

A2 PURPOSE OF THE CONSTITUTION

1. Purpose of the constitution

- 1.1 The constitution is made under Section 37 of the Local Government Act 2000. The purpose of the constitution is to provide a framework of rules governing the way in which the Council exercises its functions and takes decisions. The Council is required to maintain an up to date constitution.
- 1.2 Central Bedfordshire 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.
- 1.3 The purpose of the constitution is to:-
 - 1.3.1 Enable the Council to provide clear leadership to the community in partnership with citizens, businesses and other organisations;
 - 1.3.2 Support and encourage the active involvement of citizens in the process of local authority decision-making;
 - 1.3.3 Help councillors represent their constituents more effectively;
 - 1.3.4 Enable decisions to be taken rationally, efficiently and effectively;
 - 1.3.5 Create a powerful and effective means of holding decision-makers to public account;
 - 1.3.6 Ensure that no one will review or scrutinise a decision which they have taken or were directly involved in taking;
 - 1.3.7 Ensure that those responsible for decision-making are clearly identifiable to local people and that they explain the reasons for decisions;
 - 1.3.8 Provide a means of improving the delivery of services to the community;
 - 1.3.9 Enable the Council to provide services and opportunities that are available to all and fairly allocated; and
 - 1.3.10 Provide a robust framework of ethical standards that the Council, councillors and officers will observe in the conduct of the Council's business.

2. Interpretation and review of the constitution

- 2.1 Where the constitution permits the Council to choose between different courses of action, the Council will always choose that option which it thinks is closest to the purposes stated above. The Council will monitor and evaluate the operation of the constitution as set out in Part A5 (Review and revision of the constitution).

3. Inspection of the constitution

- 3.1 The constitution is published on the Council's website – www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk and is available to councillors, officers and the public. A copy is also available for inspection at the Council's main offices, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Beds and High Street North, Dunstable during office hours.
- 3.2 Further information about the publication and review of the constitution may be found in Parts A5 and A6.