

<b>This report is public</b>	
<b>Constitution Review</b>	
<b>Committee</b>	Council
<b>Date of Committee</b>	16 March 2026
<b>Portfolio Holder presenting the report</b>	Councillor Chris Brant, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services
<b>Date Portfolio Holder agreed report</b>	
<b>Report of</b>	Monitoring Officer, Shiraz Sheikh

## Purpose of report

The Constitution is the document by which, in accordance with the law, the Council exercises all its powers and duties. It is essential that it is reviewed to ensure it remains fit for purpose. This is to update Members with the latest changes agreed following meetings of the Constitution Review Working Group (CRG).

## 1. Recommendations

Council resolves:

- 1.1 To approve the changes to Part 3, Officer Scheme of Delegation (Appendix 1) and the organisation chart (Appendix 2).
- 1.2 To approve the proposed Access to Information Procedure Rules (Appendix 3).
- 1.3 To approve the composition of the Planning Committee be amended to 11 members (with 11 named substitutes) effective from the Municipal Year 2026/2027.
- 1.4 To agree the Key Decision threshold on revenue expenditure/savings be £250,000.
- 1.5 To approve the renaming of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee to the Audit and Governance Committee, with a Standards Hearing Sub-Committee established under its remit; and that, consequently, the existing standalone Standards Committee be removed from the committee structure.
- 1.6 To delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to make amendments to the committee terms of reference, including stating the purpose of the committees, and to make any minor amendments to the Constitution as appropriate.
- 1.7 To delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to change the frequency of Planning Committee, if required, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee.

## 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Amongst the duties of the Monitoring Officer is responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the operation of the Constitution, and for recommending ways in which it can be amended.
- 2.2 Changes to the Constitution may only be made with the approval of the Council and/or by the Monitoring Officer arising from decisions of the Council or the Executive; where legislation requires a change in wording or terminology; or to make minor or consequential amendments.
- 2.3 The report proposes changes to the Scheme of Delegation, introduces Access to Information Procedure Rules, and amendments to some committees.

## Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary			
<b>Finance</b>	There are no financial implications directly associated with agreeing the recommendations in this report. Michael Furness, Assistant Director of Finance (S151 Officer), 18 February 2026			
<b>Legal</b>	The Council's Constitution needs to be regularly reviewed to ensure that governance procedures are up to date with internal structural changes and any legislative updates. Shiraz Sheikh, AD Law & Governance 06 March 2026			
<b>Risk Management</b>	If the Constitution and Scheme of Delegation are not kept up to date, there is a clear risk of blurred authority, inconsistent governance, and potential legal challenge. Outdated terminology and responsibilities may lead to delays, reduced transparency, and diminished confidence in the Council's decision-making. This report directly mitigates those risks by ensuring the governance framework remains current and robust. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance & Insight Team Leader, 18 February 2026			
Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
<b>Equality Impact</b>		x		N/A
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could		x		N/A

impact on inequality?				
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		N/A
<b>Climate &amp; Environmental Impact</b>				
<b>ICT &amp; Digital Impact</b>				
<b>Data Impact</b>				
<b>Procurement &amp; subsidy</b>				
<b>Council Priorities</b>				
<b>Human Resources</b>				
<b>Property</b>				
<b>Consultation &amp; Engagement</b>	Constitution Review Working Group			

## Supporting Information

### 3. Background

- 3.1 The new organisation structure became effective on 15 October 2025. The restructuring of the senior management team introduced three new Executive Directors, Cherwell Futures Director and the Head of Chief Executive's Office position.
- 3.2 The Officer Scheme of Delegation requires updating to account for the changes in titles and responsibilities. The Monitoring Officer, Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and Constitution Review Working Group have taken the opportunity to review and update the Officer Scheme of Delegation to make it a more modern and clearer format.
- 3.3 Access to Information Procedure rules are already contained in various parts of the Council's Constitution. The Monitoring Officer and Constitution Review Working Group have taken the opportunity to bring these together under a new single Part to help increase transparency and understanding for Members, council staff and members of the public.

- 3.4 The Monitoring Officer and Constitution Review Working Group have discussed and considered changes to the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee, Standards Committee, and Planning Committee.

