November 2026

Guide to the Constitution of

Cyngor Gwynedd

Produced pursuant to section 37 of the Local Government Act 2000 as amended

Note: This is a broad summary of the Constitution and is not intended to provide advice or a definitive interpretation of the document

Introduction

The constitution

The Council is made up of different individuals and bodies, who work together to deliver the Council's functions. The Council's constitution describes the different people and bodies that make up the Council, their functions, and the procedure rules that govern how those bodies work together to deliver services.

It is intended to: -

- enable the Council to make decisions efficiently and effectively;
- support you to participate in decisions that affect you;
- help Councillors to represent their constituents more effectively; and
- enable you to hold the Council to account.

One of the main aims of the constitution is to set out clearly what you can expect from the Council, and what you can do if your expectations are not met.

This guide

This guide is designed to help you to understand how the Council makes decisions and works to deliver services in your area and how you can get involved. It provides an overview of the Council's constitution and explains key sections of the constitution in clear and simple language.

It may also be of use to those organisations that work with the Council to deliver services in the Council's area.

The first part of this guide explains why the constitution is important and how it is reviewed and updated.

It aims to answer questions such as: -

- *Why does the Council have a constitution?* p.5
- *How can I get a copy of the constitution?* p.5

- *Who is responsible for keeping the constitution up to date?* p.5

The second part of this guide explains how the Council is structured. It describes the Council's democratic bodies as well as how decisions are made and by whom.

It explains the functions of the Council, its Cabinet and its committees, and which body of the Council is responsible for particular policies and decisions.

It aims to answer questions such as: -

- *What does my local Councillor do?* p.9
- *What does the Council do?* p.10
- *What happens at Council meetings?* p.12
- *How does the Council make decisions?* p.12
- *How can I find out what the Council decided about an issue that affects me?* p.13
- *What does the Cabinet do?* p.14
- *How does the Cabinet make decisions?* p.16
- *How are decisions scrutinised?* p.15
- *Who is responsible for upholding standards and holding Councillors to account for their conduct?* p.16
- *What do the Council's committees do?* p.18
- *What does the planning committee do?* p.17
- *What does the licensing committee do?* p.18
- *Who is responsible for governance, audit and risk management?* p.17
- *Who is responsible for upholding local democracy?* p.18

The third part of this guide explains the roles and responsibilities of elected members and paid officers of the Council. It describes the jobs they do, and how they work together to deliver the Council's functions and priorities. It also explains the codes of conduct that govern councillors' and officers' conduct and the standards of behaviour that you can expect from them.

It aims to answer questions such as: -

- *What does the Chair of the Council do?* p.20
- *What does the Leader do?* p.21
- *What happens if the Leader is unable to perform their duties?* p.21
- *My Councillor is a member of the Cabinet, what does this mean?* p.22
- *How are members of the Cabinet supported?* p.23
- *What does the Chief Executive do?* p.23
- *What responsibilities does the Monitoring Officer have?* p.23
- *Who is responsible for ensuring that the Council's democratic policies and procedures are complied with?* p.23
- *How should Councillors behave?* p.26
- *How should Officers behave?* p.28
- *Are there any special requirements when Councillors or Officers decide planning applications?* p.27
- *How can I complain about the behaviour of a Councillor?* p.29
- *How do I report concerns about the conduct of a paid Officer of the Council?* p.30

The fourth part of this guide provides a summary of the key policies and procedures that govern how the Council carries out certain functions.

It aims to answer questions such as: -

- *Where can I find the Council's key plans and strategies?* p.31
- *How is the Council's policy framework decided?* p.31
- *How does the Council set its budget?* p.32
- *Can decisions be taken that do not comply with the budget or policy framework?* p.32
- *Can money be moved from one budget head to another once the budget has been adopted?* p.33
- *What other policies and procedures govern how the Council manages its budget?* p.33

- *Are there any restrictions on how the Council buys in goods and services?* p.33
- *How does the Council enter into contracts and agreements?* p.33

The final part of this guide explains how you can engage with, and get involved in, your Council and local democracy. It explains how your councillors are elected, how you can contact your councillor, raise questions and speak at meetings, and how you can use petitions to raise issues that are important to you with the Council.

It aims to answer questions such as: -

- *What is the Council doing to engage with local people?* p.35
- *Can I send a petition to the Council?* p.35
- *How can I find out when meetings of the Council and its committees and bodies are taking place?* p.34
- *How can I find out what will be discussed at a particular meeting?* p.36
- *How can I find out when an issue I am concerned about will be decided?* p.36
- *Can I ask a committee or body of the Council to look into a particular issue?* p.367
- *Can I attend meetings of the Full Council?* p.37
- *Can I attend other meetings?* p.37
- *Can I speak at a meeting?* p.38
- *Can I ask a question at a meeting?* p.38
- *How can I find out what the Council decided?* p.38
- *Can I view the Council's accounts to understand how my council tax is spent?* p.39

Signposts to the most relevant sections of the constitution and to additional resources available on the Council's website are provided throughout this guide to enable you to read more on a particular topic if you wish.

There is also a detailed index on the last page of this guide to allow you to quickly look up specific topics and issues of interest to you.

If there is anything in this guide which is unclear, or anything is missing, please let us know so we can improve it.

You can contact our Monitoring Officer, Iwan Evans on iwangdevans@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

Part 1 - The Constitution

The constitution governs the way in which the Council, Councillors and officers working at the Council work together to deliver the Council's functions. It ensures that everyone at the Council acts lawfully, fairly and appropriately and that the Council's functions are performed properly and effectively.

 Section 2.1 of the constitution explains the purpose of the constitution.

You can obtain a copy of the constitution from the Council's offices and view it on the Council's website. A copy of the constitution must also be provided to each Councillor when they are elected to the Council.

 You can access the Council's constitution on the Council's website or by clicking this link.

 Section 2.8 of the constitution explains where, when and how the constitution must be published.

The Monitoring Officer is responsible for maintaining and reviewing the constitution. The Monitoring Officer is also responsible for deciding how the constitution should be understood and applied. You can read more about the Monitoring Officer's role in Part 4 of this guide.

