

PART 9 | GLOSSARY OF COMMON TERMS

GLOSSARY OF COMMON TERMS USED IN THE CONSTITUTION

The Constitution uses a number of words or phrases that have a certain meaning. Some of these are defined in legislation.

Below are plain English definitions for words or phrases referred to within the Constitution. Please refer to the body of the Constitution or the relevant legislation for more detailed descriptions.

Abstain	When a Councillor chooses not to vote on a motion.
Access to Information	By law the public must be given reasonable notice of matters to be discussed at a Council, Committee or Sub-Committee meeting.
Adjourn	When a meeting is briefly suspended.
Affirmation of the Meeting	When something is agreed by general consensus of the Members present.
Agenda	A document containing reports which sets out the business to be considered at a meeting. The Agenda is published at least five clear working days before the meeting.
Amendment	A change to a motion.
Annual General Meeting	The yearly ceremonial meeting of the Council at which the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Leader of the Council are elected.
Articles	The basic rules governing the Council's business.
Background Papers	Documents on which reports are primarily based. The law says that report authors must list any papers used in compiling a report for decision, and these papers must be available for four years to anyone wishing to inspect them.
Borough	The geographical area which the Council provides services for.
Budget	All the financial resources allocated to different services.

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Budget and Policy Framework	The plans and strategies adopted by the Council within which the Council must operate.
Casting Vote	The Chair has a casting vote which decides the matter when votes are equally divided.
Chair	The person appointed to oversee meetings.
Chief Executive	The most senior Officer, with overall responsibility for the management and operation of the Council. Also known as the Head of Paid Service.
Chief Finance Officer	The Officer responsible for the administration of the Council's finances. Also known as the Section 151 Officer.
Clear Days	Clear days does not include the day the papers are sent out or the date of the meeting. So for example, if a meeting is taking place on a Tuesday, the agenda must be published on the Monday in the week before the meeting.
Closure Motion	When a Member moves that a vote is taken to decide a question under consideration immediately, without further debate.
Code of Conduct	A set of rules to guide behaviour.
Committees	Established by the Council to assist with Council functions.
Confidential Information	Information either given to the Council by the Government on terms which forbid its public disclosure or which cannot be publicly disclosed by Court Order. See also 'Exempt Information' below.
Constitution	A document setting out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and all the procedures which have to be followed.
Co-Optee	A person who is not elected but is appointed to serve on a

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	Committee or Sub-Committee in a participatory capacity.
Council	The 26 Councillors elected for Oadby and Wigston Borough Council.
Council Tax	A tax charged to households by local authorities, based on the estimated value of the property and the number of people living in it.
Councillor	A person elected to represent their Ward on the Council.
Debate	A discussion on an issue in which different views are put forward.
Declarations of Interest	Councillors have to abide by a Code of Conduct, part of which requires them to declare any interests they have which could influence any decisions they make.
Defer	When an issue is put off or postponed until a future time.
Delegated Powers	Formal authorisation for a committee, portfolio holder or Officer to take an action which is the ultimate responsibility of the Council or Executive.
Deputations	A person or group appointed to represent issues on behalf of others at Council meetings.
Deputy Chair	The person appointed to preside in the absence of the Chair.
Deputy Chief Executive	The second most senior Officer who deputises for the Chief Executive.
Deputy Leader of the Council	The Councillor elected to the position of Deputy Leader of the Council.
Deputy Leader of the Opposition	The Councillor who deputises for the Leader of the Opposition.

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Dispensation	Where Councillors have an interest in a matter, a Committee may, in some circumstances, grant a Councillor a dispensation to speak, and sometimes to vote, depending upon the nature of the interest.
Exclusion of the Public	The public are excluded from meetings when exempt or confidential information is being considered.
Exempt Information	Information falling into one of seven categories which usually cannot be publicly disclosed – see the Access to Information Procedure Rules in Part 4 of the Constitution.
Extraordinary Meeting	A meeting convened for a specific purpose.
General Fund	Used to pay for items of everyday expenditure such as salaries.
Group Leader	Leader of another political group.
Legal & Democratic Services Manager	See Monitoring Officer below.
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.
Head of Service	An Officer with responsibility for a specific service area.
Independent Member	A Councillor who is not a member of a recognised political party. This also refers to the non-elected members.
Joint Arrangements	Services provided in partnership with other Councils or by or on behalf of those Councils.
Leader of the Council	Usually the Councillor who heads the largest political group, and is elected by the Full Council to the position of Leader of the Council.

