

Glossary of Terms

This glossary explains some of the terms used by Northampton Borough Council, which are not automatically dictionary definitions but are meant to show how the Council uses or interprets a term, phrase or abbreviation.

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| Annual Report | Scrutiny Committees summarise their work and findings in an annual report. |
| Audit Commission | The Audit Commission is an independent body responsible for ensuring that public money is used economically, efficiently and effectively. It regulates the proper control of public finances by local authorities and the National Health Service, and is responsible for conducting inspections relating to Best Value Reviews and to the Comprehensive Performance Assessment of local councils. |
| Allowance | A payment towards expenses or costs. |
| Members' Allowances | Paid to Members in recognition of out of pocket expenses or direct costs of being a Member of the Council |
| Best Value | Relates to the Local Government Act, 1999 - the means by which the Council seeks to deliver high quality services in an efficient and cost effective way |
| BVPP | Best Value Performance Plan |
| Backbencher | A term applied to Members who are not part of the Cabinet |
| Budget | The annual summary of income and Expenditure |
| By-Election | An election which occurs between main (4 yearly) elections |
| Cabinet (Executive) | The executive body responsible for day-to-day running of the Council and |

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| | <p>the development of policy. Cabinet Members have portfolios or areas of responsibility (e.g. Housing) for which they take executive decisions.</p> |
| Call-in | <p>The process by which Overview and Scrutiny Committees consider whether a decision is properly taken or is the right decision</p> |
| Casting vote | <p>A vote made by a chairman to decide a matter when there is a tied vote</p> |
| Chair/Deputy Chair | <p>The person who chairs a body of the Council e.g. a Scrutiny Committee.</p> |
| Chief Executive | <p>The senior employee of the Council</p> |
| Citizen | <p>A member of the public who is not a Member or employee of the Council</p> |
| Coalition | <p>An alliance of groups or parties</p> |
| Code of Practice | <p>A set of rules, usually of expected behaviour</p> |
| Committee | <p>A formal body consisting of elected Members</p> |
| Census | <p>Since 1801, every 10 years the nation has set aside one day for the Census - a count of all people and households. It is the most complete source of information about the population that we have. The latest Census was held on Sunday 29 April</p> |

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| <p>Community Strategy</p> | <p>2001.</p> <p>Under the Local Government Act 2000, all Councils are required to work in partnership with the community as well as private, voluntary and public sector partners to develop a long-term strategy to promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of their local communities.</p> |
| <p>Co-Opted Member to a Scrutiny Committee</p> | <p>An individual with an area of expertise or experience who is invited to sit on a committee or Work Group (either for the Municipal year or for the duration of a specific review) to provide information and advice to maximise effective decision-making. A co-optee does not have voting rights.</p> |
| <p>Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)</p> | <p>A performance management framework for Councils to draw together all the assessments made by the inspectorates, external Audit and Government departments.</p> <p>The framework is called Comprehensive Performance Assessment, and Councils are rated in one of five categories (excellent, good, fair, weak, poor). One of the main outcomes of the assessment will be an action plan for improvement and a programme of work for the subsequent year.</p> |
| <p>Constitution</p> | <p>The set of rules governing the decision-making arrangements and activities of Northampton Borough Council.</p> |

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| Council | The term used for the organisation or in respect of the meeting of all of the Councillors |
| Councillor or Member | An elected local representative on the Council, a Councillor (sometimes called Member) represents the interests of the people who live in their ward and Northampton as a whole. |
| Council Tax | The money raised by the Council from residents of the Borough |
| Cross-cutting review | A cross-cutting review addresses a topic which covers more than one service area, and in certain cases, examines services provided by organisations other than the Council (e.g. the police, health trusts, voluntary sector organisations, etc). One of the aims of such a review is to ascertain how well the various agencies communicate and work together, and to put forward recommendations for improvements in this area. |
| Elected Mayor | An individual elected directly by the electorate (not Councillors) to run the Council |
| Employee | A paid official of the Council |
| Exempt information | Information which is exempt from the normal publication rules (normally |

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| <p>Forward Plan</p> | <p>under Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act, 1972)</p> <p>A list of key decisions which will be taken by the Council or Executive. The list is published at least four months before the decisions are to be taken and an annual plan is published for each Council year.</p> |
| <p>Head of Paid Service</p> | <p>A statutory role, usually combined with that of Chief Executive</p> |
| <p>Home Office</p> | <p>The Home Office is the Government department responsible for internal affairs in England and Wales, e.g. public order, public safety, immigration, etc.</p> |
| <p>Human Rights Act, 1998</p> | <p>The Act of Parliament that puts European Human Rights into UK law. The Council must by law consider the impact of its rights of the individuals.</p> |
| <p>Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA)</p> | <p>The Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) was established by and for Local Government in April 1999. It aims to: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - deliver practical solutions to improve local government performance - develop innovative approaches to ensure the transfer of knowledge within local government - act on behalf of local government as a whole, promoting joined-up, locally delivered services |

