

Jargon Buster

Council & Officers

Standing Orders

The policy document which outlines how the Council and its meeting are governed.

Tender

A formal process where businesses are invited to bid for contracts. The Council's tender process must comply with our financial regulations and relevant legislation.

Contractors

A person or organisation hired to carry to a project or service on behalf of the Council.

Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)

The Responsible Finance Officer administers the Council's financial affairs.

Proper Officer

The Proper Officer (Director) carries out the decisions of the Council, implements policies and deals with the day-to-day running of the Council.

Community Development Officer

Works with the community to implement the projects approved by the Council.

Councillors

Councillors

A person elected or co-opted to represent residents' interests and make decisions as a member of the Council.

Register of interest

Councillors have a duty to register and disclose any interests which may conflict with their role as Councillor, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, and the Members' Code of Conduct. The register is kept by the districts monitoring officers and is available on the Council's website.

Members Code of Conduct

A document which outlines how Councillors' are expected to conduct themselves when acting in their role as Councillors.

Meetings

Annual Meeting

A full Council meeting held in May. The election of the Chair and various other procedural matters are discussed and decided.

Community Meeting

An informal meeting the Council holds each year during which it reports to residents about its work, gains input and feedback from residents.

Chairs

A Councillor appointed to oversee the Council or a Committee and leads the respective meetings.

Quorum

The minimum number of Councillors required for a meeting to take place.

Minutes

Minutes are a legal record of the decisions made at a meeting.

Declaration of interests

Councillors have a duty to disclose any conflicts of interest which may impact their participation at a meeting. E.g. a Councillor must declare an interest at any meeting deciding on grants if they are associated with any grant applications being discussed at the meeting.

Dispensation

Councillors can be granted a dispensation to participate/vote on matters in which they have disclosed an interest. This can only be granted in certain circumstances as set out in the Members' Code of Conduct.

Reports

A document proposing that the Council take an action or a document outlining work undertaken by Officers, Chairs, Committees or Working Groups. Reports requiring approval must be submitted in written form. Reports requiring noting can be submitted in written or verbal form.

Finance Report

A document outlining the Council's budget and updates on income and expenditure. Financial reports are submitted at each Council and Committee meeting. Financial reports to Council Meetings outline and request approval of all payment above £1000.

Resolution

The legal term for a decision lawfully made by the majority of those present and voting at a meeting.

Amendments

An alteration to any aspect of a Report which requires approval.

Voting

Proposer

A person who supports (or recommends) that a vote takes place to approve a report.

Secunder

A person who gives further support for a vote to take place to approve a report.

Consensus

A general agreement which is gained by the majority voting in favour or in opposition to any matter put to a vote during meetings.

Casting vote

The chair of a meeting is able to cast a second (or deciding vote) if there is no consensus (or majority) after a vote.

Finance

Precept

The council tax collected from local residents each year which makes up the bulk of the Council's income. Each year the Council decides on whether to maintain, increase or decrease the precept.

Budget

An annual outline of the Council's expected income, spending and saving.

Reserves

Income which the Council holds and does not intend to spend except to cover the cost of unexpected expenditure.

Earmarked reserves

Reserves that can only be spent for a specific project or purpose.

Accounting statements

The statement of the Council's annual income and expenditure, bank balances and record of all payments and receipts.

AGAR

The Annual Governance and Accounting Statement presents the Council's accounting statements and governance arrangements in the year and the internal and external auditor's opinion on them.

External audit

The process by which an auditor reviews the Council's annual return and other documents. The auditor is appointed by the Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments (SAAA).

Internal audit

Someone independent of the Council, who scrutinises the Council's systems and finances and reports back to the Council.

Financial Regulations

A document which set out how the Council regulates and controls its financial affairs and accounting procedures, and which is adopted from the model created by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC)

Elections

Ordinary elections

Ordinary elections occur during the month of May every four years to elect 12 Councillors as members of Queen's Park Community Council.

Contested election

A contested election is where there are more candidates than seats, therefore a poll is required.

By-election

An election held between ordinary elections and takes place if a vacancy become available and residents request that an election take place rather than a co-option.

Co-option

Councils can co-opt (vote to appoint) a new Councillor if a position become vacancy during the term between ordinary elections or where insufficient candidates are proposed for seats at an election.