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**REPORT OF THE COUNTY CLERK AND MONITORING OFFICER**

**FORWARD PLAN 2014/15**

**AGENDA ITEM: 6**

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**Reason for this Report**

1. To consider the Forward Plan of matters for consideration by the Constitution Committee in 2014/15.

**Background**

2. The Constitution Committee is responsible for reviewing the Council's Constitution recommending any changes to Council and/or Cabinet. It has authority (subject to the Monitoring Officer's advice) to make the following changes on behalf of the Council:-
  - (a) Drafting improvements to enhance clarity and remove minor anomalies.
  - (b) Updating to reflect legislative changes and matters of record.
  - (c) Amendments to the Financial, Contracts and Land Procedure Rules (subject to the advice of the S.151 Officer being sought).
3. A work plan is emerging for the Committee based on its work to date this year and Members' commitment for the Council and its committees to be valued as key democratic institutions for Cardiff making accountable, robust and inclusive decisions.
4. In addition to the objectives/outcomes that have emerged from previous discussions (and set out in Appendix A), the Committee will be aware that the Council's Organisational Development Programme addresses key enablers through which the Council will reposition its approach to understanding and meeting citizen needs and, through that focus, meeting the challenges facing the organisation. The outcomes sought from the programme are:
  - Reduced operating costs, to address rapid fiscal consolidation;
  - Improved outcomes across the Council and in key improvement priorities, to address current performance weakness;
  - Improved demand management & reduced failure demand, to more efficiently address the increasing demand for services;
  - Delivery of key infrastructure projects to accelerate Cardiff's development as a European Capital City.

5. Improving governance is at the heart of the Programme and the Constitution Committee will have a key role to play in supporting this work. The Committee, through its work plan, could consider taking on a more dynamic role by carrying out a “Governance” or “Democracy” Review,. Such a review could be undertaken with the view of bringing the Council closer to its residents, making it more accountable to those citizens and more connected with their concerns. The review could involve residents, community leaders, academics, experts and other people who are active in Cardiff such as business leaders who have a stake in the City.
6. Governance comprises the systems and processes; and culture and values by which the council is directed and controlled and through which it accounts to, engages with and, where appropriate, leads the community. The Authority’s ambition is for the governance of the Council to demonstrably improve the quality of policy outcomes, public services, and public spending for Cardiff residents and all who rely on our services. To support this ambition robust governance arrangements are required with opportunities for political, peer and community engagement with the improvement programme.
7. Indicators of success in this area will be improved annual perceptions of Cardiff Citizens, improved performance across of a range of services, seeing the Council move out of the bottom quartile in Wales and more public engagement in the running of the Council.

## Issues

8. The Improving Governance work stream sets out a number of actions that are relevant to the terms of reference of the Constitution Committee. These are:
  - Define and document the roles and responsibilities of the executive, non-executive, scrutiny and officer functions, with clear delegation arrangements and protocols for effective communication in respect of the authority and partnership arrangements
  - Research best practice at major UK cities in relation to effective governance structures
  - Review and begin to implement improvements to current collaborative scrutiny arrangements with partner organisations including a review of the current Local Service Board Scrutiny Panel.
  - Encourage public participation in council meetings by making meeting more welcoming to the public including developing a public question time at cabinet and committees
  - Refine scrutiny arrangements to strengthen focus on organisational development with improved clarity on role of Scrutiny; more strategic view and focus on key information
  - Implement member development programme to facilitate wide, informed engagement with policy development and performance improvement;

- Work with all Committees to review their objectives and work plans for 2014/15 to focus on impact and outcomes
  - Develop mechanism to enable Neighbourhood Partnership lead members to provide structured community perspective to policy and performance debate;
  - Develop a concise informative annual public report based on the key questions the public are likely to want answered about the council containing key risk and performance information, plus anything else fundamental to council strategy. A web-based annual report could be a live document, updated after the audit of the accounts.
9. If the Committee were to agree to carry out a Governance or Democracy Review as set out in paragraph 5, above, it may wish to consider taking evidence which could include public and expert opinion as well as examples of approaches and activities that have successfully increased public engagement at other authorities.

### **Legal Implications**

10. There are no direct legal implications arising from the content of this report.

### **Financial Implications**

11. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1) Consider the Forward Plan 2014/15, as set out in **Appendix A**, and to consider to what extent it would wish to participate in the Improving Governance Work stream of the Council's Organisation Development Strategy;
- 2) Advise officers how it wishes to progress the various items or topics contained in the Forward Plan and the relevant actions set out in the Improving Governance Work stream of the Council's Organisation Development Strategy.

**Marie Rosenthal**  
**County Clerk and Monitoring Officer**  
5 June 2014

Appendix A – Constitution Committee Forward Plan 2014-2015

## **APPENDIX A**

### **CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE – FORWARD PLAN 2014/15**

The following topics have been prioritised on a Red / Amber/ Green (RAG) basis with Red being the highest priority and include indicative timescales as applicable:

<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>OBJECTIVE/OUTCOME</b>	<b>WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?</b>	<b>PRIORITY</b>
(1) Present Annual Report to Council in June 2014	To report on the work of the Committee in reviewing the Constitution	Committee Chair/Monitoring Officer	<b>RED</b> June 2014
(2) Review Access To Information Rules	To review the current arrangements.	Monitoring Officer	<b>AMBER</b> July 2014
(3) Facilitate greater public participation in council business	Implement recommendations from the Public Engagement with Scrutiny Report April 2013. Improve Petition Scheme Improve Public Information and Guides to how the Council works	Monitoring Officer	<b>AMBER</b> September 2014
(4) Revised Contract procedure Rules	.To ensure Constitution Up to Date with legislation and to align with WLGA Model and best practice	Monitoring Officer , Finance, Procurement and Legal Officers	<b>GREEN</b> September 2014