

Topic		Issues	Suggested Approach
1	The Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process for amending and updating constitution needs clarifying and reviewing. • Urgent business procedures to be reviewed. • Special Urgency to be amended from a decision of the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee to a decision of the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee. • Simplify and clarify the Constitution document itself – indexing, continuous page-numbering, terminology used, minor anomalies which have been identified, etc. 	Officers to prepare a further report for the Audit Committee detailing the issues and options.
2	Appointment of Leader	The Constitution currently says that Council will elect the Leader and Cabinet annually. As a requirement of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the Council will be required to change its procedure for appointing the Leader to be on a four year basis, with the Leader then selecting the Cabinet. The new requirement came into force 2 months after the Act was passed, so will be effective from the next Council election in 2011.	A resolution making these changes must be passed at a specially convened Council meeting before 31 st December 2010. However, between then and third day following the local authority elections in 2011, known as the “transitional period” the authority is allowed to continue to operate its current Executive arrangements.
3	Byelaws	Part 6 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 provides that local authorities will be able to make certain bylaws and enforce them with fixed penalty notices without agreement from central Government.	Audit Committee to request that the Monitoring Officer looks into the constitutional amendments that will be required to reflect the changes.
4	Petitions	The recent White Paper, Communities in Control, highlights the fact that petitions have become easier through the Internet and outlines plans to introduce a new duty for councils to respond to petitions, ensuring that those with significant local support are properly debated. In line with this duty, the Council may wish to amend the constitution procedure rules to state that petitions to Council should be passed to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider and carry out any inquiry work, as appropriate, before reporting back to Cabinet or the relevant	Audit Committee to consider whether it wishes to recommend this proposed change in the procedure rules to Council Business Committee.

		decision-making body.	
5	Council	<p>The Audit Committee requested that further consideration be given to speaking at Full Council. There is a view that, despite a previous review, further tightening of the time limits on speaking should be applied. These are currently</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2 minutes to ask a question or a supplementary question ▪ 3 minutes to respond to a question ▪ 5 minutes to present a petition or address ▪ 5 minutes speaking time during debate or to move a motion ▪ 30 minutes in total for public question time <p>In addition there is currently no limit to the number of questions which can be asked by councillors at Council. There are a number of options to restrict the length of time devoted to such questions such as limiting the number of questions per councillor or introducing an overall time limit.</p> <p>Currently there is scope for Cabinet Members, a Chairman of a Committee or an Overview and Scrutiny meeting to be asked questions of a factual nature on issues which are outside their remits. It is suggested that this is tightened to provide greater clarity for Councillors and Officers.</p>	<p>Audit Committee to consider whether to recommend to the Council Business Committee reducing the current time limits and/or introducing any restrictions on questions from Councillors.</p> <p>Officers to prepare a report asking the Audit Committee to consider instigating a ‘filter’ system within the Constitution to allow the Chief Executive to reject questions which would be outside the remits of the Member they are directed to.</p>
6	Outside Body, Partnerships and Board Appointments	<p>Outside body representation would benefit from development and active management to improve its effectiveness. This review has previously been suggested as part of the Grants Task Group and Council has reviewed and amended its protocol for making appointments to outside bodies. It is recommended that guidance be developed for representatives on outside bodies; that reporting mechanisms and the number of appointments could also be reviewed and that consideration is given to how Council policy can be progressed through involvement in</p>	<p>Audit Committee to recommend that Council Business Committee considers these issues.</p>

