report submitted to the Cabinet on 19th July 2012.

3. BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSALS

3.1 The LJsCs will promote the localism agenda by:-

- **building on the ways of working already established and the achievements of the former Neighbourhood Forums;**
- **extending the remit and responsibilities of the former Neighbourhood Forums;**
- **providing a mechanism for all tiers of local government to work together;**
- **allowing the LJsCs to engage with their communities in the most appropriate way;**
- **allowing the LJsCs to develop in a way that suits them within the parameters of the Constitution;**
- **enabling there to be greater flexibility to operate in a way that suits local need; and**
- **providing an opportunity for local democratic decision making to take place on a range of possible matters where appropriate.**

3.2 The proposals are not intended to usurp the roles of Town and Parish Councils nor are they intended to add another layer of bureaucracy within local government. They seek to provide a forum whereby the three tiers of local government can meet to discuss issues of local concern for the benefit of their communities and take decisions on local matters.

4. KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEES (LJCS)

4.1 The proposals are intended to build upon the former Neighbourhood Forums and seek to introduce smaller more localised areas than the previous model. Whilst being mindful of localism and the opportunities that this presents and the consultation responses previously received from Town and Parish Councils on whom they considered to be part of their local communities, a boundary map has been produced at **Appendix A** proposing areas for the LJsCs. This takes account of elected Member representation for each area (see **Appendix B**), the boundaries of the Shape Your Place initiative and the views of other Parishes. **It is stressed that the proposed boundaries at Appendix A and the elected Member representation at Appendix B should be adhered to.** This is because it will prevent issues arising such as Parishes wanting to be Members of more than one LJC and the potential for a Parish to be excluded if communities are allowed to establish their own boundaries. It

should be noted that during consultations, no Parish raised any disagreement with their proposed geographical allocation.

- 4.2 The LJCs are intended to operate in a flexible way, to enable each area to develop in accordance with local need, whilst also encouraging public engagement and participation at meetings. The functions listed in the Constitution at **Appendix C** are exhaustive but it is emphasized that the LJCs do not have to undertake all of them. In light of the principles agreed at the Executive Leader's Strategy Group, the Constitution has been amended slightly to make it permissive on local communities' part. The Constitution had previously been subject to consultation with interested stakeholders.
- 4.3 Localism has been the main driver for the proposals. A significant change to the way the former Neighbourhood Forums worked is the possibility that decision making responsibilities might be devolved from the District or County Councils to the LJCs. This will enable communities to have greater say and take decisions on local matters. Members who sit on the LJCs are reminded that they are there to represent the whole community, not specifically their Ward or the local authority that appointed them.

5. COMMON ISSUES RAISED DURING COURSE OF THE REVIEW

Budgets and Accountability

- 5.1 The LJCs will not hold funds and there will not be a requirement for the LJCs to have their own separate accounts or for them to be subject to audit. Decision making responsibilities relating to a particular budget might be delegated from the District or County Councils in the future. The relevant authority will continue to hold that budget and they have their own audit procedures (Section 4 of the Constitution refers). Which decisions might be delegated has not yet been determined, but a mechanism has been created to enable this to happen. **The devolution of decision making responsibilities embraces the localism concept by enabling communities to take decisions on local matters.**

Public Speaking at LJC Meetings and Delegated Decision Making

- 5.2 Public attendance and speaking is encouraged at the LJC meetings. To be clear on one particular point, Local Joint Committees established under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 do not permit members of the public to speak during formal decision-making deliberations. There will be a separate open public session on the Agenda for meetings. Only those from amongst the membership would be entitled to speak at formally constituted meetings when a decision is being taken. Members of the public will not be entitled to speak during the LJCs deliberations on such matters, but can continue to observe the meeting.

Voting Arrangements

- 5.3 It is intended to create a voting system that promotes equality whilst at the same time not being too complex in nature. All Members will have one vote each. This will ensure there is consistency in the voting arrangements. Members are appointed to represent the views of their communities and not just their respective Wards.

Elected Member Representation

- 5.4 The relative levels of Member representation between the three tiers of local government are neither equal nor constant across all the LJCs. The view has been taken that localism and the geographical identities of settlements should be the overriding factor in determining the boundaries of the LJCs.

