

**Standards Committee Recommendations on  
Changes to the Constitution**

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**Purpose of Report**

1. This report asks council to consider recommendations of the council's standards committee on the following matters:
  - a) Part 4 – in relation to Petitions
  - b) Part 9 – Financial Regulations and Procedure Rules
  - c) Part 12A – in relation to the Safeguarding Children and Young People Panel

**Background**

2. The Standards Committee has responsibility for oversight of the Council's constitution. It has established a cross party working group, known as the Focus Group on the Constitution, to advise and assist the committee in carrying out this function.
3. On 25 April 2014, the standards committee considered a number of recommended changes to the above mentioned parts of the constitution
4. These changes were recommended by the Focus Group on the Constitution following detailed consideration at meetings on 19 March and 15 April 2014.

**Main Considerations for the Council**

5. The relevant extract of the minutes of the standards committee's meeting on 25 April 2014 is attached as Appendix 1.

## Summary of proposed changes

### (a) Parts 4 and 4A – Petitions

6. The duty to provide a statutory petition scheme has been repealed by the Localism Act and the Council has since been operating its own discretionary petition scheme. The Standards Committee considered whether a petition scheme should be available and if so, what arrangements should apply. Following recommendation from the Focus Group, the Standards Committee recommends that a petition scheme is provided to operate as follows:
  - i. A threshold of 25 signatures for a petition to be noted at full council and 10 signatures at an area board.
  - ii. A threshold of 1% of the total population of the county (approximately 4700) be required to trigger a debate at full council, and a threshold of 1% of a total community area population (ranging from approximately 140-450) to trigger a debate at an area board.
  - iii. Those eligible to sign a petition to include those who live, work or study in Wiltshire from the age of 13 upwards and also those not included in the above criteria, but with a direct link to a council service which is the subject of a petition.
  - iv. The petition scheme to be updated to clarify the procedure required for external e-petition sites to be accepted for submitting a petition in addition to the council's own e-petition site.
7. The report considered by the Focus Group and Standards Committee is attached as background information at Appendix 2.

### Recommendation

8. **Council is asked to approve changes to Part 4 of the constitution in relation to petitions and Part 4A, the Petition Scheme, as shown in the attached tracked change documents at Appendix 3.**

### (b) Part 9 – Financial Regulations and Procedure Rules

9. The changes proposed do not make any material changes to existing financial controls but seek to ensure that the financial regulations and procedures under the constitution are exercised properly. The majority of the proposed changes are designed to remove duplication, reflect the management structure and make it clearer and easier to follow.

10. The report considered by the Focus Group and Standards Committee is attached as background information at Appendix 4.

**Recommendation:**

**11. Council is asked to approve changes to Part 9 of the constitution as shown in the attached tracked change document at Appendix 5.**

**(c) Part 12A – in relation to the Safeguarding Children and Young People Panel**

12. This has been amended to incorporate details of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Panel established by Cabinet as part of its acceptance of the recommendations of the Safeguarding Task Group. This provides consistency in approach as this Panel runs parallel to the Corporate Parenting Panel which is already included in this part of the constitution.

**Recommendation:**

**13. Council is asked to approve changes to Part 12A of the constitution to include details of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Panel of the as shown in the attached tracked change documents at Appendix 6.**

**Environmental Impact of the Proposals**

14. There is no environmental impact as a result of these proposals

**Safeguarding Implications**

15. There are no safeguarding issues arising from this report.

**Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

16. There is no equalities impact arising from this report.

**Risk assessment**

17. There are no significant risks identified as a result of these recommendations.

**Financial Implications**

18. None identified directly as a result of this proposal.

## **Legal Implications**

19. The recommendations in this report are consistent with the relevant legislation, in particular the Localism Act 2011.

## **Options Considered**

20. As set out in the relevant papers to the standards committee.

## **Proposal**

**21. Council is, therefore, asked to consider the recommendations of the standards committee as set out in paragraphs 8, 11 and 13 above and decide accordingly.**

**Ian Gibbons**

**Associate Director Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer**

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**Unpublished reports relied upon in the preparation of this report: None**

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Extract of Standards Committee minutes 25 April 2014

Appendix 2 – Report of Focus Group on Part 4 (petitions)

Appendix 3 – Part 4/4A – tracked

Appendix 4 – Report of Focus Group on Part 9

Appendix 5 – Part 9 – tracked

Appendix 6 – Part 12A tracked