

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTE EXTRACT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 25 APRIL 2014 AT KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

16 Recommendations and Update from the Constitution Focus Group

The Monitoring Officer introduced the reports and recommendations from the Constitution Focus Group on Part 4 of the Constitution in relation to Petitions, Part 9 - Financial Regulations and Procedure Rules - and Part 12A in relation to the Safeguarding Children and Young People Panel.

In discussing Petitions it was explained that with the repeal of the underpinning Act of Parliament, the Council's statutory petition scheme had lapsed, and the Constitution Focus Group had considered what details should be retained or added to the discretionary petition scheme. The Focus Group had recommended that once petitions reach a specific threshold they should be able to trigger specific actions such as a council debate, and that the previous thresholds had been too high. The Focus Group had therefore recommended new thresholds, as well as clarifying the rules on e-petitions and who was eligible to sign a petition.

It was clarified that the changes to Part 9 were largely to remove duplication with other parts of the Constitution and updates to reflect council practice, management structure and legislative changes.

The changes to Part 12A of the Constitution were stated 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.

The Committee discussed the proposed changes, requesting details of how population would be determined for the community areas and the associated thresholds for petition actions. In relation to Part 9 members were assured that with removal of information from Part 9 that other parts of the Constitution contained the relevant details on Overview and Scrutiny.

The Monitoring Officer then updated the Committee on progress of the work to revise Part 3 of the Constitution - Responsibility for Functions and Scheme of Delegation - which would be brought forward for the Committee's approval at a future date.

At the conclusion of debate, it was,

Resolved:

To recommend that Council adopt the proposed revisions to Part 4, Part 9 and Part 12A of the Constitution.