

## **PART 1 – SUMMARY AND EXPLANATION**

### **THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION**

Blaby District Council has agreed a constitution which 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. Some of these processes are required by the law, while others are a matter for the Council to choose.

The Constitution is divided into 14 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 at the end of the document.

### **WHAT'S IN THE CONSTITUTION?**

Article 1 of the Constitution commits the Council to provide a framework of democratic accountability aimed at continuous improvement of the delivery of services to the community be they residents, voluntary organisations, businesses, those travelling through, or to, the District of Blaby. Articles 2 - 14 explain the rights of citizens and how the key parts of the Council operate.

### **HOW THE COUNCIL OPERATES**

The Council is composed of 39 Councillors elected every four years.

Councillors are democratically accountable to residents of their ward. The overriding duty of Councillors is to the whole community, but they have a special duty to their constituents, including those who did not vote for them.

All Councillors meet together as the Council. Meetings of the Council are normally open to the public. Here Councillors decide the Council's overall policies and set the budget each year. The Council is responsible for approving the policy framework and the budget, provides the main political debating platform and holds the Cabinet Executive to account. It also retains responsibility for regulatory functions.

The Council at its Annual Meeting considers what Committees to establish and whether those Committees do not need to be established on a politically balanced basis:- (on the basis of a nem con vote - i.e. no one voting against).

---

## **HOW DECISIONS ARE MADE**

The Cabinet Executive is the part of the Council which is responsible for most day-to-day decisions. The Cabinet Executive is made up of a cabinet of Councillors appointed by the Leader of the Council. When key decisions are to be discussed or made, these are published in the Cabinet Executive's forward plan insofar as they can be anticipated.

The Cabinet Executive has to make decisions which are in line with the Council's overall policies and budget. If it wishes to make a decision which is outside the budget or policy framework, this must be referred to the Council as a whole to decide.

Committees carry out a number of regulatory functions, including dealing with planning applications, licensing and most other regulatory business.

Meetings of the Council are open to the public except where personal or confidential matters are being discussed.

## **SCRUTINY**

The Scrutiny Commission advises the Cabinet Executive and the Council as a whole on its policies, budget and service delivery. The Scrutiny Commission also monitors the decisions of the Cabinet Executive.

## **THE COUNCIL'S STAFF**

The Council has people working for it (called 'Officers') to give advice, implement decisions and manage the day-to-day delivery of its services. Some Officers have a specific duty to ensure that the Council acts within the law and uses its resources wisely.

## **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. The local Citizens' Advice Bureau can advise on individuals' legal rights. Further information can be found on the Council's website [www.blaby.gov.uk](http://www.blaby.gov.uk)

The Council welcomes participation by its citizens in its work. For further information on your rights as a citizen, please contact the Democratic Services, Scrutiny and Governance Manager.