

## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

**WEDNESDAY 13 JULY 2022**

Link to live stream: <https://youtu.be/s0wSNe3uzRo>

**Councillors Present:** Deputy Mayor Cllr Anntoinette Bramble in the Chair  
Cllr Margaret Gordon, Cllr Ian Rathbone and Cllr Lynne Troughton

**Officers in Attendance:** Lucinda Bell (Education Lawyer), Peter Gray (Governance Officer), Louise Humphreys (Head of Legal and Governance), Sonia Khan (Head of Policy and Strategic Delivery), Rabiya Khatun (Governance Officer), Dawn Cater- McDonald (The Director of Legal, Democratic and Electoral Services) and Nkencho Okonta (Trainee Solicitor).

### 1 To elect the Chair and Vice-Chair for the Municipal Year 2022/23

#### RESOLVED:

To note the confirmed appointment to the position of Chair, Deputy Mayor Councillor Anntoinette Bramble and the position of Vice-Chair, Councillor Margaret Gordon for the Municipal Year 2022/23, as agreed by Full Council at its Annual Meeting on 25 May 2022.

### 2 Apologies For Absence

2.1 There were no apologies for absence.

### 3 Declarations of Interest - Members to declare as appropriate

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3.2 Deputy Mayor Councillor Bramble declared that she was a Vice Deputy Vice Chair of the Local Government Association (LGA) Cross Party Board.

### 4 Consideration Of The Minutes Of The Previous Meeting

4.1 Members considered the previous minutes of the meeting held on 13 April 2022.

#### RESOLVED:

**That the minutes of the Pensions Committee held on 13 April 2022 were approved as a correct record.**

**5 Ward Forums Support**

- 5.1 The Head of Policy and Strategic Delivery introduced the report highlighting how meetings operated, frequency of meetings annually and the resources available to support future meetings.
- 5.2 The Head of Policy and Strategic Delivery advised that each Ward Forum received a budget of approximately £900 annually for meeting costs relating to marketing, publicity and venue bookings. There were no compulsory set number of meetings but during the pandemic more meetings were held virtually. The issues of resourcing and prioritisation remained. The next steps involved looking at the impact of Ward Forums and maintaining a light touch model that was scalable and based on one officer servicing an allocated number of meetings per Ward Forum. This model would also focus on community leadership and working dynamically with members of the council.
- 5.3 Members thanked officers for the support provided to Ward Forums over the years. It was emphasised that Ward Councillors had taken different approaches to engaging with residents during the pandemic, with some members holding online group surgeries and others continuing online Ward Forum meetings. A review of Ward Forums was currently being undertaken and members and officers' could get involved in the survey being carried out regarding the function of Ward Forums in the future.
- 5.4 Members sought further information regarding Ward Forums in particular the arrangements and notes of meetings, making reports available on the Council's website and to consider undertaking a survey of Members on their understanding of the functions of Ward Forums and the impact of Ward Forums on policy.
- 5.5 The Head of Policy and Strategic Delivery responded that since the cyber attack and 2021 all papers relating to Ward Forums were now published on the Council's Business page. However, there was no requirement to keep notes of the meetings or make them publicly available. In terms of resources, there had been additional pressure put on the Head of Scrutiny and Ward Forums with the team and wider service providing administration support and this support would be reviewed in the future. This led to a lack of time to deal with live issues, policy and strategy work.
- 5.6 With regard to marketing, the Head of Policy and Strategic Delivery had already undertaken work to move from Committee style meetings to encourage public participation but the survey had not received a good response. The Head of Policy and Strategic Delivery indicated that the Head Of Scrutiny And Ward Forums could liaise with the Chair to hold a workshop to seek members' views on review and new approaches to future meetings. There was a need for Ward Forums to be linked to issues impacting on the area and being more interactive.
- 5.7 The Head of Policy and Strategic Delivery and Head of Scrutiny and Ward Forums met fortnightly to discuss Ward Forum related issues and policy. There was quantitative data available from the community impact assessment and the

information provided from the voluntary community sector. It was important for members to have more information about the support in place for Ward Forums and to manage expectations, and to look at discussing live issues as meetings as people returned to face to face meetings.

**ACTIONS:**

1. The Head of Policy and Strategic Delivery in conjunction with the Chair to construct a letter from the Deputy Mayor outlining the changes and recirculating the survey to all Members outlining the support for Ward Forums and managing Ward Members' expectations.
2. The Head of Policy and Strategic Delivery/Head Of Scrutiny And Ward Forums to arrange a workshop and for all Members of the Council to be invited to discuss the future of Ward Forum meetings.
3. The Head of Policy and Strategic Delivery/Head of Scrutiny to recirculate the Ward Forum survey following the workshop.

