

Glossary of Terms used in the Constitution

Advisor	A person, who is neither a Member nor an officer of the Council, appointed by a committee, sub-committee or panel to advise on specific matters or generally. This person cannot vote.
Allocation of Responsibilities	Formerly known as the Scheme of Delegation, this document (in Part 3 of the Constitution) sets out which committee, councillor or officer is responsible for particular functions of the Council.
Articles	The basic rules governing the Council's business.
Background Papers	The law says that report authors must list any papers used in compiling a report for decision, and these papers must be available for 4 years to anyone wishing to inspect them.
Budget	All the financial resources allocated to different services and projects.
Cabinet	The Councillors who, together with the Leader, form the Executive.
Call-in	A mechanism, which allows the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to examine, and challenge, an Executive decision before it is implemented.
Chief Financial Officer	Also known as the "Section 151 Officer". The officer responsible for the administration of the financial affairs of the Council. This is a statutory 'proper officer' role.
Chief Officers	The most senior Council staff – see Article 12 and the Officer Employment Procedure Rules.
Committee Procedure Rules	Rules governing meetings of Council committees and sub-committees. Note that different rules govern Executive meetings.
Clear Working Days	Relevant to prior notice of decisions – all agendas and papers for decision in public must be available 5 clear working days before the decision is taken (special rules can apply to urgent late items). The five days does NOT include the day the papers are sent out or the date of the meeting (hence the use of 'clear'). 'Working' is taken to be Monday to Friday inclusive and excludes Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays.
Confidential Information	Information either given to the Council by the Government

on terms which forbid its public disclosure or which cannot be publicly disclosed by Court Order. (see also 'Exempt Information' below)

Constitution	A document setting out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and all the procedures that have to be followed.
Co-optee/Co-opted	A non-Councillor (may be non-voting) appointed to serve on a Committee/Sub-Committee in a participatory capacity. Some co-optees on Lifelong Learning Scrutiny sub-committee are able to vote.
Council Committees	May be established by the Council to assist with non-Executive functions.
Delegation	Formal authorisation for a committee, portfolio holder, joint committee or officer to take an action, which is the ultimate responsibility of the Council or Executive.
Ethical Standards Officer	An independent officer appointed by the Standards Board for England, who investigates allegations that a Councillor has failed to comply with the Councillors' Code of Conduct, and associated matters.
Executive	The Leader and the Cabinet; responsible for carrying out almost all of the local authority's functions. The Executive must consist of a minimum of three Councillors, including the Leader, and a maximum of 10.
Corporate Directors	The officers in charge of the Council Directorates.
Executive Procedure Rules	The rules of procedure governing meetings of the Executive. Note that Advisory Panels and Consultative Forums established by the Executive have their own set of procedure rules.
Exempt Information	Information, falling into one of 7 categories set out in the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006 and the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 which usually cannot be publicly disclosed – see the Access to Information Procedure Rules in Part 4 of the Constitution.
Forward Plan	A schedule of the Key Decisions the Executive expects to take over the next 4 months.

Head of Paid Service	The most senior officer, with overall responsibility for the management and operation of the Council. The Head of Paid Service is a statutory 'proper officer' role.
Joint Committee	A body appointed under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 (e.g. Association of London Government (ALG) Transport and Environment Committee, Trading Standards Consortium).
Key Decision	A decision by the Executive, which is likely either to incur significant expenditure/make significant savings or to have a significant impact on those living or working in 2 or more Wards (sometimes 1 Ward). (See Article 13 for more information).
Leader of the Council	Elected by the whole Council, usually though not always from within the party with most Councillors on the Council. Proposes the membership of the Executive, which must then be approved by the whole Council. Leads and Chairs the Executive.
Mayor	The first citizen of the Borough. Promotes the Council as a whole and carries out ceremonial duties on behalf of the Authority. Also Chairs meetings of the whole Council.
Monitoring Officer	The Council officer charged with ensuring that everything that the Council does is fair and lawful. The Monitoring Officer is currently the Director of Corporate Governance. This is a statutory 'proper officer' role.
Overview & Scrutiny	A main committee and four sub committees established to provide support and advice to the Executive by contributing to the review and development of policy; also to hold the Executive to account by questioning, challenging and monitoring their performance.
Budget and Policy Framework	The plans and strategies, which have to be adopted by the full Council and within which the Executive have to operate – see Article 4.
Political Proportionality	A legal principle which dictates that Committees of the Council (but not the Executive) must include elected politicians in proportion to the size of their groups on the Council as a whole.
Portfolio Holder	Responsible for ensuring the effective management and delivery of Executive functions. Each Portfolio Holder has specific areas of responsibility. (See Part 3A – Allocation of Responsibilities).
Procedure Rules	Detailed rules, which govern how, the Council operates

and how decisions are taken. See Part 4 of the Constitution.

Proper Officer	A senior officer of the Council who is given a set of responsibilities by statute.
Protocols	Codes of Practice, which set out how, for example, various elements of the Council, are expected to interact with each other.
Quorum	The minimum number of people who have to be present before a meeting can take place. (This is set out in the relevant Rules of Procedure in Part 4 of the Constitution)
Reserves	On most committees councillors can appoint a reserve (or substitute) councillor to attend a meeting, which they cannot attend themselves.
Standards Board for England	A national body, appointed by the Secretary of State, responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Councillors.
Summons	The term used to describe the Agenda for meetings of the full Council.
Virement	Moving budget funds from one area of expenditure to another within a financial year.