

PART 2

Articles of the Constitution

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ARTICLE 1 - The Constitution

The Constitution

1.1 This Constitution, and all its appendices, is the Constitution of the Borough Council of Epsom and Ewell (hereafter referred to as 'the Council').

Powers of the Council

1.2 The Council will exercise all its powers and duties in accordance with the law and this Constitution.

Purpose of the Constitution

1.3 The purpose of the Constitution is to:-

- (a) Enable the Council to provide clear leadership to the community in partnership with residents, businesses and other organisations;
 - (b) Support the active involvement of citizens in the process of local authority decision-making;
 - (c) Help Councillors represent their constituents more effectively;
 - (d) Enable decisions to be taken efficiently, effectively and transparently, with due regard to probity and equity;
 - (e) Create a powerful and effective means of holding decision-makers to public account;
 - (f) Ensure that no one will scrutinise a decision in which he or she was directly involved;
 - (g) Ensure that those responsible for decision-making are clearly identifiable to local people and that they explain the reasons for decisions;
- and
- (h) Provide a means of improving the delivery of services to the community.

Interpretation and Review of the Constitution

1.4 Where the Constitution permits the Council to choose between different courses of action, the Council will seek to exercise that choice in the way that it thinks will most closely achieve the purposes stated above. The Council will monitor and evaluate the operation of the Constitution as set out in Article 14.

ARTICLE 2 - Members of the Council

Composition and Eligibility

- 2.1 **Composition:** The Council comprises 38 Councillors, (otherwise called Members). Councillors will be elected by the voters of each ward in accordance with a scheme drawn up by the Local Government Commission for England and approved by the Secretary of State.
- 2.2 **Eligibility:** Only registered voters of the Borough or those living, working or owning land in the Borough will be eligible to hold the office of Councillor.

Election and Terms of Councillors

- 2.3 **Election:** The regular election of Councillors will be held on the first Thursday in May (or whatever date is fixed by law) every four years (from 2003).
- 2.4 **Terms:** The terms of office of Councillors will start on the fourth day after being elected and will finish on the fourth day after the date of the next regular election.

Roles and Functions of all Councillors

- 2.5 **Key Roles:** All Councillors will:
- (a) Collectively be the ultimate policy-makers and carry out the principal strategic and corporate management functions, taking a Borough-wide view;
 - (b) Engage with and represent their communities, whose views they will bring into the Council's decision-making process and whose involvement and participation they will actively encourage;
 - (c) Represent the interests of their ward and where necessary balance different interests;
 - (d) Deal with individual casework and act as an advocate for constituents in resolving particular concerns or grievances;
 - (e) Be involved in decision-making;
 - (f) Be available to represent the Council on other bodies
- and
- (g) Maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics, showing respect for fellow Members, officers and the community.

2.6 Rights and Duties: Members will:-

- (a) Have such rights of access to such documents, information, land and buildings of the Council as are necessary for the proper discharge of their functions and in accordance with the law.
- (b) Not make public any information which is confidential or exempt without the consent of the Council or divulge information given in confidence to anyone other than a Member or officer entitled to know it.

and

- (c) No Member can issue an order for works to be carried out by or on behalf of the Council and nor can he/she, unless specifically authorised to do so, claim any right to inspect or enter any land.

For these purposes, 'confidential' and 'exempt' information are defined in the Access to Information Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution.

2.7 Job Description: A job description of the role of the Councillor in the Borough is included in Part 3 of this Constitution.

Conduct

2.8 Members will at all times observe the Members' Code of Conduct and will have regard to other documents such as the Codes of Conduct for Planning and Licensing matters and the Member/Officer Protocol set out in Part 5 of this Constitution.

2.9 The Council is required to maintain and update a Register of Interests of its Members. The Register is available for public inspection at the Council's offices.

Allowances

2.10 Members will be entitled to receive allowances in accordance with the Members' Allowances Scheme set out in Part 6 of this Constitution.

ARTICLE 3 - Citizens and the Council

Citizens' Rights

3.1 Citizens have the following rights. Their rights to information and to participate are explained in more detail in the Access to Information Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution.

