

# USE OF NON-GENDER SPECIFIC PRONOUNS IN THE CONSTITUTION

<b>Meeting</b>	Constitutional Review Working Party - 5 November
<b>Report Author</b>	Corporate Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer
<b>Status</b>	For Recommendation
<b>Classification:</b>	Unrestricted
<b>Ward:</b>	All

## Executive Summary:

A request has been made to the Monitoring Officer that the Constitutional Review Working Party (CRWP) should consider recommending that the Constitution should be amended to replace the use of gender specific pronouns e.g. *chairman* with the use of alternatives such as *chair* or *chairperson*.

*Chair* has been recognised in the sense of 'occupant of the chair' since the 17th century.

## Recommendation(s):

The CRWP considers this request and decides whether or not to recommend a change in the Constitution to the Standards Committee and thereafter to Council.

This would not preclude those Chaining meetings of the Council choosing that they should be called by the title Chairwoman, Chairman or a gender-neutral title such as Chairperson or Chair should they so wish.

## Corporate Implications

### Financial and Value for Money

There are no financial implications resulting from this report.

### Legal

There are no legal implications resulting from this report.

### Corporate

Any proposed changes should reflect the Council's commitment to inclusion and gender equality. Those Chaining meetings of the Council should still be able to choose to be called by the title Chairman, Chairwoman or a gender-neutral title such as Chairperson or Chair.

### Equality Act 2010 & Public Sector Equality Duty

Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to the aims of the Duty at the time the decision is taken. The aims of the Duty are: (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Protected characteristics: age, sex, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and pregnancy & maternity. Only aim (i) of the Duty applies to Marriage & civil partnership.

This report relates to the following aim of the equality duty: -

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- To foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

## **CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

This report relates to the following corporate priorities: -

- Communities

### **1.0 Introduction and Background**

1.1 A request has been made to the Monitoring Officer that the Constitutional Review Working Party should consider recommending that the Constitution should be amended to change the use of gender specific pronouns e.g. chairman to the use of alternatives such as *chair* or *chairperson*. *Chair* has been recognised in the sense of 'occupant of the chair' since the 17th century.

1.2 A change to the Constitution would not preclude those charring meetings of the Council choosing that they should be called by the title Chairwoman, Chairman or a gender-neutral title such as Chairperson or Chair should they so wish.

### **2.0 Next Steps**

2.1 All recommendations will go to the Standards Committee and thereafter to Council for approval.

Contact Officer: Tim Howes, Corporate Director of Governance  
Reporting to: Madeline Homer, Chief Executive

### **Corporate Consultation**

**Finance:** Matthew Sanham, Financial Services Manager  
**Legal:** Tim Howes, Corporate Director of Governance