## **4. Details**

### **Officer Scheme of Delegation (Part 3 of the Constitution)**

- 4.1 The Officer Scheme of Delegation sets out the powers and functions delegated to officers. It shows the ways in which Council officers can make decisions and which decisions they have the power to make. The summary of the key changes is below. The highlights in yellow in Appendix 1 reflect any new changes to the Officer Scheme of Delegation.
- 4.2 Section 2 (*Chief Officers and Deputy Chief Officers*) defines the Council's Chief Officers and Deputy Chief Officers. The Chief Officers are the Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service), Assistant Director Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer), Assistant Director Finance (Chief Finance Officer), and the three Executive Directors. Deputy Chief Officers are those that report directly to one or more of the Chief Officers, excluding posts that are solely secretarial or clerical in nature.
- 4.3 Section 17 (*Areas of Responsibility*) defines each Chief Officer's area of responsibility. The Scheme remains by exception, which means Chief Officers may exercise all delegated powers in their respective areas, subject to the limitations in Sections 8 to 22. A Chief Officer may authorise and further delegate powers to other officers in their Local Scheme of Delegation.
- 4.4 Section 23 (*Call-in*) and Section 24 (*Recording and Publishing Officer Decisions*) have been inserted to reflect the regulations on recording and publishing of officer decisions.
- 4.5 Section 25 (*Proper Officers and Authorised Officer Appointments*) has been reviewed and updated to bring this in line with any new changes in legislation. Post titles have been amended to reflect the new organisation structure.
- 4.6 Section 26 (*Local Choice Functions*) has been inserted to reflect what in practice is happening.
- 4.7 The Key Decision revenue threshold is increased to £250,000. This will be reflected in the proposed Scheme in Section 22.8.2 and throughout the Constitution. This is also reflected in the Access to Information Procedure Rules, Appendix 3.
- 4.8 The terminology has been updated in accordance with new organisation structure.

### **Access to Information Procedure Rules**

- 4.9 The new Part brings together existing sections of the Constitution that relate to access to information. This is to help increase transparency. The proposed Access to Information Procedure Rules is attached at Appendix 3.

### **Changes to Committees (commencing Municipal Year 2026/2027)**

- 4.10 The Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee to be renamed Audit and Governance Committee. This better reflects its functions.
- 4.11 The Standards Committee to be abolished with the Standards Hearing Sub Committee established as part of the renamed Audit and Governance Committee. Terms of reference and composition of the Standards Hearing Sub Committee to be agreed in the next Municipal Year.
- 4.12 Planning Committee to be composed of 11 members, with 11 named substitutes. This is primarily based on advice from the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) (set out at paragraph 4.13).
- 4.13 It is important that Members chosen to sit on the committee have the time and capacity to undertake the responsibilities of a Planning Committee member. PAS, considers that a Planning Committee of between 9 and 12 members is best practice for the following reasons:
- **An efficient use of time** – all members of the committee have a chance to speak without the meeting having to go on for an excessive amount of time;
  - **Better use of resources** – running, servicing and training committees takes up resources and the more members on committee, the more resources are required; and
  - **Greater flexibility and representation** – allows for a sufficient pool of councillors to focus on ward representation when needed (for example by ensuring that no more than one councillor from an individual ward is on the committee) and to provide cover as committee substitutes to reduce the chance of meeting cancellations, ensuring meetings remain quorate and decisions are made efficiently.
- 4.14 Amended terms of reference to include the purpose of each Committee to be inserted.

## **5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Not to agree the recommendations. This is not recommended as it is important that the Constitution is kept up to date.

## **6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations**

- 6.1 The Constitution is the document by which, in accordance with the law, the Council exercises all its powers and duties. It is essential that it is reviewed to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

## Decision Information

<b>Key Decision</b>	N/A
<b>Subject to Call in</b>	N/A
<b>If not, why not subject to call in</b>	N/A
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All

## Document Information

<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Appendix 1</b>	Proposed updated Officer Scheme of Delegation
<b>Appendix 2</b>	Organisation chart
<b>Appendix 3</b>	Proposed Access to Information Procedure Rules
<b>Background Papers</b>	None
<b>Reference Papers</b>	None
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<b>Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)</b>	Report of Statutory Officer, Monitoring Officer