

Article 1 - The council and the constitution

This article explains the council's priorities and values, and the constitution which is published on the council's website. The council has decided to operate a leader and cabinet model of governance.

2.1.1 Strategic priorities and values of the council

2.1.2 Priorities

2.1.3 The council has a [corporate plan](#) that sets out its priorities in order to improve the quality of life of the people in the county and the measures used to show how far those priorities have been met. The corporate plan is reviewed every four years. A delivery plan that sets out what actions the council will take to achieve the priorities of the corporate plan is agreed each year by the cabinet and progress is reported on a quarterly basis.

2.1.4 Values

2.1.5 The council is committed to maintaining high standards of conduct by its staff and councillors and has adopted the following values that underpin its work:

People: treating people fairly, with compassion, respect and dignity

Excellence: striving for excellence, and the appropriate quality of service, care and life in Herefordshire

Openness: being open, transparent and accountable

Partnership: working in partnership, and with all our diverse communities

Listening: actively listening to, understanding and taking into account people's views and needs

Environment: protecting and promoting our outstanding natural environment and heritage for the benefit of all

2.1.6 Everyone who is elected or appointed to public office, works for the council, or provides services on the council's behalf is required to follow general principles of ethical conduct. These principles are described in more detail in [part 5 section 1](#) of the constitution.

2.1.7 Powers of the council

2.1.8 The council's duties and powers are set out in the law of England. A duty requires the council to act in a particular way. A power gives the council discretion to act. The arrangements are complex and detailed.

2.1.9 The council must meet high ethical and other standards in everything it does; it must comply with legal requirements; and it must use public money and other resources economically, efficiently and effectively, accounting fully for its actions. In order to discharge these responsibilities, members and senior officers must ensure the proper governance of the council's affairs and the stewardship of its resources. The council has therefore adopted a code of corporate governance (Part 5 section 1) which sets out how this will be done.

2.1.10 Powers are exercised by the council and its functions carried out in accordance with the functions scheme (part 3). The council operates the leader and cabinet model of executive arrangements. A description of these executive arrangements is set out in a schedule to this part 2.

2.1.11 The constitution

2.1.12 This constitution and its appendices form the constitution of the County of Herefordshire District Council (known as Herefordshire Council).

2.1.13 Purpose of the constitution

2.1.14 The purpose of the constitution is to set out in a single place and clear language how the council works and how it makes decisions to

- (a) enable the council to provide clear leadership to the community in partnership with citizens, businesses and other organisations
- (b) support the active involvement of citizens in the process of council decision-making
- (c) help councillors represent their constituents more effectively
- (d) enable decisions to be taken efficiently and effectively
- (e) create a powerful and effective means of holding decision-makers to public account
- (f) ensure that no one will review or scrutinise a decision in which they were directly involved
- (g) ensure that those responsible for decision making are clearly identifiable to local people and that they explain the reasons for decisions
- (h) provide a means of improving the delivery of services to the local community

2.1.15 Meaning of the constitution

2.1.16 If the constitution gives the council a choice about what to do, the council must choose the option that it thinks is closest to the purpose of the constitution in paragraph 2.1.14

2.1.17 Review and changes to the constitution

2.1.18 Reviews and changes to the constitution will be in accordance with the functions scheme (part 3).

2.1.19 Suspension of the constitution

2.1.20 The only power to suspend the constitution is in accordance with the council procedure rules (part 4).