

PART 1 SUMMARY AND EXPLANATION

The Council's Constitution

This sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures, which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people and businesses. Some of these processes are required by the law, while others are a matter for the Council to choose.

The Constitution is divided into 18 articles, which set out the basic rules governing the Council's business. More detailed procedures and codes of practice are provided in separate rules and protocols contained in Part 4.

What's in the Constitution?

Article 1 of the Constitution commits the Council to provide leadership to the community, to serve those who live, work and visit the Stroud District, and to improve the quality of life for all members of the community. Articles 2 – 18 explain the rights of citizens and how the key parts of the Council operate.

How the Council operates

The Council is composed of 51 Councillors with one-third being elected at a time. Councillors are democratically accountable to constituents of their ward.

Councillors have to agree to follow a code of conduct to ensure high standards in the way they undertake their duties. The Standards Committee trains and advises them on the code of conduct.

All Councillors meet together as the Council. Meetings of the Council are open to the public. Here Councillors decide the Council's overall policies.

The Council sets the policy, budget and Council Tax. Recommendations on these come from a small 'executive' group of Councillors. This is known as the Cabinet, headed by the Leader. The Cabinet is also responsible for putting Council policy into action.

Some Councillors who are not in the Cabinet serve on Overview and Scrutiny Committees and hold the Executive to account.

Quasi-judicial matters are dealt with by the Licensing and Regulation Committee and Development Control Committee.

A Standards Committee, made up of mainly independent people, makes sure the highest standards of conduct and probity are maintained by all parts of the Council.

Stroud District Council has a commitment to consult with the Youth Council which has representatives from the secondary schools within the district and acts as a representative voice for the 10,000 young people aged between 11 and 18 years

Citizens' Rights

Citizens have a number of rights in their dealings with the Council. These are set out in more detail in Article 3. Some of these are legal rights, whilst others depend on the Council's own processes.

Where members of the public use specific Council services, for example as a housing benefit claimant or as a Council tenant, they have additional rights. These are not covered in this Constitution.

The Council welcomes participation by its citizens in its work.

For further information on your rights as a citizen, please contact Democratic Services at Ebley Mill, Westward Road, Ebley, Stroud, Glos GL5 4UB. Telephone 01453 - 754351 email democratic.services@stroud.gov.uk

Copies of this Constitution are available on the Council's website, www.stroud.gov.uk.