

Minutes of West Surrey Shadow Authority Constitution Sub Committee

6 August 2026

Present:

Councillor Jonathan Hulley, Thorpe, Longcross & Ottershaw
Councillor Louise Morales, Woking South
Councillor Rory O'Brien, Sunbury Common & Ashford Common
Councillor Joanne Shaw, Guildford East
Councillor Sally Shorthose, Farnham South
Councillor Richard Wilson, Bagshot, Windlesham & Chobham Ward

Apologies:

Councillor Jane Austin, Waverley Eastern Villages

Substitutes:

Councillor Scott Lewis, Woodham & New Haw

Councillors in attendance:

1 Election of a Chair for the Constitution Sub-Committee

Councillor Richard Wilson nominated and Councillor Louise Morales seconded Councillor Joanne Shaw as Chair of the West Surrey Shadow Authority Constitution Sub-Committee.

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** that Councillor Joanne Shaw be elected as Chair of the West Surrey Shadow Authority Constitution Sub-Committee.

2 Election of a Vice Chair for the Constitution Sub-Committee

Councillor Joanne Shaw nominated and Sally Shorthose seconded Councillor Louise Morales as Vice Chair of the West Surrey Shadow Authority Constitution Sub-Committee.

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** that Councillor Louise Morales be elected as Vice Chair of the West Surrey Shadow Authority Constitution Sub-Committee.

3 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Jane Austin. Councillor Scott Lewis was in attendance as her substitute.

4 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interests made.

5 Terms of Reference and Procedures of the Constitution Sub-Committee

The Sub-Committee considered and noted the Terms of Reference and Procedure Rules of the West Surrey Shadow Authority's Standards Committee's Constitution Sub-Committee.

The membership of the Committee, how the substitute scheme could work for the Sub-Committee and the role of the Committee in making recommendations to the Standards Committee were discussed. The Sub-Committee would be able to consider any proposed changes to the Constitution in depth before making any recommendations.

The role of the Sub-Committee would be to consider the reports brought before them and resolve whether to make a recommendation to the Standards Committee for them to make a recommendation to Full Council.

Substitutes for members of the Sub-Committee would be chosen from the members of the Standards Committee.

During the debate the Sub-Committee were advised that the Sub-Committee would consist of 7 members appointed from the Standards Committee and 3 members would be required to be physically present in order for the meeting to be quorate.

The Committee discussed changing the Constitution Sub-Committee into a Working Group to allow remote participation and voting. It was requested that a report be brought back to the Sub-Committee that would outline the process for making this change and any implications. Members were asked to submit specific comments or suggestions regarding the Working Group proposal to the Monitoring Officer for them to be incorporated in the officer's report.

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the extract from the Terms of Reference of the Standards Committee, relevant to the Constitution Sub-Committee, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report; and
2. To note the extract from the Standards Committee Procedure Rules, relevant to the Constitution Sub-Committee, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report.

6 Proposed Changes to Council Procedure Rules

The Sub-Committee considered the suggested arrangements for dealing with proposed changes to the Council Procedure Rules in the West Surrey Shadow Authority Constitution.

The Sub-Committee were asked whether they wanted to consider all the procedure rules in one session or split them over the September, October and November's meetings.

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED:**

1. To consider the Council Procedure Rules in parts at the Sub-Committee meetings in September, October and November 2026; and
2. To authorise the Interim Monitoring Officer to amend the Work Programme for the Sub-Committee to give effect to its decision.

7 Guidance for Councillors on Gifts and Hospitality

The Sub-Committee considered the proposed adoption of guidance for councillors on Gifts and Hospitality for the West Surrey Authority, both during the Shadow Period and post Vesting Day. The guidance would support councillors in identifying, declaring and managing offers of gifts and hospitality connected with their role and establish a consistent approach across the new authority.

In preparing the proposed guidance, officers had reviewed the arrangements operated by predecessor councils in West Surrey as well as relevant national guidance. The proposed guidance had been developed specifically for the West Surrey Authority.

Adoption of the guidance would provide transparency, support high standards of conduct and provide councillors with practical guidance on the acceptance, refusal and declaration of gifts and hospitality.

The Sub-Committee considered declaration thresholds, the process for registering gifts and hospitality, handling of past declarations and the importance of transparency.

