

UNDERSTANDING THE CONSTITUTION

Glossary of some of the terms used in the Constitution

Articles	The basic rules governing the Council's business, which cannot be suspended.
Budget	All the financial resources allocated to different services and projects.
Cabinet	7 portfolio-holding Councillors, including the Leader, responsible for carrying out almost all of the local authority's functions.
Call-in	A mechanism, which allows Overview & Scrutiny Committees to examine, and challenge, an Executive decision before it is implemented.
Chief Finance Officer	The officer responsible for the administration of the financial affairs of the Council; also known as the Director of Finance.
Chief Officers	The most senior Council staff – see Article 12 and the Officer Employment Procedure Rules.
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.
Constitution	The 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-voting, non-Councillor appointed to serve on a Committee/Sub-Committee in an advisory capacity.
Executive	Term used to describe the collective role of the Leader, Cabinet & individual Cabinet Members.
Exempt Information	Information falling into one of 15 categories set out in the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 which usually cannot be publicly disclosed – see the Access to Information Procedure Rules.
Forward Plan	A schedule of all 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; also known as the Chief Executive and Corporate Director of Administration.

Joint Committee	A body appointed under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 (e.g. Association of London Government (ALG); ALG Transport and Environment Committee).
Key Decision	A decision by the Cabinet or Cabinet Member, which is likely either to incur significant expenditure/make significant savings or to have a significant impact on local communities. The criteria used to identify Key Decisions are set out in the Article 7.
Monitoring Officer	The officer charged with ensuring that everything that the Council does is fair and lawful.
Overview & Scrutiny	Providing support and advice to the Executive by contributing to the review and development of policy; holding the Executive to account by questioning, challenging and monitoring their performance.
Policy Framework	The plans and strategies, which have to be adopted by the full Council and in accordance with which the Cabinet have to operate – see Article 4.
Procedure Rules	Detailed rules, which govern how the Council operates and how decisions are taken.
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.
Standards Committee	A Committee, with independent members, responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Councillors and considers written allegations that a Councillor has failed to comply with their Code of Conduct.
Corporate Director	The most senior officers, after the Chief Executive, each of whom is responsible for Council service departments
Virement	Moving funds from one area of expenditure to another.