

Glossary of Common Terms Used in the Constitution

Term	Definition
Access to Information Rules	Provisions that apply to all principal councils that provide the public and press with access to meetings and connected papers of the Council, its committees and sub committees, unless confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed.
Articles	The basic rules within the Constitution which govern the operation of the Council's business.
Background papers	Papers containing facts or matters on which the proper officer thinks the report or an important part of it is based, or which in his or her opinion are relied on to a material extent in preparing the report.
Budget and Policy Framework	The plans and strategies and budget which shall be adopted by the full Council and within which Cabinet shall operate.
Budget	The allocation of financial resources to different services and projects, proposed contingency funds, the council tax base, setting the council tax and council house rents and decisions relating to the control of the Council's borrowing requirement, the control of its capital expenditure and the setting of virement limits.
Cabinet	The Leader elected by the Council and up to 9 councillors chosen by the Leader to form a Cabinet with legal powers and responsibilities for discharging executive functions, including the day to day management of the Council's business in line with the policy framework and budget approved by the Council.
Call-in	A mechanism which allows an overview and scrutiny committee to examine and challenge a Cabinet decision (or decision of another executive decision taker) before it is implemented.

	<p>Call in may be requested by the chair of the relevant scrutiny and overview committee, the committee itself or any five councillors where they consider a decision is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. contrary to the policy framework or contrary to, or not wholly in accordance with, the budget (a “Departure Decision”); or 2. not in accordance with the principles set out in Article 13 (Decision Making) (“Outside Article 13 Decision”).
Chair	<p>The person appointed to preside at meetings of any constituted body.</p> <p>The Constitution refers throughout to “The Chair”, whether of the Council or any committee or sub-committee or, by analogy, any working party or group. Any Chair may, however, wish to be referred to as “Chairman” or “Chairwoman” or some other related term, at any meeting at which he or she presides and all members or other persons speaking at the meeting shall respect that wish. Notwithstanding this, unless Council determines otherwise, minutes of all meetings and all references in one meeting to the Chair shall continue to use the word “Chair”.</p> <p>The same principle shall apply to the Vice-Chair.</p>
Chief Executive	<p>The officer with overall corporate management and operational responsibility (including overall management responsibility for all officers). This officer is also the Head of Paid Service.</p>
Chief Finance Officer	<p>The officer appointed by the Council under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, to exercise the proper administration of the Council’s financial affairs, with specific responsibilities under the Local Government Act 1972. Also known as the “Section 151 Officer”. This is a statutory officer role.</p>
Chief Officers	<p>The Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer and Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development, as defined in Article 12 of the Constitution.</p>

Chief Operating Officer	The officer appointed by the Council to carry out the responsibilities listed in Article 12.
Clear Working Days	All agendas and papers for decision shall be available five clear working days before the decision is taken (special rules may apply to urgent late items). A clear working day excludes Saturday, Sunday or Bank and public holidays and does not include the day the papers are sent out or the date of the meeting.
Code of Conduct	<p>All councillors are required to abide by a Code of Conduct adopted by the Council which sets out the standards of conduct expected by them. The Code of Conduct applies to all councillors and co-opted members of the Council. The Code of Conduct for Councillors can be found in Part 5 A of the Constitution.</p> <p>All officers of the Council are also obliged to comply with a Code of Conduct setting out the standards of conduct expected of them. This can be found in Part 5 B of the Constitution.</p>
Committee	Committees are appointed to carry out functions delegated to them by the Council or Cabinet.
Confidential information	<p>Confidential information means:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. information provided to the Council by a Government department on terms which forbid the disclosure of the information to the public; and 2. information which is prohibited from being disclosed by any enactment or by a court order.
Contracts Finder	A national government portal for advertising public contracts.
Co-optee/Co-opted	Non-councillor appointed to serve on a committee or sub-committee in a participatory capacity, usually with no voting rights.
Councillor	An elected member of the Council

