

Title of Report	Constitution Review - Parts One and Two
For Consideration By	Constitution Committee
Meeting Date	13 July 2022
Classification	Open
<u>Ward(s) Affected</u>	N / A
Director	Dawn Carter-McDonald, Director of Legal, Democratic and Electoral Services

1. **Introduction**

- 1.1. At its meeting in March 2022, the Constitution Committee endorsed the vision for the Constitution review and endorsed the proposals for the content of the revised Constitution.
- 1.2. The Constitution Officer Working Group (COWG) has, since that meeting, been reviewing Parts One (Your Council) and Two (Articles of Association), including
 - considering revisions to the existing text where this is to be retained;
 - drafting text for new elements, such as Part One, Section B (Principles of Decision-Making);
 - working up a presentational style for the Constitution, which will be adopted throughout

2. **Recommendations**

- 2.1. **The Committee considers the overall proposed presentational style and draft wording for Parts One and Two of the revised Constitution and provides any comments / observations to be taken forward by the Constitution Officer Working Group.**

3. **Background**

- 3.1. The Constitution Committee was established on 26 January 2022 under the backdrop of work commencing to conduct a review and refresh of the Council's Constitution more generally. As explained within the report to Full Council, the review does **not** seek to change the balance of decision-making

within the Council or how decisions are made generally, rather the aim is to provide greater clarity for the public and Members alike as to how the Council operates and improve upon the information provided to the public / businesses / other organisations generally with regards to the operation of the Council and with particular reference as to how they can become involved with the formal aspects of Council decision-making.

3.2. The vision statement endorsed for Constitution review is

To produce a clear and succinct Constitution for the London Borough of Hackney which is user-focused and accessible for all; which provides helpful instruction on the manner in which the Council conducts its business; and which ensures excellence in governance across the Council.

3.3. The proposed contents of the revised Constitution, as endorsed by the Committee in March 2022, appears at Appendix 1. Officers have now prepared drafts of Parts One and Two of the revised Constitution for consideration by the Committee. The existing text of Parts One and Two are provided for comparative purposes.

3.4. Members of the Constitution Committee expressed a wish to be provided with guidance as to the requirements for plain English which would meet the standards for the Crystal Mark. The Plain English Campaign produces a number of guides to assist authors, which are available on their website. The copyright to those guides rests with the Plain English Campaign and whilst they allow people to print or save the guides for personal use, the guides cannot be copied or passed on in electronic format without consent. If Members wish to consult the guides, then these are available at <http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/free-guides.html>.

4. Comments of the Group Director of Finance and Corporate Resources.

4.1. There are no financial implications arising from the recommendation contained within this report.

5. Comments of the Director of Legal, Democratic and Electoral Services

5.1. Section 37 of the Local Government Act 2000 requires that the Council must prepare and keep up to date a document known as the Constitution which contains a copy of the Council's standing orders, a copy of the Council's code of conduct, and such other information (if any) as the Council considers appropriate.

5.2. In addition, Article 15 of the Constitution requires the Monitoring Officer to monitor and review the operation of the Constitution and to make

recommendations for the way in which it could be amended in order to achieve its purposes.

5.3. There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Contents of new Constitution

Appendix 2 - Draft wording for Part One (Your Council)

Appendix 3 - Draft wording for Part Two (Articles of Association)

Appendix 4 - Current form of Parts One and Two from the Council's Constitution (May 2022 edition)

Background documents

None

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