- (a) **Voting and Petitions.** Citizens on the Register of Electors for the Borough have the right to vote in elections and to sign a petition to request a referendum for a form of Constitution with an elected Mayor. (A petition signed by 5% of those on the Register of Electors requires the Council to hold such a referendum). Petitions on other matters will be dealt with in accordance with the relevant Standing Order in Part 4 of this Constitution.
- (b) **Information.** Citizens have a right to:-
- Attend meetings of the Council and its committees, Sub-committees and Advisory Panels except where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, and the meeting is therefore held in private;
 - See reports and background papers, and any records of decisions made by the Council;
- and
- Inspect the Council's accounts and make their views known to the external auditor.
- (c) **Participation.** Citizens have the right to submit petitions and, in accordance with the relevant Standing Order in Part 4 of this Constitution, to speak at committee meetings.
- (d) **Complaints.** Citizens have the right to complain to the:
- Council itself under its complaints scheme;
 - Local Government Ombudsman (either directly or through a Councillor) after having first raised the complaint with the Council and given the Council a chance to respond;
 - Standards Committee about a breach of the Members' Code of Conduct.
 - the Information Commissioner about a breach of the Council's obligations under the Data Protection act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or the Environmental Information Regulations 2005.

Citizens' Responsibilities

- 3.2 Citizens must not be violent, abusive or threatening to Members or Officers in the exercise of their rights set out in 3.1 or generally, and must not wilfully harm property owned by the Council, Members or Officers. The Council will in appropriate cases be prepared to take action to protect its own rights and to support such action by its Members or Officers.

ARTICLE 4 - The Council

Meanings

4.1 **Policy Framework:** The policy framework includes the following plans and strategies:-

- Corporate Plan;
- CPA Improvement Plan;
- Best Value Performance Plan;
- Community Strategy;
- Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy;
- Plans and strategies which together comprise the Development Plan (principally, this is the Epsom and Ewell District Wide Local Plan);
- Sustainable Development Strategy;
- Housing Strategy (including Housing Investment Programme);
- Leisure (Cultural) Strategy;
- Health Strategy.

4.2 **Budget.** The budget includes:-

- The allocation of financial resources to different services and projects;
- Any proposed contingency funds;
- Setting the Council Tax;
- Decisions relating to the control of the Council's borrowing requirement;
- The control of capital expenditure;
- The setting of limits to the amounts by which committees and officers can transfer expenditure between different budget heads (virement).

Functions of the Council

4.3 Only the full Council will exercise the following functions:-

- (a) Adopting and changing the Constitution;
- (b) Approving and adopting the Policy Framework and the Budget (see 4.1 above);

- (c) Agreeing and/or amending the terms of reference for committees, deciding on their composition and making appointments to them (except for authorised substitutions in accordance with the relevant Standing Order in Part 4 of the Constitution);
- (d) Appointing representatives to outside bodies unless the appointment has been delegated by the Council;
- (e) Delegating functions to other local authorities or their executives and deciding whether or not to accept such a delegation from another local authority;
- (f) Adopting an allowance scheme under Article 2.5;
- (g) Changing the name of the Borough;
- (h) Conferring the title of Honorary Alderman or Honorary Freeman;
- (i) Confirming the appointment of the Chief Executive;
- (j) Determining any delegation to officers which does not fall within the purview of any committee;
- (k) Making, amending, revoking, re-enacting or adopting bylaws and promoting or opposing the making of local legislation or personal bills;

and

- (l) All other matters which by law must be reserved to Council.

Council Meetings

4.4 There are three types of Meetings of the full Council:

- (a) the Annual Meeting;
- (b) Ordinary Meetings;
- (c) Extraordinary Meetings.

and they will be conducted in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution.

ARTICLE 5 - The Mayor

Role and function of the Mayor

- 5.1 The Mayor and the Deputy Mayor will be elected by the Council annually.
- 5.2 The Mayor, and in his/her absence the Deputy Mayor, will be the first citizen of the Borough and have the following roles and functions, to:-
 - (a) Uphold and promote the purposes of the Constitution, and to interpret the Constitution when necessary;
 - (b) Preside impartially over meetings of the Council so that its business can be carried out efficiently and with regard to the rights of Members and the interests of the community;
- 5.3 Should the Mayor wish, in exceptional circumstances, to take part in debate on an issue before the Council, he/she should vacate the Chair for the whole of that item in favour of the Deputy Mayor;
- 5.4 Ensure that Council meetings are a forum for the debate of matters of concern to the local community;
- 5.5 Promote public involvement in the Council's activities;
- 5.6 Attend such civic and ceremonial functions as the Council and/or he/she considers appropriate;
- 5.7 Promote the Council as a whole and act as a focal point for the community.

