

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL
STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

**AGENDA
ITEM NO**

12 JULY 2018

6c

Report Title	TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR 2018/19 CONSTITUTION WORKING GROUP
Purpose of Report	For the committee to determine the terms of reference for the Group for 2018/19
Decision(s)	<p>The Committee RESOLVES to reconvene the Constitution Working Group for 2018/19 on the following basis:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(a) The Group examine the issues and conduct its business as, outlined in Section 2 of the report;</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(b) Membership shall comprise Cllrs Cooper, Pearson, Townley, Reed, Kay and Studdert-Kennedy*;</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">and</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(c) The Committee Chair shall be Cllr Pearson.</p>
Consultation and Feedback	This report is the result of proposals from the Leader and Cllr Townley in view of issues raised by other councillors.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications arising directly from this report David Stanley – Accountancy Manager Tel: 01453 754100 Email: david.stanley@stroud.gov.uk
Legal Implications	None
Report Author	Karen Trickey, Head of Legal Services Tel: 01453 754369 Email: karen.trickey@stroud.gov.uk * amended by Craig Hallett, Solicitor & Deputy Monitoring Officer
Background Paper	Internal Guide on Member Meetings (in particular the Appendix setting out matters to be addressed when setting up a Task and Finish Group) March 2018 and available on the Members' Hub Page.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The Leader has previously proposed to Committee that the Constitution Working Group be reconvened to consider pertinent issues which have been raised by members in recent months. This report sets out proposed terms of reference for the Group.

2. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- 2.1 In short, the following issues are proposed for the Group's consideration:
- (a) Whether a further redistribution of functions between committees should take place to reduce the number of committees;
 - (b) A review be undertaken of the Council's Financial Regulations (Part 5 Constitution) to assess how best to engage committees and Members in the budget setting process; and
 - (c) A review be undertaken of the Role Profiles for Councillors (Part 16 Constitution) to further promote and improve Member involvement in the decision making process.
- 2.2 Regarding (a), such an issue has been raised within the context of whether the Community Services and Licensing Committee and the Environment Committee should be amalgamated; and the potential for cost savings in having one less committee. If there is to be a new (or revised) committee, the Group will also need to consider the committee's terms of reference.
- 2.3 Members will recall that following the Working Group's previous consideration of point (a) between June and September 2016, in October 2016 the Committee did not consider there should be a change in the two committees at that time although it requested that the committees' workload be kept under review in 2016/17. In response to the latter, it was found that there had not been any material reduction in either committee's workload during 2016 – 2017. If anything, there appears to have been an increase since the last review. Nevertheless, in view of the medium term budget position, it has been suggested by some Members that the issue should be considered again.
- 2.4 Another main issue which has been raised for review is the Council's Financial Regulations. This follows on from Member concerns about the process for setting the annual budget and the limited involvement of committees in the budget process flagged up in January 2017's budget meeting. In response to such, the Leader has asked that this (i.e. item (b) above) also be considered by the Working Group.
- 2.5 Questions have also been raised by Members which touch upon the Role Profile for Members; the aim being to help ensure that all Members have the support they need and are clear as to their responsibilities as elected representatives. This issue potentially includes consideration of a range of

matters such as Member engagement including the better recognition of Member Champion roles in promoting Council policy objectives; improving work plans for committees including scrutiny and review functions; extending public speaking; the effectiveness of the current opportunities for Members to challenge committees; and the possible use of substitutes.

3. PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS

- 3.1 Consistent with previous arrangements it is proposed that:
 - (a) the Group is cross party;*
 - (b) the Chair of the Working Group is appointed by the Strategy and Resources Committee;
 - (c) the Working Group meets in private, although the time and place of all meetings may be notified to all Members of Council.
- 3.2 It is proposed the group will comprise of 6 members (2 Conservative, 2 Labour and 1 Green and the non group member).*
- 3.3 As set out in the Decision Box to the report, various councillors have been nominated for membership and Cllr Pearson has been nominated to Chair the Group. The Committee is requested to resolve the appointments.
- 3.4 To progress matters expeditiously, it is recommended that:
 - (a) the review of the number of committees and the financial regulations (given the implications for the 2019/20 budget setting process) be addressed first, with a report being submitted to the Committee in October 2018; and
 - (b) for the remaining items to be considered afterwards with a report back to committee in 2019 after the budget setting cycle.
- 3.5 Given the timescales for the first two items, it is important that all Members appointed to the Group are able to commit to attend at least the majority of meetings over the next 3 months. Provisional meetings are currently proposed for Thursday 19 July, Thursday 2 August, Thursday 16 August and Thursday 6 September from 4.30 – 6pm.
- 3.6 The officer support for the Group will come from the Monitoring Officer and also in respect to the Financial Regulations, the Section 151 Officer.