

What is the Constitution?

It is a document which sets out how the Council operates; how decisions are made, and the procedures which are followed.

The Council has to exercise all its powers and duties in accordance with the law and the Constitution.

The Constitution also explains how the Council relates to its citizens, communities and partners.

Can it be Amended ?

The Constitution can only be approved and amended by all Members of the Council sitting together as Full Council. But if the law changes then the Council's Solicitor can amend the Constitution to reflect the law.

How do I obtain or view a copy?

Copies are available on request from Democratic Services by telephoning or emailing democratic@wycombe.gov.uk. Alternatively it can be viewed on the Council's website www.wycombe.gov.uk.



What is its Purpose?

The purpose of the Constitution is to set out how the Council conducts its business, how decisions are made and the procedures it has to follow to ensure that it is accountable to local people.

Summary And Explanation

The Council's Constitution is in four parts. This part is a summary of how the Council works. We have tried to make it easy to follow. The detailed rules are set out in Part 2.

Composition of the Council

There are 60 elected Councillors (or members) who serve on Wycombe District Council and all of them together comprise the Full Council and represent the wards which make up the District.

Each ward is represented by one, two, or three Councillors. The boundaries of the Wards are reviewed from time to time by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

General information about the Councillors, the Wards they represent and their addresses are available on the Council's website at www.wycombe.gov.uk.



Election and Councillors' Length of Office

Once elected, a Councillor normally remains a Councillor for four years. This Council holds an 'all out' election, which means that every four years there is an election, in every Ward, and all Councillors stand for election at the same time. If an election is held for more than one seat in a Ward then electors have one vote for each vacant seat. The last elections in Wycombe were held in May 2015 and the next election will be held in 2019.

If a Councillor stops being a Councillor during the four years, for any reason, then a by-election is held. Councillors elected at a by-election are elected for less than four years. They 'take over' the remaining four year period from the previous Councillor. When a Councillor's four years are up they can be re-elected.



Electors

Who can vote?

Most European Union citizens who live in the Wycombe District are entitled to be registered as local government electors. Every year we send a registration form to every house, usually around the end of August. If you aren't sure if you're on the register then you can see a copy at the Council Offices or you can contact Democratic Services by telephoning or by emailing



The Chairman

The Chairman is appointed annually. The Chairman is the figurehead of the Council at civic and ceremonial events. The Chairman also spends many hours each week representing the Council on official visits to groups and events – almost all in the District.

The Chairman has a few formal powers. For instance, the Chairman chairs the meetings of the Full Council. If the Council takes a vote and the number is equal then the Chairman has a second or 'casting' vote to overcome the deadlock.

Further details on the role and responsibilities of the Chairman are available on the Council's website or by telephoning



Councillor Suzanne Brown - Chairman

The Leader

The Leader may be removed during his/her four-year term of office by a vote of the majority of Council Members.

The Leader has the power :

- To decide the size of Cabinet, a minimum of three and a maximum of nine Members;

- To appoint the Deputy Leader and the Cabinet, and allocate the Portfolios; and

- To make most of the decisions on his/her own and draw up the budget and new policies alone or with Cabinet.

The Leader is able to delegate Executive functions to other Sub-Committees, individual Cabinet Members and Officers. To appoint the Deputy Leader and the Cabinet, and allocate the Portfolios; and



Katrina Wood – Leader of Wycombe District Council

Councillors

Councillors decide the Council's policies and priorities and represent their communities. They are democratically accountable to the whole community, but they have a special duty to their constituents, including those who did not vote for them. The Council, acting as one body, has responsibility for certain activities including approving the Council's policy