

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK**CONSTITUTION INFORMAL WORKING GROUP**

Minutes from the Meeting of the Constitution Informal Working Group held on Thursday, 7th August, 2025 at 4.30 pm in Meeting Room 2:4 and Microsoft Teams

PRESENT: Councillors Bearshaw, Dickinson, Lintern, Long, Osborne (remotely) and Ware (remotely)

OFFICERS: Alexa Baker – Monitoring Officer

1 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Beales and Moriarty.

2 **MEMBERS PRESENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 34**

There was none.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

4 **NOTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes from the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.

5 **SCRUTINY GOVERNANCE REVIEW FEEDBACK - PRESENTATION**

The Monitoring Officer presented the feedback from the Scrutiny Governance Review. A copy of the presentation is attached.

Members of the Group made the following comments as summarised below:

- The need to further explore the role and scope of the Joint Panels.
- Terms of Reference for the Panels required tidying to improve clarity and consistency.
- Separate sessions had been proposed after Panel meetings to review the Forward Work Programmes.
- It had been agreed that training on scrutiny skills was required and to have scrutiny well defined. The Monitoring Officer confirmed an increase in training provision relating to scrutiny.
- Concerns were raised regarding repeated discussions, lack of structure and receipt of papers at short notice for Panel meetings.

- The Monitoring Officer recommended holding Briefings on Microsoft Teams before Panel meetings for all Members to attend.
- Members acknowledged that Work Programmes continued to slip behind schedule.
- Cabinet Briefings were useful for providing information and allowing Members to ask questions.
- Panel Briefings had been considered potentially beneficial.
- The Monitoring Officer suggested draft reports be circulated prior to pre-meetings.
- A proposal was made for Joint Panels to appoint a lead Panel.
- Recommendations in reports were often repetitive.
- Concerns were raised that Cabinet Members receive more information than other Members and that specific Panel Members should be able to investigate matters in greater detail.
- Suggested that reports don't include recommendations, leaving Panels to formulate their own recommendations.
- The Monitoring Officer explained they were looking to set up workshop sessions in March 2026 to review forthcoming items for Panels.

The key recommendations were proposed as follows:

- Explore and clarify the remit of Joint Panels, considering a lead Panel structure.
- Review and update Panels' Terms of Reference.
- Schedule regular post-meeting sessions to examine the Forward Work Programmes.
- Deliver structured, well-defined training on scrutiny.
- Introduce Teams Briefings for Panels and circulate draft reports in advance of pre-meetings.
- Develop structured meeting processes to reduce repetition and improve timely circulation of papers.
- Increase of Panel involvement in shaping recommendations.
- Plan and prepare for strategic workshops in March 2026.

Councillors Dickinson and Lintern left the meeting at 5.35pm.

6 **CONSTITUTIONAL UPDATES**

The Monitoring Officer presented a table of proposed substantive amendments to the Constitution. A copy of the table is attached.

AGREED: The Group agreed with all of the proposed substantive amendments to the Constitution.

7 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Constitution Informal Working Group was scheduled to take place on 4th September 2025 at 4.30pm in Meeting Room 1:3 and Microsoft Teams.

The meeting closed at 6.05 pm