

Part 1 – Introduction to the Cooperative Council Constitution

Contents

1- The Constitution	11
2 - The Council's Cooperative Ambition	12
3 – Councillors	14
4 – The rights of the public	17
5 – Decision Making	19
6 – The Mayor	22
7 - The Council's Decision Making Structure	23
8 – The Cabinet	24
9 – Scrutiny	26
10 – Regulatory Committees	27
11 – The Standards Committee	28
12 - Health and Wellbeing Board	29
13 – Joint arrangements and principle consultative and partnership bodies	30
14 – Officers	32
15 – Finance, Contracts and Legal Matters	33
16 – Changing, interpreting and suspending the Constitution	34

1- The Constitution

The London Borough of Lambeth's Constitution sets out how the Council operates and how decisions are made. This includes a great deal of detail which we are required to provide about committees, their powers and procedures, financial processes, rules of procedure and legal matters. It has been our aim to provide this detail in a clear way so that people can find out what they want to know.

Just as importantly, the Constitution reflects our ambition to become a Cooperative Council and shows how that ambition will come to affect the way the Council operates and the way decisions are made. This is outlined in section 2, below.

Against this background, the purpose of the Constitution is to:-

- establish a comprehensive and cooperative framework for how the Council makes decisions with and on behalf of local residents;
- enable the Council to provide strong community leadership in cooperation with local residents, businesses and other organisations;
- support the active involvement and empowerment of citizens in the process of local authority decision-making;
- help councillors represent their constituents more effectively;
- enable decisions to be taken efficiently and effectively;
- create an effective means of holding itself to public account through Overview & Scrutiny
- ensure that those responsible for decision making are clearly identifiable to local people and that they explain the reasons for decisions;
- provide a means of improving the delivery of both personalised and community services through the empowerment of citizens and communities in the delivery and design of services;
- promote high standards of conduct and ensure that the rights and duties of individual councillors are clearly set out.

2 - The Council's Cooperative Ambition

Lambeth has stated its ambition to become a Cooperative Council. We need, over time, to develop a new relationship between the Council and local people and new ways of working for our councillors and officers. The Constitution therefore sets a framework within which these things can happen rather than a rigid set of rules for all time.

The Council believes that the challenges facing the borough can only be met by recasting the relationship between the Council, and the citizens and communities of Lambeth. Citizens are valuable sources of insight and expertise, and are often best placed to identify solutions to meet the needs of their local area. The Cooperative Council ambition is about putting the resources of the state at the disposal of citizens so that they can take control of both services and the places in which they live. It is about finding new ways in which citizens can participate in the decisions that affect their lives.

Lambeth is one of the most diverse places in the UK and Europe. In a very real sense it is “the world in one borough”. It is important that every community feels at home here, secure both in their separate identity and also as part of Lambeth as a whole. Lambeth Council must therefore work, in a cooperative fashion, with all its communities to ensure their ambitions are met because no single model of service provision will be sufficient.

We will measure and judge our progress towards becoming a Cooperative Council by the extent to which all the communities who live and work in Lambeth are constructively engaged in decisions that affect their lives. The Council established the Cooperative Commission in 2010 to work with Lambeth's citizens to develop the vision of the Cooperative Council. The Commission made a series of recommendations and conclusions to guide the Council and its partners as they seek to turn the vision into a reality. The Commission agreed on five principles (known as the Cooperative Council Principles) that set out the type of local leader Lambeth Council should be, and the way in which services should be designed, delivered and made more accessible.

Principle 1: The Council as the local democratic leader and civil society partner: we have a unique position as Lambeth's democratically elected political leader and working with other community groups to encourage and support a vibrant and strong civil society.

Principle 2: Public services planned together and delivered through a variety of organisations, which will improve outcomes, empower citizens and users, and strengthen civil society: staff will play a vital role in providing expertise and experience and we need to align this with citizens working as equal partners.

Principle 3: Citizens incentivised to take part in the provision of public services: the relationship of cooperation must be underpinned by reciprocity.

Principle 4: Public services enabling residents to engage in civil society through employment opportunities: if unemployed citizens help with the delivery of local public services, Lambeth Council should provide opportunities for these individuals to develop their skills in a way that expands their employment opportunities.

Principle 5: Public services accessible from a variety of locations: this is about enabling access to services through a variety of locations, both physical and web-based.

These Principles set out the ways in which our ambition to become a Cooperative Council will be realised. This is reflected in this Part of the Constitution and in what it says about the roles of people and the way decisions are made. It will also be reflected in a review, over time, of all our strategic plans and policies, starting with those we consider to be most important, to ensure that a proper basis is in place for informed decisions to be made which support and develop the Cooperative Council ambition. Our next steps will be to review and reform the way the Council's officers, services and commissioning work to ensure they reflect our cooperative ambitions.