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Leader of the Opposition	Usually the Councillor who heads the second largest political group, and is elected by the Full Council to the position of Leader of the Opposition.
Local Authority	The Council.
Local Choice Functions	Activities which can be the responsibility of the Council.
Meeting	A meeting of the Council, a Committee or of a Sub-Committee.
Member	Elected Councillors, or a person co-opted to the Council's Committees.
Minster of the Crown	A government Cabinet minister.
Minutes	A public record of decisions taken at meetings of the Council, its Committees and Sub-Committees.
Monitoring Officer	The Council Officer charged with ensuring that everything that the Council does is fair and lawful. The Monitoring Officer is currently the Legal & Democratic Services Manager.
Motions	A formal proposal made by a Councillor for the consideration of the meeting.
Move (A Motion)	A motion is moved when a formal proposal is made by a Councillor.
Negate (A Motion)	A motion is negated when it is made ineffective.
Notice of Meeting	The public notice stating the date, time and place of a meeting.
Outside Body	An external organisation which has invited the Authority to nominate representative(s) to serve on its management body.

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Petition	A formal written request, signed by more than 10 people, appealing to the Council.
Point of Order	A question raised to clarify whether the procedural rules are being adhered to.
Political Balance/ Proportionality	Comes from legal rules which dictate that Committees of the Council must include elected politicians in proportion to the size of their political groups on the Council as a whole.
Precept	A proportion of Council Tax which is paid to other authorities such as the County Council and Police.
Procedure Rules	Rules governing how the Council operates and how decisions are taken.
Proper Officer	A senior Officer of the Council who is given a set of responsibilities by statute.
Proposal/Proposition	Another term for a motion.
Quasi-Judicial	A process of decision-making which is similar to a court of law, in that each party with an interest in the matter under consideration has an opportunity to make their case, following which a decision on the facts and representations is made.
Quorum	The minimum number of people who have to be present before a meeting can take place.
Recorded Vote	A vote in which the names of those voting for and against are recorded.
Register of Interests	The record of all interests declared by Councillors.
Regulatory Committees	The Committees of the Council that are charged with regulatory functions, such as Development Control Committee and Licensing Committee.

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Representation	A statement of reasons made when appealing or protesting.
Rescind (a Decision)	When a decision is revoked or withdrawn.
Resolution	A motion/decision agreed by a meeting is subsequently referred to as a resolution.
Resolved	When a motion is resolved, it is agreed.
Right of Reply	The mover of a motion has a right to reply at the close of debate on a motion or amendment.
Scheme of Delegation	Sets out which committee, Councillor or Officer is responsible for particular functions of the Council.
Second	When a motion is endorsed by another member, it is 'seconded' and can then be voted upon.
Secretary of State	The head of a major government department.
Stakeholder	A person or group that may be affected by a matter.
Statutory	Required by law.
Sub-Committee	A formal decision-making body with functions referred or delegated to it by a Committee.
Substantive Motion	The term used to refer to a motion which has been amended by agreement of the meeting.
Summons to Meeting	The term used to describe the Agenda for meetings of the Council, Committees or Sub-Committees.
Team Manager	An Officer with responsibility for a specific service area who reports to a Head of Service.
Tendering	The making of an offer by a contractor to carry out work.
Terms of Reference	The description of what a Committee, Sub-Committee or

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	panel may concern itself with.
Vice-Chair	The person appointed to assist the Chair to oversee meetings.
Virement	Moving budget funds from one area of expenditure to another within a financial year.
Ward	The defined area within the Borough which a Councillor represents. The Councillor is elected to represent the interests of the constituents in their Ward.
Whip	A member of a political party who gives instructions to Members regarding meetings and attendance.