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED:**

1. To consider the proposed Guidance for Members on Gifts and Hospitality attached at Appendix 1 of the report, and recommended its approval to the Standards Committee,
2. **That the Standards Committee recommended that the Shadow Authority resolved:**

- 2.1 To adopt the Guidance for Councillors on Gifts and Hospitality, attached as Appendix 1 of the report, into the West Surrey Shadow Authority Constitution and for post Vesting Day, the West Surrey Authority Constitution,
- 2.2 To note that the Monitoring Officer will maintain a Register of Gifts and Hospitality declared by councillors and co-opted members and arrange for relevant entries to be published on the Future Surrey website.
- 2.3 To delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Standards Committee, to make minor administrative, legislative and formatting amendments to the guidance where these do not materially alter its purpose or effect.

8 Member Conduct Complaints Procedure

The Sub-Committee considered a report that set out suggested arrangements for dealing with allegations of member misconduct under the Code of Conduct, for adoption into the Constitution.

If the revised arrangements were accepted, they would replace the current Part 4:5 Part A: Arrangements for Dealing with Allegations and Determinations of Complaints Under Section 28(6) Localism Act 2011 and Appendix 1 - Sub Committee Hearing Procedure for determination of allegations about the Member Code of Conduct.

The Sub-Committee were advised how the procedure would work if adopted. The composition of hearing panels and the selection of members to sit on a panel was discussed. Members were advised that 3 members from the Standards Committee would sit on the Hearing Panel and would be politically balanced.

An annual report would be produced that would provide data on how many complaints were received, how many were investigated and the outcomes.

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED:**

To recommend that the Standards Committee:

Recommend to the Shadow Authority that the revised Standards Arrangements set out in Appendix One and Appendix Two to this report are agreed and that the Constitution be amended accordingly.

That the Standards Committee resolves to recommend that the Shadow Authority resolves to:

Adopt the revised Standards Arrangements set out in Appendix 1 and Appendix Two to this report into the Constitution with immediate effect.

9 Social Media Policy for Councillors

The Sub-Committee considered a report that outlined the proposed Social Media Policy for Councillors of the West Surrey Shadow Authority, for inclusion in the Constitution. The policy was prepared having regard to the existing arrangements of the sovereign Council's and the Local Government Association's updated guidance on councillors' use of social media. By drawing on national guidance and good practice, the policy aimed to ensure councillors were well-equipped to navigate the digital environment in a professional and inclusive manner, establishing a clear and consistent framework for members' online activity.

The Policy aimed to support councillors in engaging with residents effectively, whilst protecting the Council's reputation, ensuring compliance with legal obligations, and upholding the Member Code of Conduct. Adoption of the policy would minimise risks and promote consistent standards of behaviour across all online platforms.

The Sub-Committee was asked to consider the proposed policy and recommend to the Standards Committee for recommendation to the Shadow Authority for its inclusion in the Constitution, both during the Shadow Period and post Vesting Day. Adoption of the policy would support members to use social media safely and effectively, provide clarity about the standards expected of them and help maintain public confidence in the Council's ethical governance arrangements.

The Constitution Sub-Committee **RESOLVED**:

1. To consider the proposed Social Media Policy for councillors, attached at Appendix 1 of the report, and recommend it to the Standards Committee:
2. **That the Standards Committee recommends that the West Surrey Shadow Authority resolves:**
 - 2.1 to approve the Social Media Policy for Councillors for inclusion in the Constitution, both during the Shadow Period and for Post Vesting Day,
 - 2.2 to authorise the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Standards Committee, to make minor amendments to the policy to reflect changes in legislation, statutory guidance, Local Government Association guidance or Council arrangements, provided that such amendments do not materially alter the purpose or effect of the policy; and
 - 2.3 to note that training to support councillors in using social media is included within the Member Development Programme.

10 Member Requests Regarding the West Surrey Shadow Authority Constitution

The Sub-Committee considered requests from councillors for areas of the West Surrey Shadow Authority Constitution they wanted to be reviewed and amended. The following members' requests had been submitted for the Sub-Committee's consideration:

1. Councillor Austin – The Monitoring Officer would produce a Briefing Note for all members to clarify the term 'clear working days' as referenced in the procedure for submitting motions and questions within the Council's Constitution.
2. Councillor Hulley – This would form part of the CPR Review
3. Councillor Austin – This was seen as low priority at this time but would be considered in the future.
4. Councillor Macdonald – This had been addressed within the proposed Constitution.
5. Councillor Powell - This would form part of the CPR Review
6. Councillor Rice - This was seen as low priority at this time but would be considered in the future.

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED**:

That the requested items should be included in the Sub-Committee Work Programme and authorise the Monitoring Officer to update it accordingly, and to bring forward further requests for consideration as appropriate.

11 Work Programme for the Constitution Sub-Committee

The Sub-Committee reviewed and approved the Work Programme and requested that future meeting dates be confirmed and circulated to members.

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED**:

To approve the Work Programme for the Sub-Committee.