The Full Council is responsible for agreeing the constitution. Once the constitution has been agreed, it can only be changed by the Full Council. Usually, changes to the constitution are recommended to the Full Council by the Monitoring Officer.

In some circumstances, the Monitoring Officer may make changes to the constitution. For example, where there is a change in the law that affects the constitution, or where a minor change is needed to clarify a provision in the constitution that is unclear.

 Sections 2.4 to 2.6 of the constitution explain how the constitution is agreed and how it can be changed.

The constitution also governs how meetings of the Council and its committees should be conducted. The person chairing a meeting will be responsible for ensuring that the constitution is followed during that meeting.

 Key words and phrases are defined and explained in section 2.2 of the constitution.

Part 2 - The Council's democratic structures

The Council is made up of Councillors who are elected every five years to represent people living in different parts of the Council's area (referred to in the constitution as 'electoral wards').

Councillors are responsible for everyone living in the Council's area, but they have a special duty to people living in their ward.



Section 1.2 of the constitution provides an overview of how individual Councillors work together as the Council.

All Councillors meet together regularly as the Full Council. The Full Council is responsible for setting the Council's budget, policy priorities and overall policy framework.

At the start of every year, the Full Council will elect one Councillor as its Chair. The Chair is responsible for chairing meetings of the Full Council and ensuring that decisions are taken properly and in accordance with the rules.

You can read more about these roles in Part 3 of this guide.

The Council appoints or elects a Leader (who may be the leader of the largest political group or coalition of political groups). Individual councillors may also be appointed to the Cabinet by the Leader. The Leader will generally appoint councillors from their own political group to the Cabinet, although they may appoint councillors from any political group to the Cabinet. Members of the Cabinet are responsible for specific policy areas, commonly referred to as portfolios. Where responsibility for a particular work area or function is given to a member of the Cabinet, it is described in the constitution as being delegated to that person.

The Cabinet meets regularly to take collective decisions on those aspects of the Council's work which the Cabinet is responsible for.

Some of the Council's functions are carried out by committees. Committees are small groups of Councillors that meet together to carry out some of the Council's regulatory and scrutiny functions. Subject to some exceptions, committees comprise of councillors from each political group in the same proportion as they are represented on the Full Council.

Until recently all council meetings (whether of the Full Council, the Cabinet or a committee or sub-committee) had to take place in person and only those councillors how were physically present at the meeting could participate in discussions and vote. Councils are now able to meet using video conferencing software. Meetings may either be "remote" (where all councillors are in different places) or "hybrid" (where some people are present in one place, and others are in different places). Even if all the people who are participating in a meeting

choose to be physically present, the Council must ensure that there is the option to join the meeting remotely.

The Full Council may engage such paid staff (referred to as officers) as it considers necessary. The Cabinet, Full Council and committees may delegate functions to officers. Further information on delegations can be found in the Section 13.3 of the Constitution

You can read more about these structures in the following sections of this Part of the guide.

November 2026

Structure chart

THE PUBLIC, elect the

COUNCILLORS, who are members of

the FULL COUNCIL
(which is chaired by the CHAIR)

LEADER
(elected by the FULL COUNCIL)

CABINET
(comprising COUNCILLORS appointed by LEADER)

SCRUTINY COMMITTEES
(political balance of seats decided by the FULL COUNCIL- political groups nominating their members)

- EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
- COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
- CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

REGULATORY and OTHER COMMITTEES
(political balance of seats decided by the FULL COUNCIL and political groups nominating members. Lay members appointed by Full Council.

- GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE
- DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
- LICENSING COMMITTEES
- PLANNING COMMITTEE
- STANDARDS COMMITTEE
- OTHER COMMITTEES

JOINT BODIES
(Leader or the relevant Cabinet member(s) as members)

- NORTH AND MID WALES TRUNK ROAD AGENCY JOINT COMMITTEE
- NORTH WALES RESIDUAL WASTE COMMITTEE

OFFICERS
(employees of the Council, appointed by MEMBERS or other SENIOR OFFICERS)

- CHIEF EXECUTIVE
- CORPORATE DIRECTORS (DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES)
- CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER
- MONITORING OFFICER
- HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
- DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
- OTHER CHIEF OFFICERS

Councillors

Councillors are elected by the people living in a particular ward to represent them on the Council. However, Councillors are also accountable to the wider community and must act in the best interests of everyone living in the Council's area.

If you want to raise an issue with the Council and are not sure who to contact, you may wish to contact your Councillor to ask for help.



You can find out who your local Councillor is and their contact details on the Council's website or click the link here.

All Councillors are members of the Full Council, and they may also be members of one or more of the Council's members bodies (such as the Cabinet or a committee). Where Councillors act as a member of a particular Council body, they are referred to in the constitution as 'Members'.



This is explained more fully in the list of definitions in section 2.2.2 of the constitution.

Councillors have certain rights that are set out in the constitution, which enable them to raise issues and make representations on your behalf.

For example, Councillors may: -

- see any information which they need in order to fulfil their role as a member of the Council;
- attend any meeting of the Council, its committees or the Cabinet;
- speak at any meeting of any Council body which they are a member of;
- with the permission of the chair, speak at any meeting of any Council body (even if they are not a member of that body);
- talk to the Leader, or members of the Cabinet or Council officers about any aspect of Council business; and
- raise complaints.



Councillors' rights to information are set out in section 3.1.2 of the constitution.

Councillors' rights to participate in Council proceedings are set out in section 3.3 of the constitution.

Councillors may also raise questions at meetings of the Full Council and the Council's committees and sub-committees, submit motions to the Full Council and call-in decisions.

The rules surrounding how these rights are exercised are set out in sections 4.19 to 4.21 and 7.29 of the constitution.

You can read more about the role of elected Councillors and the qualities that make a good Councillor in the role description are set out in Section 24 of the Constitution

Full Council

Section 4 of the constitution governs the Full Council.

What does the Full Council do?