ARTICLE 6 - Overview and Scrutiny

Functions

- 6.1 The Council will appoint a Scrutiny Committee to discharge the scrutiny and review functions conferred by Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and regulations made under Section 32 of the Local Government Act 2000 in relation to the following matters:
- (a) Local democracy and the achievement of effective, transparent and accountable decision making by the Council;
 - (b) The Council's budget, the management of its budget, capital programme, revenue borrowing and assets and its audit arrangements;
 - (c) The social, economic and environmental well-being of the Borough;
 - (d) The provision, planning, management and performance of all Council services;
 - (e) The Council's compliance with its duty concerning Best Value, in accordance with the Local Government Act 1999.
- 6.2 The Council will appoint a Crime and Disorder Committee to discharge the scrutiny and review functions conferred by Section 19 and Schedule 8 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 and regulations made under Section 20 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 in relation to the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

Terms of Reference

- 6.3 The terms of reference for the Scrutiny Committee and Crime and Disorder Committee are set out in Part 3 of this Constitution entitled 'Responsibility for Functions'.
- 6.4 Within its terms of reference, the Scrutiny Committee will:
- (a) Review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions;
 - (b) Make reports and/or recommendations to the Council and/or any Committee in connection with the discharge of any functions;
 - (c) Consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants,
- and
- (d) Exercise the right to call-in, for reconsideration, decisions made by any policy committee but not yet implemented by any policy committee.
- 6.5 Within its terms of reference, the Crime and Disorder Committee will:

- (a) Review and/or scrutinise decisions made or action taken in connections with the discharge by the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership of its crime and disorder functions;
- (b) Make reports and/or recommendations to the Council and/or any appropriate committee in connection with the discharge of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership functions, providing a copy to the responsible authorities and co-operating persons and bodies of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership;
- (c) Consider “councillor calls for action” concerning local crime and disorder matters in accordance with the Councillor Call for Action Protocol.

and

- (d) Make reports and/or recommendations to Council or any appropriate policy committee in relation to a councillor call for action concerning a local crime and disorder matter, providing a copy to the member concerned and to members of the CDRP as it thinks appropriate

Annual reports

- 6.6 The Scrutiny Committee will report annually to the Council on its workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate.
- 6.7 The Crime and Disorder Committee will, if it considers it appropriate, report annually to the Council on its workings.

Officers

- 6.8 The Scrutiny Committee will exercise overall responsibility for the work programme of those officers whose function is wholly to support its work, and of other officers in so far as they support that work.

Proceedings of Scrutiny Committee

- 6.9 The Scrutiny Committee will conduct its proceedings in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution.

ARTICLE 7 - Policy and Regulatory Committees

Policy Committees

7.1 The Council will appoint four policy committees as follows:

- (a) Strategy and Resources
- (b) Environment
- (c) Leisure
- (d) Social

7.2 The functions attributed to those committees are set out in Part 3 of this Constitution entitled 'Responsibility for Functions'.

Regulatory Committees

7.3 The Council will appoint a Planning Committee, which will be responsible for dealing with planning applications and related matters, and a Licensing Committee, which will be responsible for issuing premises and personal Licences and for establishing a sub-committee for the purpose of hearing appeals on both premises and vehicle licences.

7.4 The functions of these Committees are set out in Part 3 of this Constitution entitled 'Responsibility for Functions'.

ARTICLE 8 - The Standards Committee

Standards Committee

8.1 The Council will have a Standards Committee with a lay Chairman.

Composition

8.2 The Standards Committee will comprise:

- (a) Five Councillors;
- (b) At least two people who are not Councillors or Officers of the Council or any other body having a Standards Committee, (otherwise referred to as "lay members"), one of whom shall be the Chairman of the Committee.

8.3 The Lay Members will be entitled to vote at meetings of the Committee. The Chairman may present the recommendations of the Committee to the Council as provided for in the Council's Procedure Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution.

Roles and Functions

8.4 The Standards Committee will have at least the following roles and functions:-

- (a) promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Members;
- (b) assisting Members by advice and training to observe the Members' Code of Conduct;
- (c) advising the Council on the adoption or revision of the Members' Code of Conduct;
- (d) monitoring the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct;
- (e) granting dispensation to Members from requirements relating to interests set out in the Members' Code of Conduct;
- (f) dealing with any reports from a case tribunal or interim case tribunal, and any report from the monitoring officer on any matter which is referred by an Ethical Standards Officer of the Standards Board for England to the Monitoring Officer.
- (g) Reviewing the Constitution and making proposals for its amendment.

