

GLOSSARY

This glossary attempts to explain some of the terms used in the Constitution. These are not necessarily dictionary definitions but are intended to indicate how the Council uses or interprets term or phrase.

Allowance - Members Allowances		A payment towards expenses or costs. Paid to Members in recognition of out of pocket expenses or direct costs of being a Member of the Council
Best Value		Relates to the Local Government Act, 1999 - the means by which the Council seeks to deliver high quality services in an efficient and cost effective way
Backbencher		A term applied to Members who are not part of the Cabinet. Sometimes this also refers to Members who are not chairmen.
Budget		The annual summary of income and expenditure
By-Election		An election which occurs between main (4 yearly) elections
Cabinet		The executive body responsible for day to day running of the Council and the development of policy
Call-in		The process by which the Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider whether a decision is properly taken or is the right decision
Casting vote		A vote made by a chairman to decide a matter when there is a tied vote
Chairman of the Council		The civic head of the Council, who chairs the meeting of the Council. The Chairman is not responsible for the running of the Council
Chairman/Vice Chairman		The person (man or woman) who chairs a body of the Council eg Committee etc/The deputy to the Chairman
Chief Executive		The senior employee of the Council
Citizen		A member of the public who is not a Member or employee of the Council
Coalition		An alliance of groups or parties
Code of Practice		A set of rules, usually of expected behaviour
Committee		A formal body consisting of elected Members, constituted under the Local Government Act 1972

Council		This can be used either : As the term used for the organisation or In respect of the meeting of all of the Councillors
Council Tax		The money raised by the Council from residents of the District
"Departures"		Literally "departures" ie variances from the policies or rules set out in the District Wide Local Plan
(Dorset) County Council		The local authority which delivers county council services to the whole of Dorset. These are mostly different to the services provided by North Dorset District Council
Elected Mayor		An individual elected directly by the electorate (not councillors) to run the Council
Employee		A paid official of the Council
Ethical Standards Officers		Employees of the Standards Board who investigate complaints about unethical behaviour
Exempt information		Information which is exempt from the normal publication rules (normally under Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act, 1972)
Forward Plan		A list of Key Decisions which will be taken by the Cabinet or employees. The list is published at least four months before the decisions are to be taken and an annual plan is published for each Council year
Head of Paid Service (HOPS)		A statutory role, usually combined with that of Chief Executive
Human Rights Act, 1998		The Act of Parliament which puts European Human Rights into UK law. The Council must by law consider the impact of its action on the rights of individuals
Independent Member		A Member who is not a member of a recognised political party also, in the context of the Standards Committee, refers to the non-elected member of the Committee.

Key Decision		An important decision which affects more than one ward of the Council or will involve spending of large amounts of money. They must be made public and can only be taken after appropriate notice
Laws		Acts of Parliament or Regulations
Leader of the Council		The political head of the Council, usually the leader of the largest group of Members (or coalition) - responsible for the proposal of policies and day to day running of the Council
Local Council		A town or parish council
Local Government Ombudsman		The nationally appointed person (department) which looks into complaints by the public about the way they have been treated by or the service they have received from councils
Management Board		An informal meeting of the Cabinet and the Senior Management Team
Manager		An employee who is responsible for managing employees, resources and services
Member		A councillor; the elected representative of the community
Member of the Public		Anyone who is not a part of the Council
Minutes		The formal record of the proceedings of a meeting
Monitoring Officer		The officer appointed under the Local Government and Housing Act, 1989 to oversee the legality of the Councils actions and the ethical behaviour of Members and employees
Officer		A paid official of the Council
Overview and Scrutiny		The role of Members who are not members of the Cabinet
Policy		A plan of action or approach to an issue - part of the Council's Policy Framework
Policy and Financial Framework		The Council's main policies and approach to managing its finances

Political Proportionality/Balance		The system by which each group is represented on Council bodies in proportion to the number of members of the particular group relative to the size of the council as a whole
Portfolio Holder		A member of the Cabinet with responsibilities for specific aspects of the Council's policy or work
Protocol		This can mean either : A document which sets out how people will behave or matters will be handled - eg Employee/Member protocol sets out how these groups will behave in respect of one another or The etiquette of the Council
Referendum		A ballot of all electors of the District - in particular on whether they wish to have an elected mayor
Regulatory		The functions of the Council which "regulate" eg licensing, planning etc
Rules of Procedure		The rules that govern the way specified matters must be handled. (previously known as Standing Orders)
Scrutiny		See Overview and Scrutiny. The way in which Members oversee the work of the Council and investigate the needs of the community
Senior Management Team (SMT)		The Chief Executive, General Managers, Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer
Standards Board		The national body which oversees ethical standards of behaviour
S151 Officer		The finance officer employed under s151 of the Local Government Act, 1972 - who is responsible for the financial probity and arrangements of the Council
"They"		In this Constitution the word they is sometimes used to represent the 3 rd person singular (he/she)
Ward		An area of North Dorset for which elections are conducted