

Central  
Bedfordshire  
Council  
Priory House  
Monks Walk  
Chicksands,  
Shefford SG17 5TQ



<b>CONSTITUTION ADVISORY GROUP</b>
<b>DATE: 21 July 2009</b>

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Guide to the Constitution</b>	<b>ITEM NO.</b>
<b>REPORT OF</b>	Head of Democratic Services	<b>10</b>

<b>PURPOSE</b>	To invite the Advisory Group to consider a draft Guide to the Constitution and to review also any other arrangements felt necessary to promote understanding and knowledge of the Constitution.
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<b>RECOMMENDATION:</b>
(1) <b>Members' views are sought upon the draft Guide to the Constitution now submitted.</b>
(2) <b>That the Advisory Group note the actions already taken or proposed to be taken to promote understanding and knowledge of the Constitution.</b>

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

1. A copy of the Central Bedfordshire Constitution has been sent to all Members of the Council.
2. A copy of the Constitution is also available on the website but officers are working to ensure that the document is presented in a more user way and will also contain links to other documents, such as the detailed Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules.

3. As part of the induction programme, on 16 June a session on key elements of the Constitution was provided.
4. Officers of the Council have received a comprehensive report writing guide which includes information regarding key parts of the Constitution, such as key decisions and the Forward Plan. Directors, Assistant Directors and Heads of Service have also been advised of the provisions within the Constitution relating to dealing with Members' enquiries and the need to keep ward members informed where appropriate in connection with the exercise of certain powers under the Scheme of Delegation.
5. A draft Guide to the Constitution has been prepared and is attached at Appendix A to this report for Members' comments. The aim of the document is to try to provide the background context for the Constitution and to also summarise in tables certain key parts of the document such as the definition of a key decision, budget and policy framework, call-in scheme and important delegations, most significant Council, Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules.
6. In addition to circulating the Guide, when approved, it is intended that the Head of Democratic Services and Committee Services Manager will offer to attend Divisional team meetings to further explain the provisions of the Constitution and to also offer 1:1s to any Members who were unable to attend the induction session on 16 June.

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<b>Contact Officer Details:</b>
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<b>Key Background Papers:</b>
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