

CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Constitution Committee held on Monday 12 March 2018 at the Members' Room - Shire Hall, Gloucester.

PRESENT

Cllr Mark Hawthorne	Cllr Rachel Smith
MBE (Chair)	Cllr Lynden Stowe
Cllr Colin Hay	Cllr Ray Theodoulou
Cllr Paul Hodgkinson	Cllr Will Windsor-Clive
Cllr Nigel Moor	
Cllr John Payne	

Apologies:

Substitutes:

Officers: Jane Burns, Director of Strategy and Challenge, and Monitoring Officer
Laura Powick, Democratic Services Adviser

53. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies at the meeting.

54. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting of 15 January 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

55. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions were received.

56. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

No questions from members were received.

57. GENDER NEUTRAL LANGUAGE IN THE CONSTITUTION

The Committee considered a proposal from Cllr Rachel Smith on the use of gender-neutral language in the Constitution.

Cllr Smith explained that the use of gender-neutral language was important to avoid bias towards a particular sex or social gender. Cllr Smith explained that gender-neutral language was used for the most part within the Constitution, however the use was not consistent. It was therefore proposed that the language within the Constitution be tidied up so that it is gender-neutral throughout.

Minutes subject to their acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting

The Committee discussed the proposal in detail. In particular, the Committee considered the use of 'Chair' instead of 'Chairperson' within the Constitution, and the option for the Chair of Council to decide how they wished to be addressed during their term of office.

The Committee was advised that the language used within the Constitution could be amended under the Monitoring Officer's delegated powers, and that this could be completed in time for the full Council meeting on 16 May 2018.

On being put to the vote, the Committee agreed that the Constitution should be amended to include the use of gender-neutral language. It was agreed that 'Chairman' would be replaced by 'Chair', and that a note would be included in the Constitution to clarify that the Chair of Council, at the beginning of their term of office, could choose to indicate how they wished to be addressed, according to personal preference.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO THE COUNCIL that the Constitution be amended to include:

- 1. The use of gender-neutral language;*
- 2. The use of 'Chair' instead of 'Chairman'; and*
- 3. A note to clarify that the Chair of Council, at the beginning of their term of office, could choose to indicate how they wished to be addressed, according to personal preference.*

58. PROCEDURE FOR BUDGET COUNCIL MEETINGS

The Committee considered a suggestion from Cllr Colin Hay on the inclusion of a separate procedure within the Constitution for budget council meetings.

It was noted that, currently, procedural standing orders relating to amendments and time limits of speeches were suspended during budget council meetings. Cllr Hay suggested that it could be easier, and less confusing, for a separate procedure for budget council meetings to be codified within the Constitution instead.

The Committee discussed the suggestion in detail. The Committee recognised the reasons for the suggestion, however acknowledged the importance of flexibility in the process of managing budget council meetings. It was also noted that the current process ensures that Group Leaders took responsibility to agree an efficient procedure before each budget council meeting.

It was clarified, in response to a query, that the current process also allows for flexibility, should an individual member wish to propose an amendment to the budget.

On being put to a vote, it was agreed that the current procedure for budget council meetings should continue.

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59. MONITORING OFFICER CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Committee considered the report, which codified the appointment, by the Leader of the Council, of four Cabinet Project Champions to assist the Cabinet with its work, in the Constitution.

In response to a query, the Leader explained his reasons behind the areas of focus for the Cabinet Champion roles.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO THE COUNCIL to ratify the changes to the Constitution, as set out in the report, by the Monitoring Officer under delegated powers.

CHAIRMAN

Meeting concluded at 3.30 pm