The law requires that certain important decisions are taken by all Councillors meeting together as the Full Council. These are referred to in the constitution as functions of the Full Council. The Council may decide that other non-executive functions should be carried out by the Full Council too. These are referred to in the constitution as local choice functions because the Council has a choice about which person or body should carry them out.

Section 13 of the constitution explains the different types of functions that are carried out by the Council and which part of the Council is responsible for carrying them out.

The Full Council is responsible for, amongst other things: -

- agreeing the constitution, and any changes to the constitution;
- setting the Council's budget;
- developing the Council's single integrated plan (which explains how the Council will deliver its legal duties in areas such as health and social care, children and young people and community safety);
- agreeing key plans and strategies (referred to in the constitution as the 'policy framework');
- reviewing and reporting on the Council's performance;

- electing the Leader and the Chair; and
- appointing the Chief Executive and other Chief Officers.



All of the functions of the Full Council are listed in section 4.6 of the constitution.

Meetings of the Full Council are chaired by the Chair. They are responsible for ensuring that meetings are conducted in accordance with the constitution and that decisions are made properly, fairly and lawfully.

You can read more about the role of the Chair in Part 3 of this guide.

What happens at meetings of the Full Council?

The Full Council will meet early in each financial year to elect Councillors to particular positions on the Council, to appoint Councillors to outside bodies and to establish committees and working groups to carry out the Council's business during the year. This is known as the annual meeting.



The timing of the annual meeting and the issues to be decided at that meeting are described in the council procedure rules in section 4.10 of the constitution.

At the annual meeting, the Council will also decide how often all Councillors should meet together as the Full Council. These regular meetings of the Full Meetings are known as ordinary meetings.



Ordinary meetings are carried out in accordance with the council procedure rules in section 4.11 of the constitution.

In some circumstances, it may be necessary for the Full Council to meet before its next scheduled meeting to discuss an issue that is particularly urgent or important. This is known as an extraordinary meeting of the Council.



The process by which an extraordinary meeting may be called and the issues that may be discussed there are set out in section 4.12 of the constitution.

The Full Council is responsible for deciding when and where meetings of the Full Council will be held. The Head of Democratic Services must notify Councillors of this by issuing them with a summons.

The Head of Democratic Services is also responsible for ensuring that the public are told about meetings of the Full Council, by publishing a notice in advance of each meeting. The notice

must include certain information such as the date and time of the meeting, where it will be held and how you can access the meeting remotely using video conferencing.

You can read more about participating in meetings of the Council in part 4 of this guide.



Section 4.13 and 4.14 of the constitution govern meeting arrangements and notice requirements.

How does the Full Council make decisions?

Meetings of the Full Council are carried out in accordance with an agreed set of rules that are designed to ensure that debates are conducted fairly and efficiently, and that every Councillor has the ability to raise questions and to make comments on the public's behalf.



The rules of debate are set out in section 4.21 of the constitution.

Decisions are made by Councillors casting votes for or against a particular decision (referred to in the constitution as a motion). Councillors may also propose amendments (changes) to a particular motion, which must then be voted on.

Historically, votes were conducted by a show of hands, with Councillors asked to raise their hand to indicate whether they were voting for or against a particular motion, or whether they wished to abstain (i.e. to vote neither for nor against the motion). Councils now use a range of methods including electronic voting pads for meetings where Councillors are physically present and in-built electronic voting functions on video conferencing platforms where meetings are conducted remotely or in a hybrid format.

Decisions will usually require a simple majority of those present voting for a particular motion. In other words, more Councillors must vote for a motion than against it. Where a vote is tied once all Councillors have voted, the Chair will have a second, casting vote.

Councillors may request a recorded vote on a particular issue. In a recorded vote, the Councillors voting for and against a particular motion, and those abstaining, will be written down and recorded in the minutes of the meeting. Councillors may also request that their individual vote on a particular motion is recorded in the minutes.



The Council's voting arrangements are set out in section 4.24 of the constitution.

Does every Councillor need to be present before a decision can be taken?

Not every Councillor needs to vote on every decision. In fact, in some circumstances it may not be appropriate for a Councillor to vote on a particular issue (for example, where they have a personal interest in a decision). You can read more about this in part three of this guide.

However, in order for the Council to make a lawful decision a minimum number of Councillors must be present at a meeting. The minimum number of Councillors that must be present at a meeting is referred to in the constitution as the quorum for that meeting.

Section 4.16 of the constitution sets out the minimum number of Councillors that must be present so the Full Council can make a decision.

Are meetings recorded?

Meetings of the Full Council are broadcast live on the Council's website via webcast, the link to which will be available in the details of the Full Council meeting.

A record of each meeting will be kept in the form of minutes. The minutes will contain a record of the motions that were put to the meeting, and the decisions that were taken. They will also record who was present at the meeting.

The minutes of a meeting of the Full Council will be agreed by the next meeting of the Council and published on the Council's website in accordance with the Council's access to information procedure rules.

The Council also publishes a record of the decisions taken at every meeting of the Full Council, the Cabinet and at committee and sub-committee meetings within five working days of the meeting taking place.

If you want to find out what the Council decided about an issue that affects you, you can read the minutes or the record of decisions for the meeting where that issue was discussed.

Information on the Council's broadcasting arrangements can be found in section 4.32 of the constitution and on the Council's website Home - Gwynedd Council Webcasts

Information on minutes can be found in section 4.25 of the constitution.

The access to information procedure rules can be found in section 14 of the constitution.

Minutes of meetings and records of decisions are available on the Council's website or by clicking this link.

The Cabinet

The Cabinet is made up of the Leader and individual Councillors appointed to the Cabinet by the Leader.



Sections 5.2 and 5.5 of the constitution explain the composition of the Cabinet and how Councillors are appointed to the Cabinet.

The role of Leader and any role on the Cabinet may be carried out by two or more Councillors on a job-share basis.



Section 5.12 of the constitution explains the job-sharing arrangements for members of the Cabinet.

What does the Cabinet do?

The Leader is responsible for carrying out the Council's executive functions. However, in practice the Leader cannot personally carry out every one of these functions, so the Leader delegates responsibility for certain functions to the Cabinet, to members of the Cabinet, to officers of the Council or to another bodies.



