

Timetable for preparation of the West Northamptonshire Constitution

Content	Timescales
<p>Rules of Procedure Part 4 D: Meeting Procedure Rules</p> <p>The Task and Finish Group discussed the Meeting Procedure Rules twice. A number of amendments were made following the last meeting and it is believed that this document is now substantially complete, subject to final sign off by the T&F Group.</p>	Mid-October 2020
<p>Rules of Procedure Part 4 A: Access to Information and Rules of Procedure Part 4 B: Executive Procedure Rules</p> <p>The content of both the Access to Information Procedure Rules and the Executive Procedure Rules is heavily prescribed by statute. For example, the Access to Information rules set out the statutory deadlines associated with the publication of the forward plan, agendas and reports and rights of access by members and members of the public.</p> <p>These sections of the new Constitution can be drafted by officers and signed off by the T&G Group quite quickly.</p>	Mid-October 2020
<p>Part 1: Summary and Explanation and Part 2: Articles</p> <p>Part 1 of the Constitution, as well as many of the individual articles are relatively straightforward. However, it is proposed that the T&F Group prioritise work on this section based on the following suggestions:</p> <p>Key articles</p> <p>Article 5: The role of the Chair etc. The T&F group will want to assure itself that these reflect the output of the T&F group charged with looking at civic matters.</p> <p>Article 6: Overview & Scrutiny. The T&F Group will have to decide on a structure for the operation of overview and scrutiny in the new authority, as well as the membership of the committee(s) and the mechanism (if any) for operating task and finish panels.</p> <p>Article 8: Other Committees. This is a key piece of work as the T&F Group will be required to make a recommendation as to the overall structure and size of the committees. These will need to reflect all of the non-executive duties for which the new Council will be responsible for, including, but not necessarily limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit; • Licensing; • Pensions (on behalf of both new authorities); • Planning; • Senior Appointments (or something more widely named, if it would potentially have to deal with disciplinary and appeals matters); • Standards (possibly including governance matters or the audit function); <p>There are a number of interdependencies involved, such as work on the Pensions function and the Health and Wellbeing Board, both of which are the subject of</p>	End-October 2020

<p>separate reports to the Shadow Executive. The T&F group will be advised of these.</p> <p>The T&F group will be required to assess the likely requirements of the new authority, as well as the resource requirements of the committee structure. The group may wish to look at comparable authorities e.g. Cornwall in order to ascertain possible structures.</p> <p>Article 9: Joint arrangements. This will need to be reviewed in light of any formal joint arrangements, particularly with the North Northamptonshire Council.</p> <p>Article 10: Arrangements for promoting good standards of behaviour by councillors. This is largely a product of statutory requirements, but the T&F Group will be required to review this article prior to working on the detailed Code of Conduct.</p> <p>Article 12: Decision Making. The T&F Group will be required to recommend a clear definition of a 'key decision' as required by the Local Government Act 2000.</p> <p>Non-key articles</p> <p>Article 1: The Constitution – this is a short, pre-amble document</p> <p>Article 2: The Council – this explains the structure of the Council and largely reflects other parts of the constitution</p> <p>Article 3: Rights and Responsibilities of members of the public – This article largely reflects the Access to Information Procedure Rules</p> <p>Article 4: The Full Shadow Council: this largely reflects the Meeting Procedure Rules, but the T&F Group will want to assure itself that there is consistency with those rules.</p> <p>Article 7: The Executive (Cabinet): This article largely reflects statutory requirements, although it is recommended the T&F group nonetheless review this article to ensure consistency across the Constitution.</p> <p>Article 11: Officers. This article largely reflects the statutory requirements relating to the designation of certain statutory posts, e.g. Head of Paid Service, Chief Finance Officer etc.</p> <p>Article 12: Legal matters. This article is largely administrative in nature.</p> <p>Article 13: Review, revision, suspension, interpretation and publication of the Constitution. The text of this article is common across most authorities.</p> <p>Budget and Policy Framework: This article reflects the statutory policies required by law and explains the role of the full council in making the final decision.</p>	
<p>Rules of Procedure Part 4 C: Overview & Scrutiny and Part 4 E Staff Employment</p>	<p>Mid-November 2020</p>

<p>Once the Articles have been drafted, the detailed Overview & Scrutiny Procedure Rules and Staff Employment Procedure Rules can be drafted.</p> <p>In relation to Overview and Scrutiny, the T&F will have to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will it work? • Composition/Membership? • Will it have Scrutiny Panels/Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups? • Call-in rules. 	
<p>Rules of Procedure Part 4 F: Financial Rules of Procedure Part 4 G: Contracts</p> <p>These two articles are to be drafted by officers from the sovereign authorities with specialist knowledge of the subject areas involved. The T&F Group will be required to ensure these sections are wholly consistent with the rest of the Constitution and cannot be miss-interpreted if read as stand-alone documents.</p>	<p>Mid-November 2020</p>
<p>Rules of Procedure Part 5: Code of Conduct</p> <p>The Code of Conduct agreed by the Shadow Authority was based on an exemplar Code chosen by the T&F Group established by the West Northamptonshire Joint Committee. The T&F Group may wish to consider this Code as it is already a substantially complete piece of work. Alternatively it may wish to acquaint itself with other recent work in this area.</p> <p>The T&F Group will need to decide on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The general structure of the Code. i.e. detailed or brief. • The process for dealing with allegations of breaches of the Code. • The need to appoint a statutory independent person to meet the requirements of the Localism Act 2011. 	<p>Late-November 2020</p>
<p>Scheme of Delegation: Part 3</p> <p>This is a large and complex piece of work. It will set out the decision making powers of committees, as well as those delegated to officers. In doing so, it will bring together the powers and duties associated with sovereign district councils as well as those of the County Council. Almost all of these powers flow from statutory requirements, and these will need to be checked to ensure they are up-to-date and accurate.</p> <p>This section may also have to reflect the structure of the new Council, depending on the layout chosen. It is suggested that this will be a largely technical exercise, although members will have a view on important topics such as individual executive member decision making.</p>	<p>end-December 2020</p>