Secretarial Functions

- 5.5 Secretarial functions are to be undertaken by Town and Parish Clerks/Officers within the LJC area.
- 5.6 Additionally, a number of concerns have arisen around the role of the Secretary. Views have been expressed that Parishes do not have sufficient resources for their Clerks to service LJC meetings and that the function should be centrally co-ordinated to avoid any confusion with a view to ensuring continuity and efficiency. This is not, however, a universal view and **the intention of the LJCs is to promote local ownership of the scheme, not a top-down approach. It is hoped that as the whole purpose is to increase local benefit, local Councils would want to be involved.**

Police Representation at LJC Meetings

- 5.7 Police representatives will be in attendance at LJC meetings if there is a significant matter of local concern.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The principles agreed at the Executive Leader's Strategy Group meeting in May 2013 have now been incorporated within the revised proposals and with this in mind, the Cabinet are

RECOMMENDED

- (a) to encourage Town and Parish Councils to establish their own Local Joint Committees across the District within the parameters of **Appendix A** and **Appendix B**;
- (b) to approve the revised Constitution for Local Joint Committees in Huntingdonshire as appended in **Appendix C** of the report now submitted; and
- (c) to request each individual Ward Member of the Council to attend their respective Local Joint Committee(s) if a meeting is called upon by local communities.

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Minutes and Reports of the Cabinet held on 19th April and 19th July 2012:-

<http://applications.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=256&MId=4393&Ver=4>

<http://applications.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=256&MId=4763&Ver=4>

Minutes of Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) held on 3rd July 2012

<http://applications.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=10103&MId=4756&Ver=4>



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Proposed Local Joint Committee

March 2012



Key

-  County Ward
-  District Ward



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APPENDIX B

DIVISION, WARD AND PARISH BREAKDOWN FOR PROPOSED LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEES

AREA	PARISHES	DISTRICT WARDS	COUNTY WARD(S)
1	Sibson-cum Stibbington Water Newton Alwalton Chesterton Elton Haddon Morborne Folksworth and Washingley Stilton	Elton and Folksworth (1) Yaxley and Farcet (3) Stilton (1)	Norman Cross (2)
20 Seats	Denton and Caldecote		
	Holme		
<u>% Split</u> Parish - 65% District - 25% County - 10%	Yaxley Farcet		
	13 PARISHES	5 DISTRICT MEMBERS	2 COUNTY MEMBERS
20 Votes		Guyatt Banerjee, Butler and Oliver Mitchell	Henson McGuire, M
2	Sawtry Glatton Conington Little Gidding Great Gidding	Sawtry (2)	Sawtry and Ellington (1)
11 Seats	Winwick		
	Hamerton and Steeple Gidding Upton and Coppingford		
<u>% Split</u> Parish - 73% District - 18% County - 9%			
	8 PARISHES	2 DISTRICT MEMBERS	1 COUNTY MEMBER

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11 Votes		Tuplin and Tysoe	Bywater
3	Bythorn and Keyston Brington and Molesworth Old Weston Leighton Catworth Buckworth Barham and Woolley Spaldwick Stow Longa Easton Ellington Grafham Perry	Ellington (1) Brampton (2) Kimbolton and Staughton (1)	Brampton and Kimbolton (1) Sawtry and Ellington (1)
23 Seats	Covington		
	Kimbolton and Stonely		
% Split Parish - 74% District - 17% County - 9%	Great Staughton Tilbrook 17 PARISHES	 4 DISTRICT MEMBERS	 2 COUNTY MEMBERS
23 Votes		Baker, M Jordan and Morris Gray	Downes Bywater

