

## **EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**Committee:** Constitution Working Group                      **Date:** Thursday 13 March 2025

**Place:** Virtual Meeting on Microsoft Teams              **Time:** 7.00 - 8.07 pm

**Members Present:** Councillors A Lion (Chairman), J H Whitehouse (Vice-Chairman), R Bassett, C McCann, M Dadd and C C Pond

**Apologies:** K Williamson

**Officers Present:** P Maginnis (Service Director (Corporate Services)), G Woodhall (Team Manager - Democratic & Electoral Services), M Picking (Democracy & Elections Apprentice) and A McKeon (Corporate Business Partner - People)

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### **15. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

It was noted that there were no substitute members for this meeting.

### **16. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed. A point of clarification was raised around Councillor planning training. The Chairman informed members that he had raised the issue with the Planning Department and the Technical Services Portfolio holder, and that the training dates would be circulated once they have been finalised.

No amendments to the minutes were suggested.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the notes of the working Group held on 14 November 2024 be agreed as a correct record.

### **17. TERMS OF REFERENCE & WORK PROGRAMME**

#### **(a) Terms of Reference**

The Working Group noted the Terms of Reference.

#### **(b) Work Programme**

The Working Group noted the Work Programme and there were no further comments.

**18. CONSTITUTION - REVISIONS & AMENDMENTS**

P. Maginnis (interim Monitoring Officer) provided the Working Group with an overview of her Constitution Review Report, presenting recommendations for Councillors to consider based on discussions from an officer constitution review meeting. The intention was to make the document more user-friendly and accessible.

Members of the Working Group raised and discussed several aspects of the report, including the inclusion of legislative references, the retention of specific wording, and the overall structure of the constitution, particularly the placement of its various sections. It was highlighted that if any documents are removed from the constitution as outlined in the recommendations, they must remain accessible on the website and should not be relocated frequently.

The Chairman, Councillor Lion, noted that with Local Government Reorganisation, there will be some rationalisation of all constitutions across Essex, making it essential to ensure Epping Forest's is as well-structured as possible.

The Monitoring Officer outlined the proposed restructuring of the Work Programme for the Constitution Working Group, which provided greater detail and broke the work into more functional, manageable sections. The Working Group unanimously agreed to adopt the revised Work Programme approach. Following the discussion, the Working Group also agreed to the three recommendations in the report: implementing key principles, restructuring the constitution, and removing certain sections.

**ACTION:**

P. Maginnis will circulate a final draft of the meeting discussions to the members of the Constitution Working Group for final agreement. Additionally, G. Woodhall will draft the report to Council seeking approval for the recommendations discussed in the meeting.

**19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Working Group would be held on 10 July 2025 at 19.00.