



## GLOSSARY OF COMMON TERMS USED LOCAL COUNCILS

Below are plain English definitions for words or phrases referred to in Local Councils

<b>Abstain</b>	When a Councillor chooses not to vote on a motion.
<b>Access to Information</b>	By law the public has access to a wide range of information held by and on the activities of a local council.
<b>Adjourn</b>	When a meeting is briefly suspended.
<b>Agenda</b>	A document containing reports which sets out the business to be considered at a meeting. The Agenda is published at least three clear working days before an ordinary meeting.
<b>Amendment</b>	A change to a motion.
<b>Annual General Meeting</b>	The annual meeting of the Council at which the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Council are elected.
<b>Standing Orders</b>	The basic rules governing the Council's business.
<b>Background Papers</b>	Documents which collate information to assist councillors as they consider proposals on the Agenda.
<b>Budget</b>	All the financial resources allocated to different services.
<b>Casting Vote</b>	The Chair has a casting vote which decides the matter when votes are equally divided.
<b>Chair</b>	The person appointed to oversee meetings of the Council.

<b>Chief Executive / Clerk / Proper Officer</b>	The most senior paid officer, with overall responsibility for the management and operation of the Council. Also known as the Head of Paid Service.
<b>Responsible Financial Officer</b>	The officer responsible for the administration of the Council's finances. In smaller councils the role of Clerk and Responsible financial officer may be combined.
<b>Clear Days</b>	Clear days does not include the day the summons and agenda are sent out or the date of the meeting. So for example, if a meeting is taking place on a Tuesday, the agenda must be published on the Thursday in the week before the meeting.
<b>Closure Motion</b>	When a member moves that a vote is taken to decide a question under consideration immediately, without further debate.
<b>Code of Conduct</b>	A mandatory set of rules to guide behaviour.
<b>Committees</b>	Established by the Council to assist with Council functions.
<b>Confidential Information</b>	Information required by council but which would be prejudicial if subject public disclosure See also 'Exempt Information' below.
<b>Co-Optee</b>	A person who is not elected but is appointed to serve on a
	Committee or Sub-Committee in a participatory capacity.
<b>Precept</b>	A tax charged to households by local councils, based on the resources needed by that council to support the local services..
<b>Councillor</b>	A person elected to represent their community
<b>Debate</b>	A discussion on an issue in which different views are put forward.

<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	Councillors have to abide by a Code of Conduct, part of which requires them to declare any interests they have which could influence any decisions they make.
<b>Defer</b>	When an issue is put off or postponed until a future time.
<b>Delegated Powers</b>	Formal authorisation for a committee or officer to take an action which is the ultimate responsibility of the Council.
<b>Vice Chair</b>	The person appointed to preside in the absence of the Chair.
<b>Deputy Chief Officer</b>	The second most senior officer who deputises for the Chief Executive.
<b>Dispensation</b>	Where Councillors have an interest in a matter, the Clerk, subject to the Council's standing orders, may, in some circumstances, grant a Councillor a dispensation to speak, and sometimes to vote, depending upon the nature of the interest.
<b>Exclusion of the Public</b>	The public are excluded from meetings when exempt or confidential information is being considered.
<b>Exempt Information</b>	Information falling into which usually cannot be publicly disclosed
<b>Extraordinary Meeting</b>	A meeting convened for a specific purpose.
<b>Local Authority</b>	The Principal Council.
<b>Meeting</b>	A meeting of the Council, a Committee or of a Sub-Committee.
<b>Councillor</b>	Elected Councillors, or a person co-opted to the Council's Committees.
<b>Minutes</b>	A public record of decisions taken at meetings of the Council, its Committees and Sub-Committees.

<b>Monitoring Officer</b>	The Principal Authority officer charged with investigated allegation of a breach of the Code of Conduct. The Monitoring Officer is often the Head of Law and Democracy.
<b>Motions</b>	A formal proposal made by a Councillor for the consideration of the meeting.
<b>Move (A Motion)</b>	A motion is moved when a formal proposal is made by a Councillor.
<b>Notice of Meeting</b>	The public notice stating the date, time and place of a meeting.
<b>Point of Order</b>	A question raised to clarify whether the procedural rules as stated within the Council's Standing Orders, are being adhered to.
<b>Proper Officer</b>	A senior officer of the Council who is given a set of responsibilities by statute for example the Responsible Financial Officer is the Proper Officer for Finances, the Burial Officer is the Proper Officer for Burials
<b>Quorum</b>	The minimum number of people who have to be present before a meeting can take place.
<b>Recorded Vote</b>	A vote in which the names of those voting for and against are recorded.
<b>Register of Interests</b>	The record of all interests declared by Councillors.
<b>Rescind (a Decision)</b>	When a decision is revoked or withdrawn.
<b>Resolution</b>	A motion/decision agreed by a meeting is subsequently referred to as a resolution.
<b>Resolved</b>	When a motion is resolved, it is agreed.
<b>Right of Reply</b>	The mover of a motion has a right to reply at the close of debate on a motion or amendment.

<b>Scheme of Delegation</b>	Sets out which committee, Councillor or officer is responsible for particular functions of the Council.
<b>Second</b>	When a motion is endorsed by another member, it is 'seconded' and can then be voted upon.
<b>Statutory</b>	Required by law.
<b>Sub-Committee</b>	A formal decision-making body with functions referred or delegated to it by a Committee.
<b>Substantive Motion</b>	The term used to refer to a motion which has been amended by agreement of the meeting.
<b>Summons to Meeting</b>	The term used to describe the Agenda for meetings of the Council, Committees or Sub-Committees.
<b>Terms of Reference</b>	The description of what a Committee, Sub-Committee or panel may concern itself with.
<b>Vice-Chair</b>	The person appointed to assist the Chair to oversee meetings.
<b>Virement</b>	Moving budget funds from one area of expenditure to another within a financial year.
Audit:	An independent review of a council's financial activities to ensure decisions have been made legally, accuracy and detect fraud.
Brownfield Land:	Previously developed land that is not currently in use but may be potentially redeveloped.
Capital	Expenditure: Spending on assets such as buildings, equipment, and infrastructure that will be used for more than one year.
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):	A charge on new developments to help fund infrastructure needed to support growth in the area.
Conservation Area:	An area of special architectural or historic interest, where the character or appearance is protected by law.
Devolution:	The transfer of powers and responsibilities from central

	government to local councils.
Electoral Register:	A list of people who are registered to vote in elections.
Enforcement Notice	: A legal document issued by a council to stop or correct unauthorized development.
Freedom of Information (FOI	): The right of the public to request access to information held by public authorities.
Green Belt:	Areas of open land around cities where development is restricted to prevent urban sprawl.
Listed Building:	A building of special architectural or historic interest that is protected by law.
Local Planning Authority (LPA):	The local authority responsible for planning decisions in a particular area.
Material Consideration.	: A factor that must be taken into account when making a planning decision
Permitted Development: planning permission.	Certain types of minor changes to buildings and land that do not require
Precept:	The amount of money a council requires from the Council Tax to fund its services.
Quorum:	The minimum number of members required to be present at a meeting for it to be valid.
Revenue Expenditure:	Spending on day-to-day running costs such as salaries, utilities, and supplies.
Section 106 Agreement:.	A legal agreement between a council and a developer about measures that the developer must take to reduce the impact of new development
Spatial Planning:.	Planning that considers the spatial distribution of people and activities, and how they interact with the environment
Standing Orders:	Rules governing the conduct of council meetings and the procedures to be followed.
Unitary Authority:	A single-tier local government structure that combines the functions of county and district councils.