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4	Godmanchester Brampton	Godmanchester (2) Brampton (2)	Huntingdon (2) Godmanchester and Huntingdon East (2)
23 Seats	Huntingdon	Huntingdon East (3)	Brampton and Kimbolton (1)
	Alconbury	Huntingdon North (2)	
<u>% Split</u> Parish - 26% District - 52% County - 22%	Alconbury Weston The Stukeleys	Huntingdon West (2) Alconbury and The Stukeleys (1)	
	6 PARISHES	12 DISTRICT MEMBERS	5 COUNTY MEMBERS
22 Votes		Hyams and Kadic Jordan and Morris Akthar, Greenall and Shellens Kadewere and Mackender-Lawrence Cawley and Sanderson Baker, K	Ashcroft and Brown Shellens and Wilson Downes
5	Little Paxton St Neots	Little Paxton (1) Kimbolton and Staughton (1)	Little Paxton and St Neots North (2) Brampton and Kimbolton (1)
20 Seats	Hail Weston	St Neots Eaton Ford (2)	St Neots Eaton Socon and Eynesbury (2)
		St Neots Eaton Socon (2)	Buckden, Gransden and The Offords (1)
<u>% Split</u> Parish - 15% District - 55% County - 30%		St Neots Priory Park (2) St Neots Eynesbury (3)	
	3 PARISHES	11 DISTRICT MEMBERS	6 COUNTY MEMBERS
16 Votes		Churchill Gray Farrer and Harty Giles and Harrison Chapman and Longford Hansard, Ursell and Van De Kerkhove	Chapman and Harty Downes Giles and Van De Kerkhove Wisson

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6	Buckden Diddington Southoe and Midloe Offord Cluny Offord Darcy Great Paxton Toseland	Gransden and The Offords (2) Buckden (1)	Buckden, Gransden and The Offords (1)
	15 Seats		
	% Split Parish - 73% District - 20% County - 7%		
	15 Votes		
	Yelling Abbotsley Great Gransden Waresley-cum-Tetworth		
	11 PARISHES	3 DISTRICT MEMBERS	1 COUNTY MEMBER
		Boddington and West Clough	Wisson
7	Ramsey Warboys Bury Wistow	Ramsey (3) Warboys and Bury (2) Upwood and The Raveleys (1)	Warboys and Upwood (1) Ramsey (1)
	16 Seats		
	% Split Parish - 50% District - 37% County - 13%		
	15 Votes		
	Upwood and The Raveleys Abbots Ripton Kings Ripton Woodwalton		
	8 PARISHES	6 DISTRICT MEMBERS	2 COUNTY MEMBERS
		Curtis, Duffy and Reeve Bucknell and Pethard Howe	Tew Reeve

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<p>8</p>	<p>Fenstanton Hilton Hemingford Abbots Hemingford Grey</p>	<p>The Hemingfords (2) St Ives West (1) St Ives South (2) St Ives East (2)</p>	<p>The Hemingfords and Fenstanton (1) St Ives (2) Warboys and Upwood (1)</p>
<p>23 Seats</p>	<p>Houghton and Wyton</p>	<p>Fenstanton (1)</p>	
	<p>St Ives</p>	<p>Upwood and The Raveleys (1)</p>	
<p><u>% Split</u> Parish - 35% District - 48% County - 17%</p>	<p>Holywell-cum-Needingworth Wyton-on-the-Hill</p> <p>8 PARISHES</p>	<p>Earith (2)</p> <p>11 DISTRICT MEMBERS</p>	<p>4 COUNTY MEMBERS</p>
<p>22 Votes</p>		<p>Bates and Williams Fuller Davies and Dew, D Ablewhite and Reynolds, D Harlock Howe Carter and Rogers</p>	<p>Bates Bullen and Reynolds, K Tew</p>
<p>9</p>	<p>Old Hurst Woodhurst Pidley-cum-Fenton</p>	<p>Somersham (2) Earith (2)</p>	<p>Somersham and Earith (1)</p>
<p>13 Seats</p>	<p>Somersham</p>		
	<p>Colne</p>		
<p><u>% Split</u> Parish - 61% District - 31% County - 8%</p>	<p>Earith Bluntisham Broughton</p> <p>8 PARISHES</p>	<p>4 DISTRICT MEMBERS</p>	<p>1 COUNTY MEMBER</p>
<p>12 Votes</p>		<p>Criswell and Bull Carter and Rogers</p>	<p>Criswell</p>

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NB - Those in red denote "twin-hatters" - to receive one vote each

District Wards Covering Duplicate Areas:	Upwood and The Raveleys x 2 Brampton x 2 Kimbolton and Staughton x 2 Earith x 2
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County Wards Covering Duplicate Areas:	Sawtry and Ellington x 2 Warboys and Upwood x 2 Brampton and Kimbolton x 3 Buckden, Gransden and The Offords x 2
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HUNTINGDONSHIRE LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEES

CONSTITUTION

1. Composition

- 1.1 The Local Joint Committees (LJCs) will be constituted in accordance with Sections 101 and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972 and will be Joint Committees for decision making.
- 1.2 Any Committees established across the District will be based on the boundaries delineated in Appendix 1. The boundaries will be kept under regular review.