8.5 The detailed terms of reference for the Standards Committee are set out in Part 3 of this Constitution entitled 'Responsibility for Functions'.

ARTICLE 9 - Area Committees

Area Committees

- 9.1 The Council may appoint Area Committees as it sees fit, if it is satisfied that to do so will ensure improved service delivery in the context of Best Value and more efficient, transparent and accountable decision making.
- 9.2 In the event that the Council decides after consultation to create any Area Committee (s) it will include within a scheme approved for that purpose provision for their form, composition and function; for the avoidance of conflicts of interest through membership of other committees; and for access to information.

ARTICLE 10 - Joint Arrangements

Arrangements to Promote Well-being

- 10.1 The Council, in order to promote the economic, social or environmental well-being of its area may, subject to the other provisions of this Constitution:-
- (a) Enter into arrangements or agreements with any person or body;
 - (b) Co-operate with, or facilitate or coordinate the activities of any person or body;
- and
- (c) Exercise on behalf of that person or body any functions of that person or body.

Joint Arrangements

- 10.2 The Council may establish joint arrangements with one or more local authorities to exercise functions of any of the participating authorities or advise the Council. Such arrangements may involve the appointment of a Joint Committee with these other local authorities.
- 10.3 Details of any joint arrangements, including any delegations to Joint Committees, will be found in Part 3 of this Constitution.

Access to Information

- 10.4 The Access to Information Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution apply.
- 10.5 If the Joint Committee contains Members who are not on the executive of any participating local authority then the access to information rules in Part VA of the Local Government Act 1972 will apply.

Delegation to and from other local authorities

- 10.6 The Council may delegate functions to another local authority or, in certain circumstances, the executive of another local authority and also accept such a delegation from another local authority.
- 10.7 The decision whether or not to delegate functions to another local authority or to accept such a delegation from another local authority shall be reserved to the Council.

Contracting Out

- 10.8 The Council may contract out to another body or organisation functions which may be exercised by an Officer and which are subject to an order under Section 70 of the Deregulation and Contracting Out Act 1994. The Council may also arrange for other functions to be carried out by a contractor, where the contractor acts as the Council's agent under usual contracting principles, provided there is no delegation of the Council's discretionary decision making.

ARTICLE 11 - Officers

NOTE: 'Officers' means all employees and staff engaged by the Council to carry out its functions

Management Structure

- 11.1 **General.** The Council may engage such officers as it considers necessary to carry out its functions.
- 11.2 **Directors.** The Council will engage persons for the following posts, who will be designated Directors:

Post	Areas of Responsibility
Chief Executive	Overall corporate management and operational responsibility (including overall management responsibility for all officers) Provision of professional advice to all political groups and individual Members Together with the Monitoring Officer, responsibility for a system of record keeping for all the Council's decisions Representing the Council on partnership and external bodies (as required by statute or the Council)
Director of Finance	Audit, Accountancy and Revenues

The Council will, in addition, appoint such other Directors as it may from time to time deem necessary, which posts are set out in Part 7 of this Constitution.

- 11.3 Head of Paid Service, Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer. The Council designates the following posts as shown:

Post	Designation
Chief Executive	Head of Paid Service (Local Government & Housing Act 1989, Section 4)
Head of Legal and Democratic Services	Monitoring Officer (Local Government & Housing Act 1989, Section 5)
Director of Finance	Chief Finance Officer (Local Government Act 1972, Section 151; Local Government Finance Act 1988)

The posts will have the functions described in Article 11.2 to 11.4 below.

11.4 **Structure.** The Head of Paid Service will determine and publicise a description of the overall departmental structure of the Council showing the management structure and deployment of officers. This is set out at Part 7 of this Constitution.

Functions of the Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service)

11.5 **Discharge of Functions by the Council.** The Chief Executive will report to the Council on the manner in which the discharge of the Council's functions is coordinated, the number and grade of officers proposed for the discharge of functions and the organisation of officers.

Functions of Director of Finance (Chief Finance Officer)

11.6 **Ensuring lawfulness and financial prudence of decision making.** After consulting the Chief Executive and the Monitoring Officer, the Director of Finance will report to the Council and the Council's external auditor if he or she considers that any proposal, decision or course of action will involve incurring unlawful expenditure, or is unlawful and is likely to cause a loss or deficiency or if the Council is about to enter an item of account unlawfully.

11.7 **Administration of financial affairs.** The Director of Finance will have responsibility for the administration of the financial affairs of the Council.

