

## CONSTITUTION AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>Guiding Principles for Establishing a Working or Task &amp; Finish Group</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>Director of Law and Governance</b>

### REPORT SUMMARY

This report is presented for comment on suggested guiding principles that the Council's Committees should consider when establishing Working or Task & Finish Groups, which may be established by Committees from time to time in order to develop recommendations, or to investigate issues of interest relevant to policy development.

This is not a key decision.

### RECOMMENDATION/S

The Constitution and Standards Committee is recommended to:

1. note and comment on the guiding principles detailed at Appendix 1 to the report; and
2. agree that the *Guiding Principles for Establishing a Working Group or Task & Finish Group* document be circulated to all Policy Committee Chairs & Group Spokespersons and Senior Officers to assist them when determining if they wish to establish such Groups.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

Wirral Council's Constitution outlines that Panels, Forums, Working Groups, Liaison and Task & Finish Groups may be established by Committees. The purpose of such groups is to examine in detail specific issues or aspects of policy, procedure or service, according to their remit.

This document has been developed to:

- ensure Committees are fully utilising the opportunities to have Working Groups.
- provide a consistent approach to the running of Working Groups.
- manage the impact of Working Groups on officer and member capacity.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

Not to produce the *Guiding Principles for Establishing a Working Group or Task & Finish Group* document for consideration. However, it is hoped that Members will welcome the background and key considerations detailed in the document when determining if they wish to establish any Groups.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Council Constitution enables Committees to set up time limited Working, Task & Finish or Advisory Groups (Part 3 B - *Responsibility for Functions* :Section 2 refers) to develop recommendations or to investigate specific issues of interest.

Following the adoption of the Constitution at the Annual Council meeting in September 2020 a number of Council Committees have utilised this approach to develop policy and to support the budget setting process. In excess of 60 Working Groups and Task & Finish Groups were held between Sept 2020-March 2021.

The holding of such meetings has proved to be popular as a mechanism to allow greater time for issues to be considered and discussed by Members in detail, outside of the formal Committee setting and allowing for an outcomes report and recommendations the being submitted for consideration to formal meetings. It should be noted that there is also the option with such groups to continue to hold meetings by remote means as opposed to in person. A consequential impact associated with the success of the additional meetings has been that greater pressure has been placed on Member and Officer time and capacity. Therefore, it is hoped that the suggested principles will assist all Committees in managing both the number of groups established but also to add some degree of consistency across the Committees.

### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The ability to establish Working and Task & Finish Groups is Part 3, Section B of the Council Constitution. It should be noted that such groups do not have to comply with political proportionality requirements. The relevant Committee shall specify terms of reference and membership, which may include invited persons holding relevant expertise or knowledge and Members who are not members of the parent Committee.

## **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS**

- 6.1 There are no direct resource implications arising from this report other than to make reference to the fact that the number of Working or Task & Finish Groups that any Committee determines it wishes to hold has a consequential impact on staffing, placing demands on officer time both in the relevant Directorate but also Democratic and Member Services Officers.

## **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 7.1 Whilst there are no direct risks arising from this report, it is drafted with the intention of supporting Members and Committees when determining whether or not to establish a group to mitigate against the possible duplication of work and effort and to make the most efficient use of Member and Officer time.

## **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 The purpose of the report is to consult Members of the Constitution and Standards Committee.

## **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no equality implications arising from this report.

## **10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There are no direct environment or climate implications arising from this report.

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### **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 - Guiding Principles for Establishing a Working Group

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Constitution

**SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

Council Meeting	Date