

City of York Council	Committee Minutes
MEETING	AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
DATE	13 FEBRUARY 2012
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS JEFFRIES (CHAIR), BARNES, BROOKS (VICE-CHAIR), BURTON, CUTHBERTSON, WATSON AND STEWARD

PART B - MATTERS REFERRED TO COUNCIL.

54. CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

[See also under Part A Minutes]

Members considered a report which asked for their support for a number of changes to the Council's Constitution.

The report outlined a number of changes which Members considered in turn as outlined below.

Cabinet Member Decision Sessions

Members deferred making a decision on the abolition of Cabinet Member Decision Sessions and asked that a further report be brought back to the Audit and Governance Committee after further consideration of how public involvement might be maintained in the decision making process.

Member Champions

Due to pressures on Cabinet Members time, some Members felt that it would be beneficial to keep the Member Champions in place to provide an additional point of contact for residents and community groups. Other Members felt that the roles were not fully effective and the cross over with Cabinet Members and the Shadow Spokespersons made it viable to remove the constitutional recognition of the role.

Merger of Scrutiny Management Committee with Effective Organisation Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Members agreed to the proposed merger and suggested that Membership should be proportional. Officers advised that Membership would be a matter for the political groups and would be subject to the annual meeting in May.

Abolition of Cabinet Working Groups

Members recommended that the Cabinet continue to be advised by a Mansion House Advisory Group to enable Members and the Public to continue be informed about the governance of the house. Members agreed to the abolition of the Young Peoples Working Group in light of the establishment of a successful Youth Council.

Establishment of a Corporate Parenting Board

Members agreed to the establishment of a Corporate Parenting Board.

Policy Framework

Members agreed that the HR, Procurement and Risk Management Strategies should be removed from the Constitution.

HR and ICT Procedure Rules

Members agreed to the removal of the HR and ICT procedure rules from the Constitution and noted that removing these rules would not affect controls within the Council.

Officer Decision Log

Members suggested that rather than removing the requirement for decisions to be recorded in an Officer decision log, that the wording in the Constitution be amended to reflect that only decisions that are considered noteworthy should be recorded.

Pre-Decision Call In

Some Members argued that pre-decision call in is useful for the public and members, especially for controversial decisions. However, other Members agreed that such call-ins are rare and as call-in meetings take

place after any decision has been made, the practice should be discontinued.

RECOMMENDED: That Council approve the following Constitutional changes:

- i. Remove references to Member Champions from the Constitution.
- ii. Merge the terms of reference for the Effective Organisation Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Scrutiny Management Committee from the start of the next municipal year.
- iii. Note the abolition of the Young People's Working Group with a recommendation to Cabinet for the retention of a Mansion House Advisory Group.
- iv. Welcome the establishment of a Corporate Parenting Board and to agree that membership should be formalised at each annual meeting.
- v. Agree that the Procurement Strategy, the HR Strategy and the Risk Management Strategy no longer be treated as part of the Council's policy framework.
- vi. Agree to the removal of the HR Procedure Rules and the ICT Procedure Rules from the Constitution.
- vii. Retain the requirement for Officer decisions to be recorded within the Officer decision log with an amendment to the Constitutional wording to record only the decisions which the decision makers consider to be exceptionally noteworthy.
- viii. Remove provisions for pre-decision call in.

REASON:

To ensure the Council has effective and efficient Constitutional arrangements in place.

Councillor Jeffries, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 8.30 pm].