



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Terms of Reference for Governance Working Group
Date:	18th November, 2011
Reporting Officer:	Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (ext 6314)
Contact Officer:	Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (ext 6314)

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Members will recall that the Committee, at its meeting on 4th November as part of its consideration of the development of a Council Constitution, agreed to the establishment of an All-Party Working Group comprising Members of the Committee where appropriate to take forward the discussions on the Constitution. The Committee agreed also that, in the first instance, the Working Group should consider the revision of Standing Orders and the development of associated protocols.

2	Key Issues
2.1	In order for the Working Group to be established and start work, it is necessary for the Committee to agree the Terms of Reference for the Group.
2.2	The suggested Terms of Reference are: To make recommendations to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in relation to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The revision of the Council's Standing Orders to make them relevant to the current modern governance arrangements.2. The development of Member-Officer Protocols to provide for a clear understanding of the different roles and responsibilities of each and to establish clear guidelines in relation to, for example, how issues are included on Committee agendas, how Member and Officer meetings

2.3	<p>outside of the formal decision-making structures should be facilitated etc.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The development of the second part of the Conflicts of Interest policy in relation to the roles and responsibilities of Members on outside bodies. 4. Initial consideration of the overall governance arrangements for the Council including the current Committee system and the issue of the scrutiny function. 5. Any other part of the overall Council Constitution which is referred to it specifically by the Committee. <p>The Committee is reminded that the Working Group would not have any decision making powers but would only be able to recommend any proposed changes to the Committee for its decision.</p>
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3	Resource Implications
	None.

4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
	None.

5	Recommendations
5.1	The Committee is recommended to approve of the Terms of Reference for the Governance Working Group as set out in the report.

6	Decision Tracking
<p>Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager</p> <p>December, 2011</p>	