

REPORT TITLE: **Constitutional Updates revised Member/Officer Protocol**

To: Civic Affairs & Audit Committee (9 March 2026)

Report by:

Tom Lewis, Head of Legal Practice and Monitoring Officer

Email: tom.lewis@3csharedservices.org

Wards affected:

None

Director Approval: Director Robert Pollock confirms that the report author has sought the advice of all appropriate colleagues and given due regard to that advice; that the equalities impacts and other implications of the recommended decisions have been assessed and accurately presented in the report; and that they are content for the report to be put to the Committee for consideration.

1. **Recommendations**

1.1 That the Civic Affairs and Audit Committee recommend to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) the following changes to the Constitution following the last meeting on 9 March 2026:

- The updated member/officer protocol
- The limited power for Cabinet to make supplementary estimates – additional revenue and capital expenditure up to a threshold.

To note:

- that the Committee already agreed to recommend minor revisions to the terms of reference for the Equalities Panel to be renamed the Inclusion and Equity Panel.

2. **Purpose and reason for the report**

2.1 Following the initial report being presented to the committee in March the member/officer

protocol has been updated and amended based on feedback from the Committee. A further briefing note was provided to members of the committee with regards to the supplementary estimates.

All members of the committee have had an opportunity to comment on some of the updates.

Committee are therefore asked to agree the updated protocol for inclusion in the report that is presented to the Annual Council meeting on 21 May 2026.

3. Background and key issues

3.1 Protocol on Member / Officer Relations

The updated Protocol on Member / Officer Relations is attached at appendix 1. A link to the previous report can be found here, ([Review of Constitutional Arrangements Cover Report.pdf](#)). The previous protocol had not been updated for a number of years. The updated version is based on best practice across the sector. It shares similarities with the member/officer protocol at South Cambridgeshire District Council but retains elements that are unique to the city council.

The updated Protocol provides a clearer, operational framework for constructive and professional working relationships. It retains the core principles of political neutrality, mutual respect and clear separation of roles, and strengthens or provides greater clarity wherever possible.

Adoption of the revised Protocol will support more consistent behaviour standards and clearer day-to-day working practices and should reduce avoidable friction by setting out predictable processes.

3.2 Supplementary Estimates

Committee members received addition information to clarify the process by which Cabinet can approve relatively small additional amounts of revenue and capital spend outside of the annual budget setting process. No concerns were raised.

4. Corporate plan

- 4.1 The Constitution underpins the decision making of the Council in order for the Council to carry out its priorities as part of the Corporate Plan

[Corporate plan 2022-27: our priorities for Cambridge - Cambridge City Council](#)

5. Consultation, engagement and communication

- 5.1 Changes to the Constitution are being presented to the committee as part of the consultation and engagement process. Any recommendations from the committee will be presented to Full Council for ratification.

6. Anticipated outcomes, benefits or impact

- 6.1 If approved at the AGM the changes will be included in the Constitution and will take effect from that date.

7. Implications

Relevant risks

- 7.1 There are none.

Financial Implications

- 7.2 There are none.

Legal Implications

- 7.3 The Constitution contains the rules by which the Council governs itself. It contains a number of legal provisions that are set out in statute. Part of good governance is to review the Constitution and ensure any legal updates are reflected.

Equalities and socio-economic Implications

7.4 There are none.

Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental implications

7.5 There are none.

Procurement Implications

7.6 There are none.

Community Safety Implications

7.7 There are none.

8. Background documents

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

8.1 [Report to Council May 2025](#)

9. Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1 – Updated Member Officer Protocol

Appendix 2 – Inclusion and Equity Panel ToR

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Tom Lewis, Head of Legal Practice and Monitoring Officer, email:

tom.lewis@3csharedservices.org