**RESOLVED:**

**To note the update provided in this report**

**6 Constitution Committee Terms of Reference and Work Programme for 2022 / 2023**

- 6.1 The Head of Legal and Governance introduced the report requesting that the noting of the Terms of Reference be deferred to the next meeting following approval by Full Council on 20 July 2022.
- 6.2 The Head of Legal and Governance summarised the proposed work programme for the municipal year.

**RESOLVED:**

1. **To note that the Terms of Reference for the Constitution Committee will be the subject of a report to Full Council on 20 July 2022 and therefore agrees to defer the formal noting of them until the next meeting.**
2. **The work programme for 2022 / 2023 as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.**

**7 Constitution Review - Parts One and Two**

- 7.1 The Deputy Mayor introduced the report setting out the review of Parts One (Your Council) and Two (Articles of Association) of the new Constitution and seeking members' comments.
- 7.2 Members suggested the following amendments:

**Part One - Your Council**

Section A

Paragraph 1.3

- Insert the word "directly" before Elected Mayor
- insert a link to Councillor's details

Paragraph 1.6

- Add reference to promoting equality among Citizens and in particular protected groups

- A new sub heading detailing Councillors responsibility
- Paragraph 1.7
- First Citizen to be in inverted comma
  - To amend to 'chairs' from 'leads'
  - Add reference to the ambassador's role of welcoming visitors to the Town Hall and the borough
  - To include examples of the role of the Speaker
- Paragraph 1.8
- Insert the word "directly" before Elected Mayor
- Paragraph 1.13
- Define Scrutiny Panel and Scrutiny Commissions in the glossary
  - In the first line delete the word "all"
- Paragraph 1.17
- To review the definition of an "Officer"
- Paragraph 1.19
- Paragraph 1.20
- To cross reference the relevant article setting out the Monitoring officer's remit to amend the Constitution

### Section B

Paragraph 1.11

- In the second line delete the comma following is
- Clarify what is meant by budget and add a link to the Budget and Policy Framework

Paragraph 1.19

- To replace the "Constitution" for 'this' in the second sentence.

Paragraph 1.14

- To highlight this is a new section within the Constitution
- To be more explicit about equalities and justice.

### Section C

First paragraph should include an opening statement of a "Citizen" and definition of citizen to be reviewed by officers

Paragraph 1.2

- To expand the definition of citizen to include anyone not living in Hackney

Paragraph 1.3

- In the final bullet point after school add the words "to receive education"

Paragraph 1.4

- In the first bullet point after 'anyone' add the words "in dealing with the council"

## **Part Two - Articles of the Constitution**

### Article 1

Paragraph 2.3

- In bullet point six, provide an explanation of personal and non-personal interest.

### Article 2

Paragraph 2.4

- A qualifying statement is needed to ensure citizens understood that access/participation could be restricted and that they do not have the rights of ETAs

Paragraph 2.6

- To add a bullet point to report a complaint by telephone and include a contact number

Article 3

Paragraphs 3.4 & 3.5

- To undertake further research with other local authorities on how opposition groups

Paragraphs 4.7b & c

- Explain about the Secretary of State
- The election of Mayor to be moved up in the constitution

Article 5

Paragraph 5.3

- Explain what is a statutory Deputy Mayor

Article 7

Paragraph

- Explain what are Scrutiny Panel and Scrutiny Commissions

Paragraph 7.1

- To amend Committee to Commission

Article 10

The section on Ward Forums would need to be reviewed following the workshop

Paragraph 10.4

- To amend 'Citizen' to 'citizen'

Paragraph 10.7

- A discussion on the future chairing of Ward Forums is necessary at the workshop.

Article 15

Paragraph 15.5

- At bullet point 5, provide an example of external factors
- Cross reference Monitoring Officer to earlier sections of the Constitution

Article 16

Paragraph 16.4

- To reword and clarify the paragraph and possibly add the following explanation " A member can request an explanation of the Speaker/Chair's ruling but once the Speaker/Chair's has ruled on the interpretation being applied to the meeting, then to ensure good conduct of a meeting members should not debate whether a ruling is correct. It is a function of the Speaker/Chair to be in control of a meeting and to avoid any debates on the interpretation of a ruling to enable the meeting to transact the items of business on the agenda."

7.3 Members indicated that a glossary would assist the public in understanding the constitution

**ACTIONS:**

1. The Head of Legal and Governance to review the relevant scrutiny sections in the Constitution with the Scrutiny Leads.
- 2 The Head of Legal and Governance to circulate a further draft of Parts One (Your Council) and Two (Articles of Association) for further comments or amendments.

(Councillor Gordon left the meeting at 19.00 hours)

**RESOLVED:**

**The Committee considered the overall proposed presentational style and draft wording for Parts One and Two of the revised Constitution and provided any**

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**comments or observations to be taken forward by the Constitution Officer Working Group.**

**8 Any Other Business Which In The Opinion Of The Chair Is Urgent**

8.1 There was no other business.

**Duration of the meeting:** 17.30 - 19.22 hours