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| Independent Member | A Member who is not a member of a recognised political party also, in the context of the Standards Committee, refers to the non-elected member of the Committee. |
| Key Decision | An important decision which affects more than one ward of the Council or will involve spending of large amounts of money. They must be made public and can only be taken after appropriate notice |
| LA21 | Local Agenda 21 |
| Laws | Acts of Parliament or Regulations |
| Leader of the Council | The political head of the Council, usually the leader of the largest group of Members (or coalition) - responsible for the proposal of policies and day to day running of the Council. |
| Local Government Association (LGA) | The LGA represents the local authorities of England and Wales – a total of just under 500 authorities. There are 34 county councils, 36 metropolitan borough councils, 47 English unitary authorities, 33 London authorities, 238 shire district councils and 22 Welsh unitary authorities. The LGA also represents police authorities, through the Association of Police Authorities (APA); fire authorities and passenger transport authorities. |
| Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) | <p>The LGIU is an independent research and information organisation supported by over 150 councils and the local government trade unions.</p> <p>The LGIU aims to be an advocate for strong democratic local government</p> |

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| Local Government Ombudsman | <p>with the financial base and powers required to act with and on behalf of local communities.</p> <p>The nationally appointed person (department) which looks into complaints by the public about the way they have been treated by or the service they have received from councils</p> |
| Manager | <p>An employee who is responsible for managing employees, resources and services</p> |
| Member | <p>A Councillor, the elected representative of the community</p> |
| Member of the Public | <p>Anyone who is not a part of the Council</p> |
| Minutes | <p>The formal record of the proceedings of a meeting</p> |
| Monitoring Officer | <p>The officer appointed under the Local Government and Housing Act, 1989 to oversee the legality of the Councils actions and the ethical behaviour of Members and employees</p> |
| Northampton Borough Council (NBC) | <p>The local authority, which delivers borough council services to the whole of Northampton. These are mostly different to the services provided by Northamptonshire County Council.</p> |

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| Office of the Deputy Prime Minister | The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created as a central department in its own right in May 2002 and brings together key responsibilities for regional and local government, fire, housing, planning and regeneration, taking over work previously covered by the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR). |
| Officer | A paid official of the Council |
| Overview and Scrutiny | <p>The process offers both opportunities and challenges for Councillors and members of the public to improve the quality and delivery of services the Council provides to its local communities. The work of overview and scrutiny includes:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy Development and Review - Oversight of the Best Value Review Programme - Holding the executive to account |
| PI | Performance Indicator |
| Policy | A plan of action or approach to an issue - part of the Council's Policy Framework |
| Policy and Financial Framework | The Council's main policies and approach to managing its finances |

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| Political Proportionality/Balance | The system by which each group is represented on Council bodies in proportion to the number of members of the particular group relative to the size of the council as a whole |
| Portfolio Holder | A Member of the Executive with responsibilities for specific aspects of the Council's policy or work |
| Protocol | A document, which sets out, how people will behave or matters will be handled. |
| Referendum | A ballot of all electors of the Borough - in particular on whether they wish to have an elected mayor |
| Regulatory | The functions of the Council which "regulate" e.g. licensing and planning. |
| Rules of Procedure | The rules that govern the way specified matters must be handled. (previously known as Standing Orders) |
| Scrutiny | (See Overview and Scrutiny). The way in which Members oversee the work of the Council and investigate the needs of the community |
| Scrutiny Review | A study led by Scrutiny Councillors on a current issue, selected by the |

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| | <p>Committee. It aims to identify areas of good as well as poor practice, compare performance with other councils' countrywide, and challenge existing practice where relevant.</p> <p>The review will lead to recommendations for improvements to relevant Cabinet Members as well as outside agencies, such as health trusts. While these are not obliged to support the recommendations, effective consultation has been proven to lead to consensus and to Cabinet support for reviews undertaken.</p> |
| Senior Management Team (SMT) | The Chief Executive and Directors |
| Standards Board | The national body which oversees ethical standards of behaviour |
| S151 Officer | The finance officer employed under s151 of the Local Government Act, 1972 - who is responsible for the financial probity and arrangements of the Council |
| Ward | An area of Northampton for which elections are conducted |