

# Overview and Scrutiny Board 2023

20<sup>th</sup> November

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## Governance Systems Task Group – Update Report

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Charlie Hotham, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services
Report Author Claire Felton	Job Title: Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services Contact email: <a href="mailto:c.felton@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk">c.felton@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk</a>
Wards Affected	No specific ward relevance
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	An Effective and Sustainable Council
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

### 1. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Overview and Scrutiny Board is asked to **RECOMMEND** that:-

- 1) The terms of reference for the Cabinet Advisory Groups be approved;
- 2) The proposed Memorandum of Understanding concerning cross party working be approved; and
- 3) The update in respect of progress with implementing the recommendations made by the Governance Systems Task Group be noted.

### 2. **BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The report details the work that has been undertaken at the Council to implement the recommendations made by the Governance Systems Task Group and which were approved at an extraordinary meeting of Council held on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023.
- 2.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Board is invited to consider the update provided and whether to approve the recommendations detailed in the report.

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### **3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES**

- 3.1 The Governance Systems Task Group completed a review of the Council's governance model in September 2023. The findings detailed in the group's report were subsequently approved at an extraordinary meeting of Council held on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023.
- 3.2 Since Council approved the group's recommendations, the Constitution Review Working Group has held a number of meetings to consider progress with the implementation of the actions that were proposed.
- 3.3 At a meeting of the Constitution Review Working Group held on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2023, Members agreed that meetings of the group should take place approximately once a month to enable Members to ensure that the amendments to the Council's constitution and working practices that are required, following on from the review, will be delivered in time for all such changes to be in place by the start of the 2024/25 municipal year.
- 3.4 At a subsequent meeting of the Constitution Review Working Group, held on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023, Members considered initial draft terms of reference for the Cabinet Advisory Groups that had been proposed by the Governance Systems Task Group. Members also considered a draft Memorandum of Understanding for cross party working, which had similarly been proposed by the Task Group.
- 3.5 A number of amendments were requested by Members to these documents and it was agreed that a further meeting of the Constitution Review Working Group should take place to consider the updated versions of the Cabinet Advisory Group terms of reference and Memorandum of Understanding for cross party working. To ensure that this could take place in time for a written update on the subject to be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting in November 2023, this additional meeting of the Constitution Review Working Group took place at midday on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023.
- 3.6 Based on the amendments that had already been made to both documents and which were subsequently suggested at the meeting of the Constitution Review Working Group held on 8<sup>th</sup> November, the group endorsed the attached terms of reference for Cabinet Advisory Groups and Memorandum of Understanding for cross party working.

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- 3.7 In addition to this work, it is important to note that a comprehensive review of the Council's constitution is currently being undertaken on behalf of the Council. Findings arising from the Governance Systems Task Group will be taken into account as part of this process, whilst the review also aims to simplify and reduce the current length of the constitution. Any proposed changes to the constitution arising from this process will ultimately need to be determined by Council.

**4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from this report.

**5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Review and revision of the Constitution is governed by Article 15 of the Constitution.

**6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS**

**Relevant Strategic Purpose**

- 6.1 The action proposed in this report supports the strategic purpose "an effective and sustainable Council".

**Climate Change Implications**

- 6.2 There are no specific climate change implications.

**Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 6.3 There are no specific equalities and diversity implications.

**7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 There is a risk that if the Council does not progress in a timely manner with consideration of the changes to the constitution required as a result of the Governance Systems Task Group, these amendments will not be in place in time for the start of the 2024/25 municipal year as intended.

**8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Proposed Cabinet Advisory Group Terms of Reference.

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Appendix 2 – Proposed Memorandum of Understanding concerning cross party working.

**Background Papers**

Governance Systems Task Group’s final report: [Governance Systems Task Group - report](#)

Minutes of the meeting of the extraordinary Council meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023: [Minutes - Council meeting, 20th September 2023](#)

**9. REPORT SIGN OFF**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Name and Job Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Charlie Hotham.	10/11/2023
Lead Director / Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services	08/11/2023
Financial Services	Pete Carpenter, Director of Finance and Resources	08/11/2023
Legal Services	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services	08/11/2023