Council	The South Cambridgeshire District Council which comprises 45 elected members.
Decision	When a matter is ultimately taken by the appropriate decision maker. A recommendation is not a decision.
Delegation	The Leader of the Council, or the Council, may delegate the exercise of their statutory functions to committees or officers, whilst also retaining the power to carry out the function themselves. Officers who have been given delegated powers may also authorise other officers to carry out all, or part of, their delegated authority on their behalf.
Departure Decision	Grounds for calling in a decision of the Cabinet or other executive decision taker where that decision is believed to be contrary to the policy framework or contrary to, or not wholly in accordance with, the budget.
Deputy Leader (Statutory)	The member of the Cabinet appointed by the Leader to be his or her deputy. This is a statutory appointment under the Local Government Act 2000. If for any reason the Leader is unable to act, or if the office of Leader is vacant, the Deputy Leader shall act in the Leader's place.
Ethical Handbook	A document which contains ethical protocols (including policies for gifts and hospitality); procedural guidance for councillors on planning and licensing; the code of conduct complaints procedure; procedures for hearings under the code of conduct and procedures for licensing appeals hearings. The Ethical Handbook does not form part of the Constitution but supplements some of the documents that are (such as the Code of Conduct).
Exempt information	Information falling into one of 7 categories listed in the Access to Information Procedure Rules (Part 4 of Constitution) which usually may not be publicly disclosed.
Executive	The Leader and Cabinet; responsible for carrying out most of the Council's functions. Known as the "Cabinet" in South Cambridgeshire District Council and shall comprise the Leader and up to 9 councillors elected by the Leader.

Executive functions	Functions which may be discharged by the Leader or delegated by the Leader to the Cabinet, a committee of the Cabinet, an individual member of the Cabinet, an officer or another local authority. Executive functions may not be undertaken by the Council.
Forward Plan	See “Notice of Forthcoming Key Decisions”.
Full Council	Full Council is made up of all 45 councillors in South Cambridgeshire. Meetings of the Full Council are held in public and are chaired by the Chair of the Council.
Group Leader	The leader of a political group as defined in “The Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990”.
Head of Paid Service	The most senior officer of the Council, with overall responsibility for the management and operation of the Council. The Chief Executive is the “Head of Paid Service” at South Cambridgeshire District Council. This is a statutory officer role.
Head of Service	Senior officers who report to the Chief Executive and Chief Operating Officer and are responsible for the effective management, delivery and performance of the services and functions within their specific corporate areas of responsibility.
Independent Persons	The Council is required, under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, to appoint at least one Independent Person to assist the Authority in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct amongst its councillors.
Key Decision	<p>A decision by the Cabinet, or an individual Cabinet Member or officer, which is likely either to incur significant* expenditure or make significant savings, or to have a significant impact on those living or working in 2 or more wards.</p> <p>*A decision to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. incur expenditure or savings in excess of £200,000; or 2. acquire or dispose of land or property with a value in excess of £1,000,000

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	shall be treated as significant. However a decision to invite a tender or award a contract shall not be treated as a key decision where the purpose of the contract is to fulfil the intention of any policy or scheme included in the policy framework or budget or involves a continuation of an existing policy or service standard.								
Lead Cabinet Member	The Cabinet Member appointed by the Leader to have responsibility for ensuring the effective management and delivery of a particular area of the Council's work (sometimes referred to as a "portfolio").								
Leader of the Council	The person elected by the Council to be its Leader with powers outlined in the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended). Appoints the Deputy Leader and Cabinet and chairs the Cabinet.								
Level	<p>A monetary amount or value, adjusted from time to time by the Chief Finance Officer in line with inflation rates in accordance with Contract Regulation 21.1. Different levels may be designated with separate corresponding values. The following shall be the designated values until further notice of adjusted values is given to Council.</p> <table style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr> <td>Level 1</td> <td>£5,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Level 2</td> <td>£25,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Level 3</td> <td>£50,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Level 4</td> <td>£120,000</td> </tr> </table>	Level 1	£5,000	Level 2	£25,000	Level 3	£50,000	Level 4	£120,000
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Local Choice Functions	The Council has a choice whether some of the functions, known as "Local Choice functions", shall be the responsibility of the Council or should be the responsibility of Cabinet. These are set out in Table 1 of Part 3 of the Constitution.								
Member	In relation to the Council, an elected councillor, in relation to any other body, a person appointed as a member of that body, whether or not entitled to vote.								