11.8 **Contributing to corporate management.** The Director of Finance will contribute to the corporate management of the Council, in particular through the provision of professional financial advice.

11.9 **Providing advice.** The Director of Finance will provide advice on the scope of powers and authority to take decisions, maladministration, financial impropriety and probity to all Members and will support and advise Members and officers in their respective roles.

11.10 **Giving financial information.** The Director of Finance will provide financial information to the media, members of the public and the community.

Functions of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer)

11.11 **Maintaining an up-to-date Constitution.** The Monitoring Officer will ensure that an up-to-date version of the Constitution is maintained and will ensure that it is available to Members, staff and the public.

11.12 **Ensuring lawfulness and fairness of decision making.** After consulting the Chief Executive and Director of Finance, the Monitoring Officer has a duty, by virtue of Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, to report to the Council if he or she considers that any proposal, decision or omission would give rise to unlawfulness or if any decision or omission has given rise to maladministration. Such a report will have the effect of stopping the proposal or decision being implemented until the report has been considered by the Council.

11.13 **Supporting the Standards Committee.** The Monitoring Officer will contribute to the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct through provision of support to the Standards Committee.

- 11.14 **Receiving reports.** The Monitoring Officer will receive and act upon reports made by Ethical Standards Officers and decisions of the Case Tribunals.
- 11.15 **Conducting Investigations.** The Monitoring Officer will conduct investigations into matters referred by the Standards Board for England through their Ethical Standards Officers (investigating officers) and make reports or recommendations in respect of them to the Standards Committee.
- 11.16 **Proper Officer for Access to Information.** The Monitoring Officer will ensure that decisions, together with the reasons for those decisions and relevant officer reports and background papers, are made publicly available as soon as possible.
- 11.17 **Providing Advice.** The Monitoring Officer will provide advice on the scope of powers and authority to take decisions, maladministration, financial impropriety and probity to all Members and will support and advise Members and officers in their respective roles.
- 11.18 **Provision of sufficient resources to the Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Monitoring Officer.**
- 11.19 The Council will provide the Chief Executive, the Director of Finance and the Monitoring Officer with such officers, accommodation and other resources as are in their opinion sufficient to allow their duties to be performed.

Conduct

- 11.20 Officers will comply with the Officers' Code of Conduct and other relevant Codes and Protocols, in particular, the Member/Officer Protocol set out in Part 5 of this Constitution.

Employment

- 11.21 The recruitment, selection and dismissal of officers will comply with the Officer Employment Rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution.

ARTICLE 12 - Decision Making

Responsibility for decision-making

12.1 The Council will issue and keep up to date a record of what part of the Council or which individual has responsibility for particular types of decisions or decisions relating to particular areas or functions. This record is set out in Part 3 in this Constitution.

Principles of Decision Making

12.2 All decisions of the Council will be made in accordance with the following principles:-

- (a) the decision should not be in conflict with the Council's Key Priorities and strategies;
- (b) the decision complied with Council Standing Orders, Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations;
- (c) the decision has a clear desired outcome and that any agreed action is proportionate to the outcome;
- (d) the decision has taken account of professional advice from officers, including the Monitoring Officer and the Chief Financial Officer and/or appropriate qualified consultants;
- (e) the decision has taken account of the provisions of the human rights legislation;
- (f) the decision was taken in an open and transparent manner unless otherwise legally permitted and unless the circumstances require the matter to be kept confidential;
- (h) the decision was taken after due consultation and, where appropriate, the views of the local ward members have been sought

Decision making by the Council

12.3 Subject to Article 12.6 the Council meeting will follow the Council Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution when considering any matter.

Decision making by Scrutiny Committee

12.4 The Scrutiny Committee will follow the Overview and Scrutiny Procedures Rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution when considering any matter.

Decision making by other Committees and Sub-Committees

12.5 Subject to Article 12.6, other Council committees and sub-committees will follow those parts of the Council Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution which apply to them.

Decision making by Council bodies acting as Tribunals

12.6 The Council, a committee, a sub-committee or an officer acting as a tribunal or in a quasi judicial manner or determining/considering (other than for the purposes of giving advice) the civil rights and obligations or the criminal responsibility of any person will follow a proper procedure which accords with the requirements of natural justice and the right to a fair trial contained in Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

ARTICLE 13 - Finance, Contracts and Legal Matters

Financial Management

13.1 The management of the Council's financial affairs will be conducted in accordance with the Financial Regulations set out in Part 4 of this Constitution.