		partnerships.	
7	Officer Training	It is evident that in some areas of the Council, some officers are having difficulty understanding and operating the decision-making process. Further training is required.	Democratic Services to target this training at the areas of most need and seek agreement from Management Team to make this mandatory
8	Development of Electronic Decision-making	<p>There are a number of features of the Modern.gov committee management system that will further improve and help co-ordinate the decision-making process.</p> <p>Paperless meetings have been successfully piloted by the Council Business Committee, with very few problems. Advantages include reduction in costs of printing and distributing information to members. However, if the Council wishes to pursue this approach, it will need to consider supplying all Councillors with laptops (currently six Councillors use their own computer via Netilla to access the Council network) as well as increasing the availability of wireless networks to all committee rooms used for meetings.</p>	<p>A fuller report to be prepared for Council Business Committee and that Committee to monitor progress made.</p> <p>A full report for consideration by this Committee, in the first instance, on the savings made, feedback received, problems encountered and estimated costs of supplying more laptops and wireless network.</p>
9	Neighbourhood Working, Community Leadership and Devolved Decision-Making	<p>Poulton Neighbourhood Management carried out a successful Participatory Budgeting pilot in February 2008. Participatory Budgeting offers an effective way of providing communities with a real say in determining how money is spent in their community whilst fully involving them in the decision-making process and the Council may wish to consider if it wishes to extend this to other grant/improvement budgets or mainstream budgets.</p> <p>Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the Council will also be able to delegate Executive functions under the Local Government Act 2000 to individual Councillors to make decisions on issues that affect their ward or to allocate resources to their ward.</p>	<p>A report evaluating the event will be presented to Cabinet for its consideration in due course.</p> <p>Officers to prepare a full report to Audit Committee asking Members to consider:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • which functions, if any, it wishes to delegate to Ward Councillors and whether it wishes

		<p>Additionally, the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 provides the opportunity for local authorities to consider if they wish to request a boundary review to establish single member wards, which are understood to assist Councillors in carrying out their representational role in a similar way to MPs.</p> <p>The recent White Paper, Communities in Control highlights how the transfer of assets to community uses can help empower communities.</p> <p>The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 places great emphasis on supporting Councillors in their role as community leaders. It will be necessary to provide training and development for members in this area, as well as considering what officer support mechanisms are most appropriate.</p>	<p>to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> consider single member wards. <p>A report to Audit Committee presenting further information to help Members establish an approach to transfer of assets to community uses</p> <p>A report to the Council Business Committee to take a decision on these Member Development issues.</p>
10	Town Council and Parish Councils	<p>The Council has agreed to establish a Morecambe Town Council and thought needs to be given about the support, training and contact that would be supplied by the City Council to this new Town Council and review that currently in place with the existing Parish Councils.</p>	<p>Council needs to consider the support, training and contact that would be supplied by the City Council to any new Town Council and this would present a good opportunity to review arrangements currently in place with the existing Parish Councils.</p>
11	Overview and Scrutiny Development	<p>An internal audit had found that the Council had no overarching strategy in place to guide partnership activity; there was no formal definition of what the Council considered to be a partnership and had no framework for evaluating the effectiveness of individual partnerships and the Council's involvement in them.</p> <p>The Cabinet Liaison roles carried out by Overview and Scrutiny Members are not functioning effectively and the purpose needs to be reviewed.</p> <p>The new Councillor Call for Action requirement needs to be considered in terms of how it will be applied to the Council.</p>	<p>Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) to consider these issues.</p> <p>A report on Partnership Working and Scrutiny was presented to the Budget and Performance Panel in July and actions are being implemented.</p> <p>Cabinet and OSC to review the Cabinet Liaison roles of O&S Members and whether guidelines and support need to be put in place.</p> <p>Officers to prepare a report to Council.</p>