2. Membership

- 2.1 Membership will comprise Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) and Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) Members for the LJC area. Town and Parish Councils within the LJC area will appoint one representative each. Membership will cease if, for whatever reason, Membership of the nominating authority ceases.
- 2.2 Town and Parish Councils will appoint a representative on an annual basis prior to the LJCs first meeting in each Municipal Year. A Town and Parish Council shall not appoint, as a voting Member or substitute, a person who is not a Member of that authority.
- 2.3 Each representative will have equal voting rights.
- 2.4 Town and Parish Council substitutes at meetings will be allowed provided the Secretary is informed at least 3 working days prior to a meeting.
- 2.5 Substitutes should be nominated at the same time as the Town and Parish Council representatives and will have the same voting rights as the Member that they replace and will count towards the establishment of a quorum.

3. Functions

- 3.1 The purpose of the LJCs is to enable transparent strategic decision making at a localised level but not to detract from public engagement with Town and Parish Councils who should be the normal point of engagement. In doing so, it will also:
 - (a) engage the public at a more strategic level than Town or Parish Councils;
 - (b) promote and enhance local democracy;
 - (c) facilitate closer working between the three tiers of local government and other public and community services within the LJC area;
 - (d) enable Town and Parish Councils, the County Council, the District Council and the Police and public sector and voluntary sector Partners (including interested Community Groups), where appropriate, to discuss and address issues of current or future concern to the LJC area;

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- (e) make plans and related decisions for the LJC area (or constituent parts of the LJC area) based on need/evidence, including community views represented and captured through existing or additional work and virtual social mediums such as 'Shape Your Place';
- (f) undertake or enable consultations (outside of the LJC meeting) to ensure the community is consulted as widely as possible, including organising special public meetings where these are indicated/agreed as being needed in the LJC area (or constituent parts of the LJC area);
- (g) determine expenditure of any delegated decision making responsibilities relating to a budget by CCC or HDC. This must be spent within policy to improve service standards and in accordance with any conditions set by that authority on how funding should be spent. It could also be used to support the delivery of service improvements identified in Parish plans or to provide grants to local voluntary organisations;
- (h) provide a reporting mechanism to the Town and Parish Councils in paragraph 2.1 above by requesting them to attend local meetings and scrutinise service delivery within the LJC area - i.e. the LJC will have a strong role in the performance management of services in local communities;
- (i) act as a decision maker with regard to the local delivery of a range of services and to prioritise resource allocation in their area within existing standards and policy;
- (j) where they cannot be resolved by the LJC, refer matters of concern regarding service to the relevant Committee/Panel or of policy to Cabinet and for the LJC Chairman to have the right to speak at those bodies of CCC and HDC in order to represent the views of the LJC;
- (k) act as a formal consultation mechanism for CCC, HDC and other public and community services over and above that undertaken with individual Town and Parish Councils;
- (l) facilitate partnership working between the County, District, Town and Parish Councils within an LJC area;
- (m) assist with neighbourhood planning/preparation of community plans/liaison on Parish plans;
- (n) liaise with the Police, Fire, NHS, other public bodies and community groups;
- (o) provide a mechanism to enable Councils to pursue the localism agenda – in the wider sense of organising communities into action as well as acting as a conduit for the upward transmission of views;
- (p) consult on and prioritise any devolved decision making responsibility relating to any local funding issues; and

- (q) undertake any decision making functions that may have been delegated by CCC and HDC.

In addition to this framework, each LJC will have the freedom to customise or develop their activities according to local need.

4. Budgets

- 4.1 Where the LJC has a delegated decision on a budget, its administration will be subject to local authority audit procedures.

