**Constitution**

**Article One: This Constitution**

* 1. **The Purpose of the Constitution**

Nottingham City Council has agreed this Constitution which sets out the Council’s governance arrangements. These describe how the Council conducts its business, how decisions are made, who can make them and what rules and procedures must be followed to ensure those decisions are well-informed, efficiently taken, transparent and accountable to local people. Some of the processes are required by law, while others have been decided by the Council. The Council will exercise all its powers and duties in accordance with the law and this Constitution. If the law differs from this Constitution, the law takes precedence. The Constitution helps the Council to take good, well informed decisions for our city.

* 1. You can view a copy of the Constitution at the City Council’s main office at Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG or on our website.
  2. **Amending the Constitution**

Only Full Council has the authority to amend this Constitution.

* 1. The only exceptions to this are:
* the Monitoring Officer can make changes required to comply with the law or to correct inaccuracies with immediate effect.
* the Leader of the Council can make changes to Executive arrangements with immediate effect.

In these circumstances the changes will be reported to the next available meeting of Full Council for noting and for Full Council to agree to amend the Constitution to reflect the changes.

* 1. The Standards and Governance Committee will consider non-Executive amendments to the Constitution and will recommend them to Full Council for adoption.
  2. **The Structure of this Constitution**

The Constitution is divided into 19 Articles, each covering a different aspect of the Council’s governance arrangements. Sitting alongside the Articles are several other Governance Framework Documents. Together, the Governance Framework Documents and the Constitution make up our overall Governance Framework. The Governance Framework Documents do not require the agreement of Council to be amended unless this requirement is stated within the individual Document or this Constitution.

* 1. **The Language of the Constitution and Glossary**

Local government is complex and the language we use can make it even more complicated. In order to simplify our language throughout this Constitution we aim to use consistent descriptions of the people we work with. Four significant groups we work with are:

* Citizens – this refers to the people of Nottingham who we serve. It does not refer exclusively to those with British Citizenship.
* Councillors – the individuals elected to the Council.
* Officers – the individuals employed by the Council.
* Partners – other organisations the Council works with.

On occasion it may be necessary to refer to the legal terms for these groups, for example we may have to refer to Councillors as Members. We will make it clear which groups we are referring to when this is necessary.

* 1. A glossary of some common words used through this Constitution can be found below.
* Article – a section of the Constitution
* Budget – this sets out how the Council plans to spend its money over a set period of time.
* Casework – issues which citizens ask Councillors to help them resolve.
* Committee – a formally appointed group of individuals (usually Councillors) who take decisions collectively.
* Constituent – an individual who lives within a Councillor’s Ward.
* Delegation – Where an individual or body with authority to do something gives that authority to another individual or body enabling them to do it as well.
* Majority Group – the Political Group with the largest number of Councillors on the Council.
* Motion – a proposal put to a meeting either identified as a motion or as a recommendation in a report.
* Municipal Year – The period from one Council Annual General Meeting to the next.
* Opposition Group – a Political Group of Councillors who are not part of the Majority Group.
* Policy – an agreed statement of what the Council intends to do and principles to be applied to its implementation.
* Political Group – a Group of two or more Councillors, usually but not necessarily from the same political party, who have identified themselves as a Group.
* Ward – an area of the city that elects either two or three Councillors. There are currently 20 wards in Nottingham.