

**Extract of minutes of the Standards Committee
Dated 20 January 2014**

8 Recommendations from the Constitution Focus Group

The Monitoring Officer introduced proposed changes to Part 5 of the Constitution - Access to Information Procedure Rules - as recommended by the Constitution Focus Group at its meeting on 8 January 2014. The changes were to reflect the requirements of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012. Other changes included a definitions section, clarity over references to council offices and the proper officer for specific actions, notification of private meetings, and other changes to reflect the Council's revised senior management structure

The Committee discussed the proposed changes as detailed in the agenda papers, and noted the Focus Group's suggestion that further clarification regarding the rights of Group Leaders and councillors generally to confidential Part 2 papers should be drawn up by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with Group Leaders. This could be dealt with as an amendment to Protocol 2 of the Constitution on Councillor-Officer Relations, which already has a section on councillors' access to information. It was suggested that it may be appropriate to change the title of the Protocol given the broad range of issues that it covers.

The requirements for giving notice of items that are proposed to be taken in Part 2 of the agenda as business which is confidential or within the categories of exempt information were noted.

The Committee also noted the ongoing discussions of the Constitution Focus Group on its review of the council's Petition Scheme. A report on the outcome of the Focus Group's consideration will be submitted to the Committee in due course.

Resolved:

To recommend that Council approves the changes to part 5 of the Constitution as detailed in the report.