Sections 5.6 and 5.10.1 to 5.10.3 of the constitution explain how functions are delegated by the Leader.



The Council's scheme of delegation can be found in section 13 of the constitution.

Meetings of the Cabinet

The Leader will decide when the Cabinet will meet, and for how long. They will also chair meetings of the Cabinet.

The constitution prescribes certain matters that must be considered at every meeting of the Cabinet. Additionally, the Leader, members of the Cabinet and certain Chief Officers may require that an item of business is added to the meeting agenda.

Meetings of the Cabinet are carried out in accordance with the rules of procedure and debate set down in the constitution.



The rules of procedure and debate of the Cabinet are set out in sections 5.8 to 5.9 of the constitution.



Section 5.10 of the constitution governs how meetings of the Cabinet are conducted.

How does the Cabinet make decisions?

The Cabinet may consult with individual Councillors and with certain committees before it makes certain decision on matters that are not urgent.

The Cabinet is also required by law to consult with the public in advance of taking certain decisions. Even where legislation does not require public consultation, as a matter of good practice the Cabinet may also consult the public in advance of taking other significant decisions. Where the Cabinet undertakes public consultation, the Cabinet must have regard to the consultation responses received when taking their decision.



These consultation requirements are explained in section 14.14 of the consultation.

The Cabinet must keep a record of every decision it makes, including every decision made by an individual member of the Cabinet and the Cabinet's committees.



Section 14.15 of the constitution sets down the requirements for the Cabinet's record of decisions.



You can read the minutes of meetings of the Cabinet on the Council's website by clicking this link.

Why does the Council have committees and what do they do?

The law requires the Council to establish committees for the purpose of carrying out certain legal functions of the Council.

The Council may also decide to establish other committees and working groups for the purpose of assisting the Council to conduct its business efficiently and effectively.

What do the Council's scrutiny committees do?

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for holding the Cabinet and other bodies of the Council to account.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee can: -

- review and scrutinise decisions made by the Cabinet and other parts of the Council;
- make reports and recommendations to the Council or to the Cabinet; and
- make proposals regarding changes to the Council's policies and procedures.



The functions of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are set out in sections 7.2, 7.4, 7.10 and 7.19 of the constitution.

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee must be told about meetings of other Council bodies. They have special rights to see Council documents.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee may also require any member of the Cabinet or any senior paid officer of the Council to attend a meeting of the committee to explain a decision that they have taken or their performance.



The Overview and Scrutiny Committee's rights and powers are described in sections 7.22 to 7.25 of the constitution.



The rules around membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the conduct of committee meetings and the carrying out of the functions are committee are set out in section 7 of the constitution.

Standards Committee

The Standards Committee is responsible for promoting high standards of conduct by Councillors, including by advising and training Councillors on the councillor code of conduct and advising the Council on changes to that code.



The functions of the Standards Committee are set out in sections 8.6 to 8.8 of the constitution.

The Standards Committee is also responsible for investigating alleged breaches of the councillor code of conduct and censuring members who are found to have failed to comply with that code.



The procedure for dealing with allegations made against Councillors is set out in Appendix 2 to Section 18 of the constitution.

The Standards Committee comprises a mixture of Councillors and independent members (who cannot be members or paid officers of the Council or related to members or paid officers of the Council).

Councillors are appointed to the Committee in accordance with the political balance rules (which ensure that the political make-up of the committee reflects the political make-up of the Council).



You can read more about the Standards Committee in section 8 of the constitution.

What do the Council's regulatory and other committees do?

Planning Committee

The Council is responsible for operating the planning system in its area. This involves preparing local development plans and local planning policies (which govern development in the Council's area) and managing development (by granting or refusing permission for new development).

The Council will appoint individual Councillors to the Planning Committee and agree terms of reference for, and the delegation of powers to, the Planning Committee to enable it to discharge those functions.



You can read more about the Council's Planning Committee in section 9.4 and section 13.1 of the constitution.



You can also read more about the Council's planning functions on the Council's website by clicking this link.

Licensing Committees

The Council is responsible for deciding whether to grant licences for a wide range of different businesses, services and activities in its area. The Council's licensing functions are delegated to the Council's Licensing Committees.

The Council will appoint individual Councillors to the Licensing Committees and agree terms of reference for, and the delegation of powers to, the Licensing Committees to enable it to discharge those functions.



You can read more about the Council's Licensing Committees in section 9.4 and section 13.1 of the constitution.



You can also read more about the Council's licensing functions on the Council's website by clicking this link.

Governance and Audit Committee

The Governance and Audit Committee advises the Full Council, the Cabinet and their respective committees and members on matters relating to good governance, financial oversight, risk management and complaints.

The Governance and Audit Committee monitors the effectiveness of the Council's rules and procedures for ensuring that the Council acts lawfully, responsibly and that it is accountable

to the public (referred to in the constitution as the Council's governance systems and internal controls). The committee is also responsible for ensuring that the Council's decisions and finances are audited in accordance with agreed procedures. Lastly, the Governance and Audit Committee must review and comment upon the Council's own corporate self-assessment reports.

The Governance and Audit Committee comprises a mixture of Councillors and lay members (who are not members of the Council). Councillors are appointed to the Committee in accordance with the political balance rules (which ensure that the political make-up of the committee reflects the political make-up of the Council).



Section 9.2 of the constitution explains the Council's arrangements for the Governance and Audit Committee and section 13.1.



The scheme of delegation in section 13 of the constitution explains the functions of the Governance and Audit Committee.

Democratic Services Committee

The Democratic Services Committee is responsible for appointing the Head of Democratic Services, keeping under review the provision of resources to the Head of Democratic Services and supporting non-executive members of the Council.

The Democratic Services Committee is made up of Councillors, though there are limits to the number of Cabinet members who can sit on the Democratic Services Committee. Councillors are appointed to the Committee in accordance with the political balance rules (which ensure that the political make-up of the committee reflects the political make-up of the Council).



Section 9.3 of the constitution explains the Council's arrangements for the Democratic Services Committee.



The scheme of delegation in section 13.1 of the constitution explains the functions of the Democratic Services Committee.

