



Agenda Item	Town Council Constitution		
Council/Committee	Full Council		
Meeting Date	25.4.2023	Report Writer	Delia Shephard
Purpose of report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i To update members on accessibility and transparency of council policies/constitution and the way this information is currently presented. To update committee structure and scheme of delegations in advance of the Annual Meeting of council on 23 May 2023 ii To provide updated version of committee structure and scheme of delegations for discussion before annual meeting should any changes be thought necessary 		
Strategic Priorities	Closer to our community		
Budget Codes and Costs	106 – democratic services 501 – staff		
Environmental Implications	None		
Community Safety Implications	None		
Equality/Inclusion Implications	Accessibility issues must be considered when providing information to the community		
Other legal implications	The council must comply with the government’s Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities (2014) alongside the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act and related legislation pertaining to the council’s duty to be transparent and encourage democratic accountability.		
Supporting Documentation (if any)	See link in body of report. Revised committee structure and scheme of delegations		

Background

An objective in the Town Council’s 2022-23 delivery plan was to amalgamate all the council’s policy documents into a single “constitution” document which would gather together the statutory governance documents the council is legally required to publish as well as policies which represent best practice. There is no legal requirement to do this as policy documents can be presented separately (as at present).



The advantages of having all the documents in one place are:

- transparency benefits and improved accessibility for the public
- ease of updating policies
- constitution doubles as a handbook for new councillors and staff members

Current Position

Due to staff capacity considerations the council has not met this objective during 2022-23 and staff are currently continuing to experience heavy workloads. The council's Modern Gov package includes a constitution module which could be used to present the council's policies in an easy and accessible format on the town council's website. This would take some staff time to implement though it could be introduced during 2023-24.

Examples of a Mod.Gov constitution can be found on Milton Keynes City Council's website at <https://milton-keynes.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=491&MId=6737&Ver=4&Info=1>

though obviously the town council's constitution would be much simpler and shorter.

Current policies can be seen on the town council website at <https://www.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk/information-and-policies>

Financial Implications

Staff time in initial introduction and training on the Mod Gov constitution module and undertaking review and reformatting of all existing policies and writing content for website to improve information provided about how the town council works.

Officer Recommendation that staff time is allocated to this project and the objective is retained in the delivery plan for 2023-24 as use of the module will save staff time and improve record keeping in the future as well as increasing transparency for the public.