

## PART 1 OF THE CONSTITUTION

### Summary of our Constitution

This summary gives a short description of how the Council is run and the key bodies and people who take decisions

#### **Councillors**

Your Council is governed by 53 *Councillors* who are elected every four years. Each *Councillor* represents people in a *Ward*. Some wards have more than one *Councillor*. The job of your *Councillor* is to represent you even if you did not vote for them.

*Councillors* have a *Code of Conduct* to make sure they follow high standards in the way that they carry out their role. There is a *Standards Committee* which trains, advises and deals with complaints against *Councillors* alleging that they have breached the *Code of Conduct*.

#### **The Council Meeting**

All *Councillors* meet together about six times a year in the *Council Meeting*. The *Council Meeting* decides overall policies and sets the *Budget* each year. The *Council Meeting* also appoints the *Leader of the Council*, the *Chairman of the Council* and other positions on various committees and outside organisations.

#### **The Leader of the Council and the Cabinet**

The *Leader of the Council* chairs meetings of the *Cabinet* and is elected for a four year term. The *Cabinet* is made up of seven *Councillors* who each have responsibility for special areas of the Council. The *Cabinet* can only make decisions within the scope of the overall *Budget* and *Policy Framework* set by the *Council Meeting*. If the *Cabinet* wants to make a decision outside the *Budget* and *Policy Framework* then it has to get the *Council Meeting* to agree.

#### **The Chairman of the Council**

The *Chairman of the Council* is the non-political and civic representative of the Council and is in charge of the *Council Meeting*. The Chairman cannot be a member of the Cabinet.

#### **The Head of Paid Service**

The Head of the Council's Paid Service, as part of the management team of Directors and heads of service, runs the day to day work of the Council, working with the *Leader of the Council* and the *Cabinet*.

#### **Scrutiny**

There are four *Scrutiny Committees* which hold the *Cabinet* to account and also review issues of local concern. In some cases, they can *Call In* a decision which has been made but not yet carried out by the Council.

#### **Planning and Licensing**

The Council's planning and licensing functions are overseen by a *Planning Committee* and a *Licensing Committee* which are both accountable to the *Council Meeting*.

**Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer**

Along with the *Head of Paid Service*, two other members of staff have special roles to help make sure the Council follows the law and manages its finances well. These are the *Monitoring Officer* and the *Chief Finance Officer*.