What are joint committees?

The Council may carry out some of its functions jointly with one or more other local authorities in Wales, and with other public bodies. The Council may decide to do this where, for example, the Council considers that it could better promote the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of people living in its area by coordinating its activities with other local authorities, bodies or people.

The Council can establish a joint committee with other local authorities, bodies or people and delegate decisions and functions to that joint committee. By allowing decisions to be taken

by a joint committee, the Council can ensure that decisions can be coordinated between all authorities and bodies represented on the committee.

The Cabinet may also establish joint arrangements with one or more local authorities in Wales for the purpose of jointly exercising executive functions together with those authorities.



Section 10.3 of the constitution governs the circumstances in which the Council or Cabinet may enter into joint arrangements with other authorities and bodies.

The Council and the Cabinet may also delegate or contract out particular functions to another local authority or to another body or organisation.



Sections 10.5 to 10.6 of the constitution explain the Council's delegations and contracting out arrangements.

The North Wales Corporate Joint Committee

The North Wales Corporate Joint Committee is made up of the Leaders of the constituent Councils, who may decide to co-opt other executive members or partner representatives as appropriate.

The North Wales Corporate Joint Committee is responsible for the following functions: -

- Strategic Development Plan;
- Regional Transport Policy;
- Economic Development;

The North Wales Corporate Joint Committee was established under regulations made by the Welsh Ministers. Consequently, many of the rules and standards that apply to the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee are set down in regulations, rather than in the constitution.



You can read more about the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee by clicking this link.



You can read more about statutory joint committees generally in guidance published by the Welsh Government here.

Part 3 - Roles and responsibilities

What roles do Councillors perform?

In section 24 of the constitution you can find information about the roles that Councillors may perform on the Council.

These include: -

- Leader and Deputy Leader;
- Chair and Vice Chair;
- Member of the Cabinet;
- Elected Member (Councillor);
- Chair and / or member of the Democratic Services Committee;
- Member of the Governance and Audit Committee;
- Chair and / or member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- Member of the Standards Committee;
- Chair and / or member of a regulatory committee;
- Leader of the Opposition and Deputy Leader of the Opposition; and

In section 11 of the constitution you will find information about the roles played by senior paid officials of the Council, including the Chief Executive, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Finance Officer and the Head of Democratic Services.

This part of the guide provides more information about these important roles.

Chair and Vice Chair

The Chair and Vice Chair are elected by the Full Council every year.

The procedures that govern the election of the Chair and the Vice Chair and their resignation or dismissal are set out in section 4.7.3 of the constitution.

The Chair is responsible for: -

- promoting and upholding the constitution;

- presiding over meetings of the Full Council;
- ensuring that meetings of the Full Council are quorate and conducted in accordance with the Council's procedure rules; and
- ensuring that decisions are taken in accordance with the constitution.

The Chair is also the civil leader of the Council. They are responsible for promoting the interests and reputation of the Council and for carrying out civic, community and ceremonial activities.

The Vice Chair performs the Chair's functions in their absence.



You can read more about the role and functions of the Chair and the Vice Chair in section 4.7.4 of the constitution.



The role description for the Chair can be found in Section 24 of the constitution.



The role description for the Vice Chair can be found in Section 24 of the constitution.

Leader and Deputy Leader

The Leader is elected by the Full Council for the term of the Council.

The Deputy Leader is appointed by the Leader to exercise the Leader's functions in their absence.



The arrangements governing the election of the Leader and the appointment of the Deputy Leader are set out in sections 6.1 to 6.4 of the constitution.

The Leader is responsible for appointing Councillors to the Cabinet and for allocating specific policy areas and responsibilities (portfolios) to members of the Cabinet recommending the allocation of specific policy areas and responsibilities (portfolios) to members of the Cabinet.

The Leader is also responsible allocating which functions are to be carried out by which members of the Cabinet (this is referred to in the constitution as the Cabinet scheme of delegation).



See section 6.5 of the constitution for more information.

The Leader also chairs meetings of the Cabinet.

The Leader will act as the Council member of the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee and the Council's representative on the North Wales Public Services Board.

The Leader may appoint other members of the Council to sit on other outside bodies.



See sections 6.5.6 to 6.5.8 of the constitution for more information.



The role description for the Leader can be found in Section 24 of the constitution.



The role description for the Deputy Leader can be found in Section 24 of the constitution.

Member of the Cabinet

Members of the Cabinet are responsible for: -

- taking decisions regarding issues that fall within their area of responsibility;
- playing an active role in Cabinet meetings and decision making;
- contributing to the development of the Council's forward work programme and to policies and procedures in their area of responsibility;
- providing political leadership to the Council's paid officers on matters they are responsible for;
- reporting to the Full Council, the Leader, the Cabinet and others on the performance of services which they are responsible for; and
- participating in the Council's scrutiny processes and procedures, including by explaining decisions they have made and the performance of functions within their area to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.



You can read more about members of the Cabinet in section 5.5 of the constitution.



The role description for members of the Cabinet can be found in Section 24 of the constitution.

Assistant to the Executive

Assistants to the Executive support members of the Cabinet by taking on certain tasks and responsibilities on their behalf. They may attend meetings, prepare reports, review papers and draft comments for the member they support.

Assistants to the Executive are not members of the Cabinet and cannot vote at Cabinet Meetings or Cabinet Committee Meetings. However, they are entitled to attend and to speak at meetings of the Cabinet and its committees.



You can read more about Assistants to the Executive in section 5.7 of the constitution.

(so far no assistants have been appointed)

What roles do paid officers of the Council perform?

The elected members of the Council are supported by paid officers of the Council, who are accountable to the Council and responsible for delivering services to the public in accordance with the policies and procedures agreed by the Full Council, the Cabinet and their committees and bodies.

The **Chief Executive** has overall corporate and operational responsibility for the work of the Council and for all paid officers of the Council.



The Chief Executive's role and responsibilities are described in section 11.2 of the constitution.

