



Council

4 March 2019

**Subject: Constitution Amendments - to remove the need for Mini Meets following Annual Council and also to permit the Head of Paid Service to reject questions during the Purdah period which he deems to be politically motivated**

Report by:

Executive Director of Resources

Contact Officer:

Alan Robinson  
Strategic Lead Governance and  
People/Monitoring Officer  
[Alan.robinson@west-lindsey.gov.uk](mailto:Alan.robinson@west-lindsey.gov.uk)

Katie Coughlan  
Senior Democratic & Civic Officer  
[Katie.coughlan@west-lindsey.gov.uk](mailto:Katie.coughlan@west-lindsey.gov.uk)

Purpose / Summary:

To agree a number of minor amendments to the Constitution, namely to the Council Procedure rules.

These amendments will remove the need for Mini Committee Meetings to elect Chairman following Annual Council, making this a function of the Annual Council Meeting itself.

A further amendment is proposed to permit the Head of Paid Service to reject questions under Procedure Rule number 9, during the Purdah period, which he considers to be politically motivated and therefore an unjustified use of Council time and resources.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

Members are asked to approve the amendments to the Constitution as set out in Appendices A, Ai, and B.

## IMPLICATIONS

**Legal:**

No legal implications

**Financial :** FIN/220/19/TJB

No financial implications

**Staffing :**

No staffing implications

**Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :**

N/A

**Risk Assessment :**

N/A

**Climate Related Risks and Opportunities :**

N/A

**Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

Wherever possible please provide a hyperlink to the background paper/s  
If a document is confidential and not for public viewing it should not be listed.

**Call in and Urgency:**

**Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?**

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

**Key Decision:**

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

No

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 A number of minor amendments are required to the Constitution, namely to the Council Procedure rules.
- 1.2 These amendments will remove the need for Mini Committee Meetings to elect Chairman following Annual Council, making this a function of the Annual Council Meeting itself.
- 1.3 A further amendment is proposed to permit the Head of Paid Service to reject questions under Procedure Rule number 9, during the Purdah period, which he considers to be politically motivated and therefore an unjustified use of Council time and resources.

## **2. Removal of Mini Meets**

- 2.1 Members will be aware that historically, on the rising of Annual Council each of the Committees convenes in turn and holds a “mini meeting” for the sole purpose of electing its Chairman and Vice Chairman/men.
- 2.2 This approach has often proved cumbersome and time consuming.
- 2.3 Cross party requests have previously been received requesting that this process be amended.
- 2.4 The Constitution currently states (Procedure Rule 23.1) “Every Committee shall, at its first meeting before proceeding to any business elect a Chairman for the year and may at any time elect a Vice Chairman”.
- 2.5 It is proposed that by simply moving this function to be listed under the functions of the Annual Council Meeting (Procedure Rule 1.3), Annual Council will be responsible for appointing Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees, as opposed to the Committee’s themselves and therefore the mini meets will no longer be required
- 2.6 The amended effected pages are set out at Appendix A and Ai.

## **3. Rejection of Questions**

- 3.1 The Head of Paid Service currently has a number of grounds by which he can refuse to accept a question Under Procedure Rule 9 (Council Procedure Rule 9.4 relates).
- 3.2 During the Purdah period it is of paramount importance that Council resources and time are not used for political reasons.
- 3.3 It is therefore proposed that an additional criteria be included to cover such circumstances.

3.4 The amended effected page and proposed wording is set out at Appendix B.

#### **4 Recommendations**

4.1 Members are asked to approve the amendments to the Constitution as set out in Appendices A, Ai and B.