

Part 5 – Policies, Strategies, Plans, Codes and Protocols

The Council operates with a wide variety of Policies, Strategies, Plans, Codes and Protocols. Some of these are required by law, others are recommended by Government or the Audit Commission and others are produced on the Council's own initiative to inform members of the public, partner organisations, elected members or Council Staff.

This part of the Constitution contains some working definitions and an index of formal documents with details of where they may be viewed or copies obtained. It also sets out the procedures for monitoring, updating, adding to or discontinuing them.

1.0 Definitions

The terms Policy, Strategy, Plan, Code and Protocol are often used interchangeably or with overlapping meanings. For the purposes of this part of the Constitution the following meanings are, wherever possible, used:

Strategy *a long term plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal or goals*

Policy *describes how the Council will act and what it will take into account in particular circumstances*

Plan *almost synonymous with "Strategy" but may be more appropriate for shorter timescales*

Code *usually deals with standards of behaviour or probity and sets out rules or expectations*

Protocol *is generally used to set out in some detail the approach the Council has taken or will take in particular circumstances and is usually informative rather than having any formal sanctions or legislative backing*

2.0 Index of Formal Documents

These documents are listed under a number of headings:

2.1 Corporate Strategies, Policies and Plans

These are the core documents which record the Councils' goals and ambitions and, in relation to particular services, how these goals are to be achieved or how the citizen may expect the Council to act.

Best Value Performance Plan
Building Control Enforcement Policy
Community Plan
Consultation Strategy
Corporate Plan
Council Constitution
Crime Reduction Strategy
Economic Development Strategy
Environmental Health Enforcement Policy
Environmental Policy
Equal Opportunities Policy
Food Law Enforcement Service Plan (Food Sampling)
Homelessness Strategy
Housing Strategy
Licensing Policy
Local Plan (LDF)
Planning Enforcement Policy and Service Standards
Procurement Strategy
Prosecution Policy
Racial Equality Scheme
Shoreline Management Plan
Social Inclusion Policy
Standing Orders (in Part 4 of this Constitution)

2.2 Probity, Ethical Standards, Access to Information

These documents deal with setting standards as to how Members and officers will act, how fraud will be addressed and how the citizen can expect to access information whilst having their own data properly protected and regulated.

Access to Information Rules (in Part 4 of this Constitution)
Code of Conduct (Members)
Code of Conduct (Officers)
Data Protection Policy
Fraud and Corruption Policy
Benefit Fraud Policy
Counter Fraud Policy
Freedom of Information Act Policy Statement
Publication Scheme
Records Management Policy
Planning Protocol
Protocol on Reporting of Racist Incidents
Scrutiny Procedure Rules (in Part 4 of this Constitution)
Whistle-Blowing Policy
Monitoring Officer Protocol
S151 Officer Protocol

2.3 Corporate and Financial Governance

These documents deal with the way the Council uses its assets and resources and how it seeks to manage risk and performance in its stewardship of those assets and resources.

Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules (in Part 4 of this Constitution)
Code of Corporate Governance
Contract Procedure Rules (in Part 4 of this Constitution)
Corporate Debt Management & Recovery Policy
Financial Procedure Rules
Information Security Policy

2.4 Staff and Employment

These documents set out how the Council interacts with its staff.

Bullying Policy and Procedure
Disciplinary Procedure
Employee Adjustment Procedure
Grievance Procedure
Health and Safety Policy
Human Resources Policy
Officer Employment Procedure Rules
Private Work/Outside Interests Policy

2.5 Miscellaneous Protocols

These documents relate to various aspects of how the Council operates and are intended as guidance for both staff and elected Members.

Arrangements for Notification of Members
Protocol on Forums
Protocol on Policy Panels
Protocol on Public and Media Relations
Protocol on Representational Role of Members
Reporting Lines
Role of Chairman

3.0 Access to Formal Documents

All the formal documents are available electronically - those in 2.1 to 2.3 on the Council's public website and those in 2.4 and 2.5 on the intranet which is available to elected members and staff.

Paper copies of any of the documents can be obtained by contacting the Democratic Services Section which also holds the definitive and up to date copy of all the documents. Anyone relying on a document may wish to check with Democratic Services that the copy they are using is the most up to date available.

4.0 Adding New Documents, Discontinuing, Amending, Reviewing and Updating Documents

4.1 New Policy Framework Documents

The documents in Paragraph 2.1 above from the Council's Policy Framework as defined in Article 4 of this Constitution. Any proposal to add new policies, plans or strategies to this framework must follow the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules set out in Part IV of this Constitution.

4.2 New Documents Falling under headings 2.2 to 2.5

Any addition to these categories can be made by the Cabinet but the Scrutiny Committee must be consulted before any new document is adopted and all Members must be informed once any such document is adopted.

4.3 Amendment or Discontinuance of Formal Documents

The amendment or discontinuance of Policy Framework documents (paragraph 2.1) can only be undertaken by Full Council. Other formal documents can be amended or discontinued by the Cabinet but the Scrutiny Committee must be consulted and subsequently all Members must be informed.

4.4 Review and Updating of Formal Documents

All formal documents will be reviewed annually and any necessary updates reported to Full Council or Cabinet as appropriate under 4.3 above. A full review of each formal document shall be undertaken at such intervals as indicated in the document, which will not usually be more than 3 years.