The **Monitoring Officer** is responsible for ensuring lawfulness and fairness in the Council's decision making, maintaining and upholding the constitution, receiving reports of alleged breaches of the Council's duties and obligations and conducting investigations into such allegations.



The Monitoring Officer's role and responsibilities are described in section 11.3 of the constitution.

The **Head of Democratic Services** is responsible for advising the Council, its committees and individual Councillors, on the proper discharge of the Council's democratic functions and responsibilities.



The Head of Democratic Services' role and responsibilities are described in section 11.5 of the constitution.

The **Chief Finance Officer** is responsible for ensuring that the Council makes lawful and financially prudent decisions. They are also responsible for the administration of the Council's financial affairs and providing advice to Councillors on the Council's budgetary and other financial procedures.



The Chief Finance Officer's role and responsibilities are described in sections 11.4 and 16.2.3 of the constitution.

The Council also employs a number of other Chief Officers, including: -

- Corporate Director and Statutory Director of Social Services
- Corporate Director
- Head of Education Department
- Head of Corporate Support Department
- Head of Finance Department
- Head of Economy and Community Department
- Head of Legal Services
- Head of Department for Adults, Health and Wellbeing
- Head of Children and Family Support Department
- Head of Highways and Municipal Department and Consultancy
- Head of Environment Department
- Head of Housing and Property Department

Chief Officers are each accountable to the Council for the financial management and administration of those services and activities allocated to them in accordance with the Council's policies.



The roles and responsibilities of Chief Officers are described in Section 13 Appendix 3 of the constitution.



The processes by which officers are recruited, appointed, disciplined and dismissed are set out in section 11 of the constitution.

How should Councillors and Officers behave?

Councillors should comply with the Members' Code of Conduct

Councillors are expected to uphold the highest standards of personal and professional conduct. Those standards are described in the Code of Conduct for Members.

The Code of Conduct for Members is intended to help and guide Councillors in maintaining appropriate standards of conduct when serving their community. In turn, it provides reassurance to the public and helps build their trust in, and respect for, their local representatives.

The Code of Conduct for Members is based upon the 7 Principles of Public Life, which were first set out in the 1995 Nolan Report on Standards in Public Life. Three additional principles were added in the local government principles in Wales.

The Code of Conduct for Members is consistent with, and provides for the practical application of, these principles.

- **Selflessness**

  Members must act solely in the public interest. They must never use their position as members to improperly confer an advantage on themselves or to improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on others.

- **Honesty**

  Members must declare any private interests relevant to their public duties and take steps to resolve any conflict in a way that protects the public interest.

- **Integrity and propriety**

  Members must not put themselves in a position where their integrity is called into question by any financial or other obligation to individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their duties. Members must on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour.

- **Duty to uphold the law**

  Members must act to uphold the law and act on all occasions in accordance with the trust that the public has placed in them.

- **Stewardship**

In discharging their duties and responsibilities members must ensure that their authority's resources are used both lawfully and prudently.

- **Objectivity in decision-making**

  In carrying out their responsibilities including making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, members must make decisions on merit. Whilst members must have regard to the professional advice of officers and may properly take account of the views of others, including their political groups, it is their responsibility to decide what view to take and, if appropriate, how to vote on any issue.

- **Equality and respect**

  Members must carry out their duties and responsibilities with due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity for all people, regardless of their gender, race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age or religion, and show respect and consideration for others.

- **Openness**

  Members must be as open as possible about all their actions and those of their authority. They must seek to ensure that disclosure of information is restricted only in accordance with the law.

- **Accountability**

  Members are accountable to the electorate and the public generally for their actions and for the way they carry out their responsibilities as a member. They must be prepared to submit themselves to such scrutiny as is appropriate to their responsibilities.

- **Leadership**

  Members must promote and support these principles by leadership and example so as to promote public confidence in their role and in the authority. They must respect the impartiality and integrity of the authority's statutory officers and its other employees.



You can read the Code of Conduct for Members in full in section 18 of the constitution.

Councillors are expected to ensure that they understand their obligations under the Code and act in a way which shows that they are committed to meeting the high standards of conduct that are expected of them. However, Councillors are provided with training when they are

first appointed, and on a regular basis, to support them to comply with the Code of Conduct for Members.

Special requirements for Councillors who are members of the Council's planning committee

Planning affects people's private and financial interests in land and property and the environment in which communities live, work and play.

The Council's planning committee is responsible for balancing the needs and interests of individuals and the community to make decisions that are open, fair and transparent and decided using sound judgment and for justifiable reasons.

For these reasons, members of the Council's planning committee are expected to abide by an additional Code of Conduct for Members and Officers Dealing with Planning Matters.

The Code of Conduct for Members and Officers Dealing with Planning Matters explains, amongst other things: -

- the role of officers in providing impartial and professional advice to members of the committee;
- the factors that should be taken into account when deciding an application for planning permission and the factors that should not be taken into account;
- the legal duties which members of the committee must have regard to, such as the duty to have regard to the need to ensure that development contributes to the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales and the duty to have regard to the impact of development on the extent to which the Welsh language in used in the Council's area
- the action members should take if they have a personal interest in a matter being determined by the committee (e.g. where an application relates to a property which they own); and
- how applications for development proposed by, or to be carried out by, the Council should be decided.



You can read the Code of Conduct for Members and Officers Dealing with Planning Matters in full in section 19 of the constitution.

Officers should comply with the Officers' Code of Conduct

Paid officers of the Council are responsible for serving the council by providing advice to Councillors, implementing the Council's policies, and delivering services to the local community. In performing their duties, they must act with integrity, honesty, impartiality and objectivity.

The public is entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from all those who work for the Council. The Code of Conduct for Officers outlines the rules and conditions of service which apply to the Council's employees. It is designed to provide clear guidance to assist them in their day to day work and to allow the public to understand what they can expect when they interact with a Council employee.



You can read the Code of Conduct for Officers in full in section 20 of the constitution.

Officers who support the Council's planning committee are also expected to abide by the Code of Conduct for Members and Officers Dealing with Planning Matters.



You can read the Code of Conduct for Members and Officers Dealing with Planning Matters in full in section 20 of the constitution.