Contracts

13.2 Every contract made by the Council will comply with the Financial Standing Orders (including Standing Orders relating to Contracts) set out in Part 4 of this Constitution.

Legal Proceedings

13.3 The Head of Legal and Democratic Services is authorised to institute, defend or participate in any legal proceedings in any case where such action is necessary to give effect to decisions of the Council or in any case where he/she considers that such action is necessary to protect the Council's interests.

Custody of Seal

13.4 The Common Seal of the Council shall be kept in some safe place and shall be secured by a lock and the keys shall be kept in some safe place by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

Sealing of Documents

13.5 The Common Seal of the Council shall not be affixed to any document unless the sealing has been authorised by a resolution of the Council or of a committee or officer to which the Council has delegated its powers in this behalf, but a resolution of the Council (or of a committee or an Officer where that committee or officer has the power) authorising the acceptance of any tender, the purchase, sale, letting, or taking of any property, the issue of any stock, the presentation of any petition, memorial, or address, the making of any rate or contract, or any other matter or thing, shall be a sufficient authority for sealing any document necessary to give effect to the resolution.

13.6 The seal shall be attested by the Mayor (or Deputy Mayor) and the Chief Executive (or Head of Legal and Democratic Services) and an entry of every sealing of a document shall be made and consecutively numbered in a book to be provided for the purpose and shall be signed by the persons who shall have attested the seal.

Signature of Documents

- 13.7 Where any document will be a necessary step in legal proceedings on behalf of the Council it shall, unless any enactment otherwise requires or authorises or unless the Council or a committee, or sub-committee to which the Council has delegated its powers, has given the necessary authority to some other person for the purpose of such proceedings, be signed by the Chief Executive or the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

ARTICLE 14 - Review and Revision of the Constitution

Duty to monitor and review the Constitution

- 14.1 The Monitoring Officer will ensure that the operation of the Constitution is monitored and reviewed to ensure that the aims and principles of the Constitution are given full effect and will report to the Council on this at least once every year.

Changes to the Constitution

- 14.2 **Approval.** Changes to the Constitution will only be approved by the Council after consideration of a proposal from the Standards Committee, Chief Executive or the Monitoring Officer or by way of Councillors proposing a motion on notice in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution.
- 14.3 **Change from alternative arrangements to a form of executive.** If at any time the Council decides to change from alternative arrangements, it must take reasonable steps to consult local electors and other interested persons in the Borough when drawing up proposals.

ARTICLE 15 - Suspension, interpretation and publication of the Constitution

Suspension of the Constitution

- 15.1 **Limit to suspension.** The Articles of this Constitution may not be suspended. The Rules specified below may be suspended by the Council or committees to the extent permitted within those Rules and the law.
- 15.2 **Procedure to suspend.** A motion to suspend any Rules will not be moved without notice unless at least one half of the whole number of the Council or the relevant Committee are present. The extent and duration of suspension will be proportionate to the result to be achieved, taking account of the purposes of the Constitution set out in Article 1.
- 15.3 **Rules capable of suspension.** The following Rules may be suspended in accordance with Article 15.1:-
- (a) The Council Procedure Rules (as specified in those Rules);
 - (b) Financial Procedure Rules;
 - (c) Contract Procedure Rules.

Interpretation

- 15.4 The ruling of the Mayor as to the construction or application of this Constitution or as to any proceedings of the Council shall not be challenged at any meeting of the Council. Such interpretation will have regard to the purposes of this Constitution contained in Article 1, and to any advice given by the Chief Executive.

Publication

- 15.5 The Chief Executive will give a printed copy of this Constitution to each Councillor upon delivery to him/her of that individual's declaration of acceptance of office on the Councillor first being elected to the Council.
- 15.6 The Head of Legal and Democratic Services will ensure that copies are available for inspection at Council offices, libraries and other appropriate locations, and can be purchased by members of the local press and the public on payment of a reasonable fee.
- 15.7 The Head of Legal and Democratic Services will ensure that the summary of the Constitution is made widely available, in print and by electronic means, within the Borough and is updated as necessary.

SCHEDULE 1 - Description of alternative arrangements

The following parts of this Constitution constitute the alternative arrangements:

- Article 6 (Overview and Scrutiny), the terms of reference for the Scrutiny Committee set out in Part 3 and the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules;
- Article 7 (Policy and Regulatory Committees), and in particular Article 7.1 and the terms of reference for those Committees set out in Part 3.