

## NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

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<b>Report Originator</b>	Councillor Jonathan Ekins Paul Goult	<i>Fwd Plan Ref No:</i> N/A	
<b>Wards Affected</b>	ALL	10 <sup>th</sup> February 2020	
<b>Title</b>	<b>Governance Working Group – Interim Report</b>		

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

For Members to receive an interim report from the Chair of the Governance Working Group regarding progress made to date on the compilation of a draft Constitution for the North Northamptonshire Shadow Council.

### 2. BACKGROUND

The North Northamptonshire Joint Committee agreed at its meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019 to establish a working group to draw-up a draft Constitution for adoption by the Shadow Council. Any draft Constitution would need to be referred by the Joint Committee for consideration by the Shadow Council at its inaugural meeting (likely to be May 2020).

Councillor Jonathan Ekins (NCC) was appointed Chair of the Working Group. The other members of the Group include – Cllr Bob Eyles (CBC), Cllr Andy Mercer (ENC), Cllr Lloyd Bunday (KBC) & Cllr Barry Graves (BCW). The Group is supported by officers from CBC, NCC, ENC & BCW.

The Group has met in Wellingborough on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2019, 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2019, 26<sup>th</sup> September 2019 & 24<sup>th</sup> October 2019. The Group is next due to meet on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

### 3. REPORT

The Group have been working to a Scoping Report agreed at its inaugural meeting, and previously reported to the Joint Committee.

The Group noted that a large part of the draft Constitution's text would be dictated by law and statutory guidance, therefore it was keen to concentrate on "exceptions", those areas of the Constitution where there could be "local choice".

These "local choice" items included –

- Committee Structure
- Overview & Scrutiny Arrangements
- Public Participation and Access to Information

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- Member Officer Protocol
- Code of Conduct for Members
- Standing Orders – Rules of Procedure
- Financial Procedure Rules

It was noted by the Group that the section relating to Member Allowances was being considered by a separate body, but would eventually need to be included in the Shadow Council's Constitution.

### **Discussions on “local choice” issues**

At the previous meeting of the North Northamptonshire Joint Committee, Members received an update of the discussion undertaken by the Working Group. Due to the unscheduled General Election progress on the draft Constitution has been delayed, but work is underway to achieve the necessary deadline.

Attached as appendices to this report are draft documents covering two important areas of the Constitution:-

- Access to Information
- Meeting Procedure Rules

### Further work to be undertaken

The Group will consider the following areas at its next meeting:-

- Articles of the Constitution
- Code of Conduct for Members
- Member Officer Protocol

The Group intend to meet to finalise the draft document, prior to its circulation to the Joint Committee membership.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are currently no direct additional costs related to the work of the Working Group. Officer support will continue to be drawn from partner authorities.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Working Group is tasked with compiling a draft Constitution for the Shadow Council, incorporating all relevant laws and statutes. The Northamptonshire (Structural Changes) Order 2019 currently being considered by Parliament

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tasks the inaugural Shadow Full Council meeting with adopting a Constitution, to include executive governance arrangements.

### 6. **CONCLUSION**

The Working Group has made progress in identifying the key issues of “local choice” and commencing consideration of those items. Officers have been requested to draft documentation, based upon preferences expressed at the Working Group.

The final consultation and sign-off on the draft Constitution will need to be made by the Joint Committee, prior to its submission to the inaugural meeting of the Shadow Full Council.

### 7. **RECOMMENDATION**

- i) **Approve the appendices for inclusion in the draft Constitution; and**
- ii) **Note the progress made by the Governance Working Group and agree to receive a further update on the draft Shadow Council Constitution at the Joint Committee meeting on 5th March 2020.**

#### Appendices

Access to Information  
Standing Orders - Rules of Procedure