

GLOSSARY OF TERMS FOUND IN THE CONSTITUTION

Articles	The basic rules setting out the different features of the council's governance system and describing how the council's business is governed.
Budget and policy framework	The council's revenue and capital budget in any one year together with certain major plans and strategies as determined by the government and the council, as described in part 4 of the constitution.
Background papers	Any papers on which a report was based or relied upon to a material extent. This excludes already published material, or papers which would include exempt or confidential information.
Cabinet	The leader and no less than two and no more than nine portfolio holding councillors collectively form the cabinet. The cabinet are legally responsible for implementing council policies within the budget and policy framework set by the council. The leader may delegate "executive function" decision-making to individual cabinet members, cabinet committees or to officers, but the cabinet as a whole remains responsible for the decision and the action taken.
Call-in	A mechanism that allows councillors to review a decision taken by the cabinet prior to its implementation.
Chief finance officer	The officer responsible for ensuring that the council's financial affairs are administered in a proper manner, in compliance with all relevant professional codes of practice, and all statutory obligations. In Southwark, the strategic director of finance is the officer appointed by the council in accordance with section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011, and section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003.
Co-opted member	A person who is not an elected councillor but is appointed to serve as a member (voting or non-voting) of a council committee or sub-committee. This includes the school governor representatives on the overview & scrutiny committee.
Committees	Committees are charged with making decisions on behalf of the council where those decisions are prohibited by law or by local choice from being made by the cabinet. Decisions that are made by committees include quasi-judicial matters such as deciding planning applications (planning committee) or public entertainment licensing (licensing committee).
Committee procedure rules	Rules governing meetings of council committees and sub-committees. Note that different rules govern cabinet meetings.

Community champions	Community champions scrutinise funding applications to the Democracy Fund and provide overview and guidance for meetings organised through the Ward Fund. They also support residents in discussing issues relevant to the local area.
Confidential information	Information either given to the council by the government on terms which <u>forbid</u> its public disclosure or which cannot be publicly disclosed by court order.
Constitution	A document setting out how the council operates, how decisions are made and the council's procedural rules and codes of conduct.
Councillors	Elected representatives who collectively are the members of the council (sometimes called 'members').
Delegated powers	Specific powers given to a particular cabinet member, officer, committee or sub-committee to take decisions on behalf of the council.
Exempt information	Information falling into one of seven categories set out in the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 and updated by March 2006 statutory instruments, which usually cannot be publicly disclosed (see the access to information procedure rules).
Forward plan	A schedule of all the key decisions to be taken over the next four months. An indicative plan for the next eight months is also published. The plan also includes budget and policy framework decisions to be considered by the cabinet and by the council assembly within that period.
Head of paid service	The most senior officer, with overall responsibility for the management and operation of the council; also known as the chief executive.
Independent person	A person who is not an elected councillor but is appointed to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the authority. The independent person will advise on any breaches of the member code of conduct. The views of the independent person will be considered by the council's standards committee, who are responsible for determining the outcome of any complaints and any remedial action.
Key decision	A decision taken, or to be taken, by or on behalf of the cabinet, which is likely either to incur significant expenditure/make significant savings (i.e. £500,000 or more) or to have a significant impact on those living or working in one or more wards. The criteria used to identify key decisions are set out in the Appendix attached to the access to information procedure rules within the constitution.

Leader	The councillor appointed by the council to provide leadership to the council and to chair meetings of the cabinet. The leader is responsible for the delegation of executive functions.
Mayor	The councillor appointed by the council to chair meetings of the council. The Mayor has special representative and ceremonial responsibilities, but is not a political leader (as the Mayor can be in some other local authorities).
Member	An elected member of the council or of a committee as appropriate. It includes the co-opted members of committees and sub-committees.
Monitoring officer	The officer responsible for ensuring that everything that the council does is fair and lawful. In Southwark the monitoring officer is the assistant chief executive (governance and assurance).
Overview & scrutiny committee	A committee appointed by the council to provide support and advice to the cabinet by contributing to the review and development of policy; and to hold the cabinet to account by questioning, challenging and monitoring their performance.
Political proportionality	Comes from legal rules that require that committees of the council include elected politicians in proportion to the size of their political groups on the council as a whole. This does not apply to the cabinet, cabinet committees, licensing committee or community councils.
Portfolio holder	Responsible for ensuring the effective management and delivery of executive functions. Each portfolio holder has specific areas of responsibility allocated to them by the leader. (See Part 3B – Cabinet portfolios)
Procedure rules	Detailed rules which govern how the council operates and how decisions are taken. See Part 4 of the constitution.
Proper constitutional officer	The officer who is responsible for a number of constitutional and/or procedural functions such as: receipt of petitions, deputations and public questions for meetings; receipt of members' questions for council assembly; providing advice on meeting procedures; maintaining an up to date version of the constitution. In Southwark, the chief executive has designated the head of constitutional services to undertake this role.
Proper officer	A senior officer of the council who is given a set of responsibilities by statute.
Quasi-judicial	Refers to a process of decision-making which is similar to a Court of Law, in that each party with an interest in the matter under discussion has an opportunity to make their case, following which the committee will make decision on the facts and representations.

Quorum	The minimum number of people who have to be present before a meeting can take place. This is set out in the relevant procedure rules in Part 4 of the constitution.
Reserves	On most committees councillors can appoint a reserve (or substitute) councillor to attend a meeting which they cannot attend themselves.
Summons	This is the document sent to every member of the relevant council meeting providing notice that a meeting is to be held and specifying the business to be transacted.
Terms of reference	A written definition setting out the responsibilities and boundaries of a particular forum.
Virement/Budget adjustment	A virement or budget adjustment or is a movement of an approved budget from one budget heading or service to another. It will be self-balancing and will be in response to either a change in the level of service (increased or decreased) or additional net costs or benefits within a service. It includes changes to expenditure and income budgets to take account of new grants or other income and associated expenditure including movements between subjective categories of income and expenditure and also corrections to budgets which were set on the basis of incomplete information. It may recognise movements to and from reserves and balances, which may only be actioned by the chief finance officer.
Working day	This applies to the period of notice to be given for summoning a meeting or the submission of deputation requests, questions or motions. For example, all agendas and papers for decision in public must be available five clear working days before the decision is taken (special rules apply to council assembly where the notice period is seven clear working days and to urgent late items). The five days does NOT include the day the papers are sent out, the day of receipt or the date of the meeting (hence the use of the word 'clear'). 'Working day' is taken to be Monday to Friday inclusive and excludes Saturdays, Sundays and bank holidays. A 'working day' means a period of 24 hours running from midnight to midnight.
Ward	The borough is divided into 23 electoral areas or wards, which are each represented by either two or three councillors.