5. Meetings and Chairing of Meetings

- 5.1 If established, each LJC will meet at least once a year with other meetings being called as necessary with the prior agreement of the LJC Chairman or if more than half the Members of the Committee are in favour. Requests for other meetings can only be initiated from amongst the membership of the LJC.
- 5.2 The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of an LJC will be appointed annually. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman will be from amongst the membership of the LJC – preferably from a Town and Parish Council.
- 5.3 Ordinary meetings will take place in the local area.
- 5.4 An invitation to attend together with the Agenda for each meeting and the Minutes of the previous meeting will be sent to each Member, interested parties and members of the public no less than five working days before each meeting.
- 5.5 At least ten working days notice will also be given to the public of the time and place of each meeting by posting details on Town and Parish Council websites and notice boards. Copies of such notice will also be sent to HDC and CCC and each Town and Parish Council in the area and will be widely publicised.
- 5.6 All meetings of the LJC will normally be open to the press and public where they will be provided with an opportunity to contribute to business transacted at the meeting. An exception to this is when decision making responsibilities have been devolved from CCC or HDC to the LJC. The public will not be permitted to partake in discussions in this respect.
- 5.7 Members of the public are encouraged to attend LJC meetings, to contribute to discussions and raise issues of local concern. There will be a separate item on the Agenda for each meeting for this purpose. Members of the public who are speaking will be encouraged to be concise and avoid repetition, thereby ensuring sufficient opportunity for others to contribute.
- 5.8 The Chairman of the LJC may invite any person to attend a meeting for the purpose of making a presentation or participating in discussion on any item relevant to that body's functions.
- 5.9 Town and Parish Councils are encouraged to receive reports on the work of the LJC.

6. Public Participation

- 6.1 So as to encourage public participation and engagement in the business of the LJC, Members and Officers shall ensure local people are informed, involved and consulted about any issues relevant to the LJC (excluding regulatory matters).
- 6.2 Each LJC meeting will decide how best to achieve this objective.

7. Voting

- 7.1 Any matter will be decided by a simple majority of all voting members of the LJC present at the time the question is put. All Members (or their substitutes) are entitled to vote at LJC meetings.
- 7.2 In the event of an equality of votes for and against, the Chairman will have a casting vote, but there will be no restriction on how he/she chooses to exercise this right.
- 7.3 Members who are both the relevant District Councillor and County Councillor will have one vote each.
- 7.4 Some decisions will be delegated to an Executive Member of CCC or HDC. In these instances the delegation will remain with that Member but he/she will take into account the views expressed by the LJC.

8. Quorum

- 8.1 The quorum for all meetings will be at least one third of voting Members to include representatives from all three tiers of local government.

9. Minutes

- 9.1 The Minutes of all meetings will take the form of a decision list. This will be presented to the Chairman to sign at the next scheduled meeting.
- 9.2 The Chairman will move that the Minutes of the previous meeting be signed as a correct record and no discussion shall take place on their content except with regard to their accuracy.

10. Secretary

- 10.1 Secretarial functions will be shared between the Clerks/Officers from amongst the Town and Parish Councils who are members of the LJC.
- 10.2 The responsibilities of the Secretary in respect of the business of the LJCs will be to ensure meetings are serviced and also specifically:
 - (a) to provide advice and support to Members in relation to the conduct of meetings;

- (b) to liaise with the Chairman, other Members and District and County support Officers to identify the matters to be included on the Agenda for each meeting; and
- (c) to produce a decision list following the deliberations of each meeting and circulate this to all participants, HDC, CCC and any other partners within ten working days of the meeting.

11. Officer Support

- 11.1 CCC and HDC will both provide a nominated point of contact for each LJC.

12. Conduct at Meetings

- 12.1 High standards of conduct are expected from the representatives of public sector and voluntary sector organisations at LJC meetings. Elected Members must abide by the Members Code of Conduct of their respective authority when engaged in the business of the LJCs. They should apply the rules concerning the declaration of interests at LJC meetings.
- 12.2 Where it is clear that a decision in which a Town or Parish representative has such an interest in a matter likely to arise at a particular meeting, the substitute Member (with no interest to declare) may attend that LJC meeting or a part of the meeting in his/her place.
- 12.3 Members of the public speaking at LJC meetings should not engage in personal criticism or slanderous comment or use the LJC as a means of pursuing personal objectives.

13. Expenses

- 13.1 Voting Members and substitutes shall be entitled to recover from the nominating authority by which they are appointed any expenses they incur in connection with the discharge of the LJCs functions (for example travel expenses) according to their authority's own policy.

14. Review

- 14.1 This Constitution will be reviewed regularly at a meeting to which all Members of all LJCs in Huntingdonshire will be invited.

15. Interpretation

- 15.1 The decision of the LJC Chairman, after consultation with the HDC Officer on the interpretation of this Constitution, shall be final.