		Amendments require to be made to the constitution and a procedure developed following the issue of guidance from the Secretary of State.	
12	Unitary Local Government	Whilst this is still Council policy, the Government has indicated that there are unlikely to be any further invitations to develop unitary government within the life of this parliament. However, the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 does make provision for the Boundary Commission on its own initiative, or at the request of the Secretary of State or a local authority, to conduct a review of one or more local government areas. This could result in the change of a boundary, abolition of a local government area or creation of a new area. There are restrictions in this power in that it cannot result in wholesale changes from two tier to single tier or vice-versa, but appears to allow for changes beneath this level, for example, the creation of a unitary Lancaster City Council if a two tier arrangement remained in some or all of the rest of Lancashire.	Audit Committee to consider whether it wishes to receive further information on this issue in order to make a recommendation to Council.
13	Rationalisation of Bureaucracy	The Council Innovation Forum has suggested that the democratic and decision-making process takes too long and is overly complicated. There is also a feeling that the local authority is overly risk averse.	Audit Committee to receive a further report on the scope for reviewing the current stages required to make a decision.
14	Meeting Room Facilities	There are a number of problems with the existing meeting room facilities that are used for Council meetings. Whilst the majority of rooms do have induction loops fitted, there is no PA system, making some meetings particularly difficult to hear. Additionally, many meetings require audiovisual multimedia equipment which is provided when required but has to be put into meeting rooms on a temporary basis. This can involve televisions for planning committee and screens and projectors elsewhere, however these do not enable all members and the public to see the images comfortably.	Information has been obtained on options for the refurbishment of the Council Chamber at Morecambe Town Hall using suitable portable equipment which can also be used at Lancaster Town Hall and it had been intended to progress this issue through the budget-setting process for 2009/10. However the current financial situation has led to this growth bid being withdrawn at this stage.

15	Individual Cabinet Member Decisions and Officer Delegation	<p>Currently it is the responsibility of the service to obtain the approval of the Cabinet Member on a report provided by the service. There have been difficulties in this area and it is suggested that Democratic Services take over the responsibility for obtaining the approval of the Cabinet Member in order to ensure a level of consistency.</p> <p>In comparison to a number of Councils, Lancaster City Council currently has a relatively low level of delegation to officers. This may be an area that the Council wishes to review in the future.</p>	<p>That Democratic Services take over this role and inform services accordingly.</p> <p>Officers to prepare a report to Council to assist Members to review this area.</p>
16	Meetings and Minutes	<p>There is felt to be scope for further consideration of the number and duration of Council meetings. For instance, it is felt that there is no longer merit in maintaining a separate Appeals Committee as its functions could be carried out by the Council Business Committee. In addition, consideration needs to be given to the effective use of Committee time, with consideration given to more innovative ways of working to reduce the duration of meetings and reduce the amount of officer time spent in Committee meetings. In particular, Cabinet and Planning Committee may benefit from further consideration of start and finish times due to the duration of these meetings.</p> <p>Cabinet Minutes currently contain the full options and options analysis for each item of business. This was provided prior to Overview and Scrutiny having access to all Cabinet information to enable Members to properly consider whether a call in was justified. It is felt that this level of detail, often running to many pages, is no longer required.</p> <p>Council Agenda currently includes a Leaders' Report and the minutes of Cabinet. The current format of the Leaders' Report essentially duplicates the later cabinet minutes as well as</p>	<p>Democratic Services to consult with Members of Cabinet and Planning Committee for their views.</p> <p>Head of Democratic Services to prepare a report to OSC with options for the OSC to recommend to Cabinet for reducing the information in Cabinet minutes, now that the full agenda is available to O&S Councillors.</p> <p>Audit Committee to consider whether to recommend to the Council Business Committee that the Constitution be amended to remove the</p>

		<p>providing information on other executive issues since the last meeting of Council and experience has shown over the past year that most questions are asked on the Leader's report rather than at the end of the meeting under the Cabinet Minutes item. It is suggested that, providing the opportunity to ask questions on Cabinet Minutes remains available under the Leader's Report item, the separate item of Cabinet Minutes could be removed from the agenda. Particularly, bearing in mind the length of Cabinet minutes at the present time, this would also provide a saving in paper and printing costs as well as removing any potential for duplication at the Council meeting.</p>	<p>requirement to include Cabinet Minutes on the Council agenda.</p>
17	Executive Support and Development	<p>Needs were identified to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ further support the Cabinet, particularly through the provision of some dedicated support to Cabinet Members to assist them with research, administration, etc ▪ provide more training and development for Cabinet Members. 	<p>In June, Council Business Committee resolved that Political Leadership be included as a priority in the Strategy as a project area and that Officers investigate how induction and support for Cabinet Members could be improved upon. This work is in progress.</p>