

How Does the Council work?

Introduction: A summary and explanation of how the Council works

INTRODUCTION

“The constitution and other documents referred to in it should set out everything anyone who has dealings with the local authority would need to know about how the local authority conducts its business who takes which decisions and how to work with the local authority”.

New Council Constitutions: Guidance to Local Authorities
Communities & Local Government – 2002

Telford & Wrekin Council has 54 Councillors who are elected every 4 years. Councillors either represent an area (a ward) on their own or with one or two other Councillors. There are 33 wards within the Borough. The Councillors together form the Council and meet together as a Council about 6 times per year. They are democratically accountable to the people in their ward, including those that did not vote for them, but have an overriding duty to act in the best interests of all the people within the Borough.

Telford & Wrekin Council is a co-operative Council which means that is a Council that works closely with residents, staff, partners and other organisations to deliver the best we can for the borough by giving local people greater influence over the services they use and the issues that affect their lives.

Council meetings decide upon the Council priorities and how it should spend its money. Council also appoints a Leader who remains in post for four years and decides, with his Cabinet, how to best deliver the services that the Council is responsible for providing.

The Council appoints a Mayor who is the first citizen and Queen’s representative within the Borough. The Council also appoints a Speaker who chairs Council meetings. Councillors are also appointed to sit on other committees to take the decisions that the Leader and Cabinet cannot make and to hold the Leader and Cabinet to account by scrutinising their decisions. Council employees, often referred to as officers, give advice to Councillors, implement decisions and manage the day to day delivery of services. Some officers have specific duties to ensure that the Council acts within the law and uses its resources wisely.

Councillors have to follow a Code of Conduct to ensure high standards in the way in which they conduct their duties.

All council meetings are held in public. If items to be discussed are of a confidential nature or can be classified as exempt then members of the public can be excluded for this part of the meeting.

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The way that the Council works is governed by its Constitution.

HOW THE CONSTITUTION WORKS

The Constitution has 3 parts to it:-

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<i>Decision-making</i>	Who makes Decisions?	Details the different powers of Council, the Leader, Health & Well-Being Board, Boundary Review, Licensing and Planning Committees and Officers
	What decisions can they make?	
	How do they make decisions?	Includes the Procedure Rules that detail how meetings will be conducted.
<i>Governance – scrutiny, oversight and transparency</i>	Scrutiny	Details the scrutiny committees, what they can do (terms of reference) and procedure rules for those committees
	Oversight	Details the different powers of the Audit ,Appeals, Council Constitution, Personnel and Standards Committees, their terms of reference and procedure rules for those committees Details financial regulations, legal rules, procurement rules and rules on changing the constitution Codes of conduct for members and officers and protocol for member/ officer relations
	Transparency	Your rights and responsibilities as a citizen How we manage our information Key decisions and forward planning