Monitoring Officer	The officer appointed by the Council in accordance with Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to promote and maintain high standards of fairness and decision making. The Monitoring Officer is currently the Deputy Head of Legal Practice, 3C Legal.
Motion	A motion is a proposal put forward for debate or decision. A motion shall be moved and seconded before it may be debated. It shall be expressed as a motion in positive terms to adopt a certain course of action or to do some act or to declare a particular attitude. There are two types of motion, formal motion on notice and procedural without notice.
Officers	Council officers are paid, non-elected employees of the local authority. Officers implement policy decisions made by councillors.
Notice of Key Decisions	A plan setting out key decisions (as defined in Article 13) which are expected to be taken by the Cabinet over the coming months. The plan is published on the Council's website and is available at least 28 days before a decision is made. Also referred to as the "Forward Plan".
Operational Decision	Those decisions which relate to the day to day operation of the organisation, which are consistent with the strategic direction set by the Council and Cabinet and are in accordance with, and not contrary to, the Budget and Policy Framework.
Outside Article 13 Decision	Grounds for calling in a decision of the Cabinet or other executive decision taker where that decision is believed not to be in accordance with the principles set out in Article 13 (Decision Making).
Outside Body	Statutory bodies, charities and voluntary organisations, partnership bodies, local government associations, companies and other external organisations to which the Council appoints representatives.
Overview and Scrutiny Committees	Committees established to assist in the development of policy and to hold the Cabinet and other executive decision takers to account by questioning, challenging and monitoring its performance.

Petitions Scheme	The Scheme which explains how members of the public may submit a petition to the Council and how petitions shall be treated by the Council.
Political Proportionality	A legal principle which requires that committees of the Council (but not Cabinet) shall include elected councillors in proportion to the size of their political groups on the Council as a whole.
Policy Framework	The plans and strategies set out in Article 4 which shall be adopted by the full Council and within which the Cabinet shall operate.
Political groups	Any two or more councillors notifying the Proper Officer in the appropriate form is considered a political group for the purpose of seat allocation.
Proper Officer	The Chief Executive or such other suitably experienced senior officer as the Chief Executive shall appoint to be responsible for specific responsibilities in law.
Public Participation Scheme	The Scheme setting out how members of the public may speak at meetings of the Council and its committees. Separate schemes operate for speaking at meetings of the Council's Planning Committee and Licensing Sub Committees.
Quorum	The minimum number of people who shall be present before a meeting may take place.
Regulatory Committee	A committee undertaking functions of the Council (such as licensing or planning).
Scheme of Delegation	The documents in part 3 of the Constitution which set out which members of the Cabinet or which officers are responsible for particular functions of the Council.
Scrutiny Monitor	Member of a scrutiny and overview committee appointed by the committee to scrutinise and review the work of a particular lead Cabinet member.
Senior Leadership	The senior officer team responsible for the operational management of the Authority and

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Team (SLT)	comprising the Chief Executive, Chief Operating Officer, Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development, Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer and Heads of Service
Substantive Motion	An original motion that has been amended and is put forward for decision.
Substitute	A person who is appointed to attend a committee meeting in place of a member of their political group where that person is unable to attend themselves.
Summons	The term used to describe the agenda for the full Council meeting.
Vice-Chair	<p>The person appointed to preside, in the absence of the Chair, at meetings. In the case of the Vice-Chair of Council, the post holder shall also deputise for the Chair of the Council at civic and ceremonial events, from time to time, as required.</p> <p>See definition for “Chair” above as to the right of the individual holding the office to request to be called by some other title.</p>
Virement	Moving budget funds from one area of expenditure to another within a financial year.
Whip	Any instruction given by or on behalf of a political group to any councillor, who is a member of that group, as to how that councillor shall speak or vote on any matter.