

# USE OF GENDER SPECIFIC ROLE TITLES IN THE CONSTITUTION

<b>Meeting</b>	Council - 10 December 2020
<b>Previously considered by:</b>	Standards Committee - 18 November 2020 Constitutional Review Working Party - 5 November 2020
<b>Report Author</b>	Corporate Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer
<b>Status</b>	For Decision
<b>Classification:</b>	Unrestricted
<b>Ward:</b>	All

## Executive Summary:

A request was 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 role titles 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.

This matter was considered by the Constitutional Review Working Party on 5 November 2020 and the removal of gender specific role titles from the Constitution was recommended to the Standards Committee.

## Recommendation(s):

“That Council removes gender-specific titles from the Constitution.”

This change would not preclude those Chairing meetings of the Council choosing to 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 Chairing 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 was made to the Monitoring Officer for the Constitutional Review Working Party to consider recommending that the Constitution should be amended to change gender specific role titles e.g. chairman to alternatives such as *chair* or *chairperson*. *Chair* has been recognised in the sense of 'occupant of the chair' since the 17th century.
- 1.2 The Constitutional Review Working Party met on 5 November 2020 who agreed the recommendation subject to an amendment to the title of the report, to avoid any confusion over the purpose of the proposed change. The amendment clarified that the changes applied to role titles and not to pronouns generally.
- 1.2 A change to the Constitution would not preclude those chairing 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 Consideration by Standards Committee**

2.1 This report was considered by the Standards Committee at its meeting on 18 November and the Committee made the following recommendation to Council:

“That the Standards Committee recommend to the Council the removal of gender-specific titles from the Constitution.”

## **3.0 Next Steps**

3.1 Council has final approval over changes to the constitution.

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