How should Councillors and Officers work together?

Councillors and Officers have different roles, responsibilities and accountabilities, but it is imperative that they work effectively together to perform the Council's functions and to deliver services to residents living in the Council's area.

The Protocol on Member and Officer Relations is designed to clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of Councillors and Officers and to guide them in their dealings with one another. It explains what Councillors and Officers can reasonably expect from one another and how they should work together to achieve their common purpose.

Councillors are entitled to express political views and to support the policies of the party or group to which they belong. Conversely, officers are expected to carry out the Council's business in a politically impartial way and many are restricted from engaging in political activity. The protocol therefore explains how officers can support the policy deliberations by political groupings, while remaining politically neutral.



You can read the Protocol on Member and Officer Relations in full in section 21 of the constitution.

How can I complain about a Councillor?

Section 3.2.1.(g) of the constitution explains how you can submit comments or complaints about the Council's services.

If you wish to complain about a Councillor, then you should contact either the Council's Monitoring Officer or the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

You can find the Monitoring Officer's contact details on the Council's website by clicking this link.

You can find out more about how to complain to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales on their website <https://www.ombudsman.wales/how-to-complain/>

How can I complain about a service provided by the Council?

If you have a complaint about the Council, its employees or the services it provides you make a complaint via the Council's complaints process which can be found on the Council's website by clicking here, or by telephone 01766 771000 or email cwynion@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

Does the Council have Whistleblowing Arrangements?

The Council has two Whistleblowing processes:

1. Arrangements for any employee, contractor, supplier, volunteer or consultant working for the Council can be found in the Policy which also contains a schedule with information on wider reporting arrangements for other individuals. These can be seen in Section 22 .

2. Confidential Reporting Procedure for Elected and Co-opted Members. These can be seen in Section 23.

Part 4 - Policies and procedures

The Council's key plans and strategies (the policy framework)

Where can I find the Council's key plans and strategies?

The Full Council is responsible for setting the Council's key plans and strategies, which together form the Council's policy framework.

The plans and strategies which form the Council's policy framework are listed in section 4.2 of the constitution.

Individual plans and strategies are published on the Council's website. These can be viewed by clicking here.

Additionally, the Council's Plan brings together the Council's plans and strategies for: communities; children and young people; health social care and wellbeing; and community safety.

You can read more about the Council's Plan in on the Councils website

The Council's Plan is published on the Council's website The Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-28

How is the Council's policy framework decided?

The Cabinet is responsible for consulting with relevant stakeholders, considering any reports or recommendations made by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee[s] and working with the Council's Chief Officers to develop a draft policy framework.

Once the Cabinet has developed a draft policy framework, it will be considered by a meeting of the Full Council. The Full Council may decide to adopt the policy framework, make changes to it, refer it back to the Cabinet so that further work can be done on it, or substitute its own policy framework for the draft prepared by the Cabinet.

If the Full Council decides to adopt the policy framework then it shall take effect immediately. If the Full Council amends the policy framework then the Leader has an opportunity to object to the amendments and to reconvene the Full Council to reconsider the policy framework.

Once adopted, the Cabinet, their committees, individual Councillors and the Council's paid officers are bound to act in accordance with the policy framework.



The process by which the Full Council adopts a policy framework is described in section 15.2 of the constitution.

Budget setting and financial management

How does the Council set its budget?

The Full Council is responsible for agreeing the Council's budget, and for agreeing changes to the Council's budget once it has been formally adopted.

The Council's budget is in two parts: -

- the revenue budget provides for day to day operating costs and expenditure like staff salaries, rent, and the ongoing costs of providing services.
- the capital budget provides for one-off costs like a major road improvement scheme, or the purchase or construction of a new car park.

The Cabinet, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, is responsible for developing initial proposals for the Council's budget and consulting over these.

Once this consultation has been completed, the Cabinet is responsible for preparing a final budget proposal for consideration by the Full Council.

The Full Council may adopt the budget without making any changes, amend the budget, or ask the Cabinet to reconsider it before adopting it.



The process by which the Full Council adopts its budget is described in sections 15.3.1 and 16.3 of the constitution.

Decisions outside the budget or policy framework

Can decisions be taken that do not comply with the budget or policy framework?

The Full Council may decide to make changes to the policy framework.

Other bodies and individuals may only take decisions that do not comply with the policy framework in a limited number of exceptional circumstances, which are set out in the constitution. For example, where an urgent decision must be taken to safeguard the Council's interests and it is not possible to arrange a meeting of the Full Council in time.

However, the Council's overview and scrutiny committee may decide to refer such decisions to the Full Council for further consideration (this is referred to in the constitution as calling-in the decision).

The Council's arrangements for urgent decisions which do not comply with the policy framework are set out in section 15.5 of the constitution.

Section 15.7 of the constitution describes the limited circumstances in which bodies or individuals other than the Full Council may make changes to the policy framework.

The overview and scrutiny committee's powers are described in section 15.8 of the constitution.

Can money be moved from one budget head to another once the budget has been adopted?

During the year the Cabinet and Chief Officers may need to transfer budgets from one service area to another to reflect changed service needs or priorities in order to deliver the Council's policy framework within the financial limits set by the Council.

The mechanism by which the Cabinet and Chief Officers may move money between budget heads is set out in section 16.3.4 of the constitution. Section-16

What other policies and procedures govern how the Council manages its budget?

The Council is bound by a number of different financial rules and procedures that govern how the Council's spending is planned, committed, reviewed and audited.

The Council's detailed financial procedure rules are set out in section 16 of the constitution.

Are there any restrictions on how the Council buys in goods and services?

The Council can enter into contracts to purchase goods and services in much the same way as any other person or organisation. However, the Council must comply with the contract procedure rules in the constitution when it does so.

The purpose of the contract procedure rules is to ensure that the Council complies with relevant legal requirements and secures the most economically advantageous (best value) goods and services for taxpayers.

If you regularly sell goods or services to the Council then you may wish to familiarise with these rules and procedures.



The Council's contract procedure rules are set out in section 17 of the constitution.

How does the Council enter into contracts and agreements?

The rules and procedures that govern how agreements, contracts and deeds are authorised and executed on behalf of the Council are set out in section 12 of the constitution.

Part 5 - How can I get involved?

How is the Council engaging with local people to encourage them to participate in local democracy?

The Council will publish a public participation strategy which explains how it will encourage local people to participate in the Council's decision-making processes. The Council's public participation strategy describes how the Council will:

- promote awareness of the Council's functions;
- promote awareness of how people can become a Councillor and what the role entails;
- facilitate access to information about decisions made, or to be made, by the Council;
- promoting arrangements by which people may make representations to the Council about decisions it has made or will make in the future;
- ensure that the public's views are brought to the attention of its Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and
- promote awareness amongst Councillors of the benefits of using social media to communicate with local people.

The Council also engages with local people through citizen panels and surveys and consultations around specific policies and services. These may be initiated by the Council, service departments within the Council or through the work of the Council's committees or sub-committees.



The Council's public participation strategy is published on the Council's website Public Participation Strategy

Can I send a petition to the Council?

Yes, you can submit petitions to the Council using the Council's petition scheme. The Council is obliged by law to operate a petition scheme, which sets out: -

- how a petition can be submitted to the Council;
- how and when the Council will acknowledge receipt of a petition;
- the steps the Council will take in response to a petition; and
- how any by when the Council will make available its response to a petition to the person who submitted the petition and to the public.

The Council publishes details of its petition scheme on its website Public Participation Strategy

How can I find out when meetings of the Council and its committees and bodies are taking place?

The Council publishes notices of meetings of the Full Council and its committees.

You can find out more about notice requirements **in sections 3.11**, 4.14 and 14.4 of the constitution.

The Council publishes notices of meetings, and a programme of upcoming meetings, on its website by clicking this link.

How can I find out what will be discussed at a particular meeting?

The Council will publish agendas for meetings, together with any background papers and reports in advance of the meeting taking place.

Hard copies of agendas and background papers and reports will also be available at the meeting for those members of the public who wish to attend in person.

You can find out more the information that is made publicly available in advance of a Council meeting in sections 14.5 and 14.8 of the constitution.

The Council publishes meetings agendas and supporting documents and reports on its website here.

How can I find out when an issue I am interested in will be decided?

The Council publishes a forward work programme, which sets out what decisions will be taken by the Full Council, the Cabinet and what issues the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be considering, and when these matters will be discussed.

You can find out more about the Council's forward work programme in sections 3.1.1 (b) and 14.13 of the constitution.

The Council will publish its forward work programme on its website

Can I ask a committee or body of the Council to look into a particular issue?

Yes, you can contact your councillor about matters of interest, and they may be able to raise them, if relevant, during a meeting; this is called a Councillor Call for Action.

You can also ask the chair of a particular body to add an item to the agenda for a future meeting, or attend a meeting and ask that body to look at an issue when it is considering items of future business.

Can I observe meetings of the Full Council?

Yes, members of the public can come to observe meetings of the Full Council so long as they are being held in public.

Meetings of the Full Council are also broadcast live on the Council's website so you can watch them in real time remotely if you wish to do so.

The public will only be excluded from meetings whenever it is likely that confidential information would be disclosed to them if they were able to attend. The Council may also exclude the public from a meeting, or part of a meeting, where exempt information would be disclosed. Exempt information includes information that relates to a particular individual or their financial or business affairs, information that is legally privileged or information relating to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of a crime, or other information specified in the constitution.

If you interrupt a meeting of the Council, then you are likely to be warned by the Chair about causing a disturbance. If you continue to disturb the meeting, then you may be removed.



The rules around excluding the public from meetings are set out in sections 14.10 of the constitution.



The Council's obligations to broadcast meetings of the Council are set out in section 4.32 of the constitution.



The rules around disturbance by members of the public are set out in section 4.29 of the constitution.

Can I observe other meetings?

Yes, members of the public can observe any meeting which the Council has resolved should be held in public.

Your right to attend meetings of the Council's Cabinet, the council's committees and other bodies are described in section 14.3 of the constitution.

Can I speak at a meeting?

Members of the public can speak at any meeting which the Council has made arrangements which include participation by members of the public or specific stakeholders for example the Planning Committee.

Can I ask a question at a meeting?

You can ask formal questions of members of the Cabinet at meetings of the Full Council.

However, you may only ask a question if you have given the designated officer (also called the "proper officer"), who is often the Head of Democratic Services notice in writing (including by email) that you wish to raise a question in advance of the meeting taking place.

You may only ask one question, but if you cannot attend the meeting then you may nominate someone to attend the meeting and ask the question on your behalf.

Time for questions is limited, and questions are permitted in the order in which they were notified to the proper officer, who is often the Head of Democratic Services. If time for questions runs out before you are able to ask your question, then you will be provided with a written answer to your question instead.

(The request must be in the hands of the Head of Democratic Services no later than noon 10 clear days before the meeting, which are working days which do not include the date of submission of the question or the date of the meeting.)

You can read more about asking a question in section 4.17 of the constitution Section-4---Full-Council.pdf .

How can I find out what the Council decided?

The Council publishes the agenda, reports and the minutes of meetings once they have been agreed. These papers are available for inspection by the public for a minimum of six years from the date of the meeting. The background papers are available to the public for at least four years. You may also be able to view webcast recordings of many meetings.

The Council also has arrangements in place for publishing written records of decisions taken by the Cabinet and the Council's committees and other bodies.

You can read about the Council's arrangements for publishing minutes of meetings in section 14.7 of the constitution.



You can read about the Council's arrangements for publishing a written record of decisions taken by the Cabinet, the Council's committees and individual members of the Cabinet in section 14.15 of the constitution.



You can read meeting minutes, reports and agendas on the Council's website by clicking this link.

Can I view the Council's accounts to understand how my council tax is spent?

Yes. The Council is required to publish its accounts and to make them available for inspection by the public. You may raise questions of concerns about the Council's accounts with the Council or with the Council's extremal auditor.



You can find out more about how to view and comment on the Council's accounts in sections 3.1.1 and 14.13 of the constitution.

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