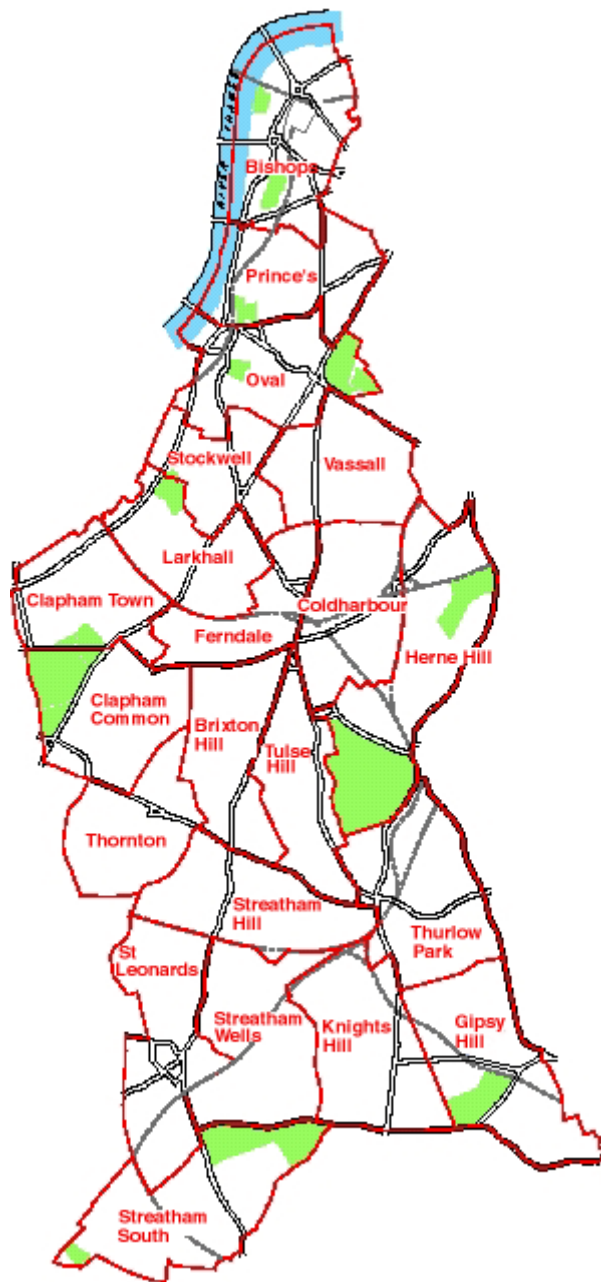
Developing the Cooperative Council Constitution

The Constitution is a work in progress. It reflects some new structures and ways of working, and empowers citizens to get involved, but there is much more to be done. It is anticipated that some of the governance structures and rules which currently apply, and which are set out in this Constitution, will need to be more fundamentally changed to enable us to truly become a Cooperative Council.

3 – Councillors

3.1 Composition

The Council has 63 councillors elected by the voting electorate every 4 years. Councillors are democratically accountable to residents of their respective wards. This means that councillors can play a key role in linking the Council and the decisions it makes to the needs of local communities and in engaging local communities in the decisions which affect them. There are 21 wards in Lambeth and each one is represented by three councillors. The overriding duty of councillors is to the whole community, but they have a special duty to their constituents, including those who did not vote for them.



All councillors meet together as the Council. Meetings of the Council are normally open to the public. Council is the supreme body and has powers to decide the Council's overall policies and set the budget each year. Council also sets the policy framework under which the Cabinet will operate.

3.2 Eligibility

Only registered voters living or working within the borough for the previous 12 months prior to an election will be eligible to stand as a councillor. A person must be a British subject or citizen of the Republic of Ireland or the Commonwealth, or a relevant citizen of the European Union, be at least 18 years old, and:

1. be and continue to be an elector for the borough; or
2. have been, for the whole of the twelve months preceding, occupied as owner or tenant of any land or other premises in the borough; or
3. have a principal place of work during that twelve months in the Borough

3.3 Election and terms of office

The regular election of councillors will be held every four years, normally in May. The next Council election will be held in 2014. The terms of office for councillors will start on the fourth day after being elected and will finish on the fourth day after the date of the next regular election.

3.4 Key roles

All councillors will:-

- (a) support and promote the Cooperative Council Principles;
- (b) work together with all communities to encourage and support a vibrant and strong civil society and help empower citizens to play a strengthened role in the coproduction of public services.
- (c) collectively be the ultimate policy-makers and carry out a number of strategic and corporate management functions;
- (d) contribute to the good governance and strong community leadership of the area and actively encourage both citizen and community participation in decision making;
- (e) effectively represent the interests of their constituents, bring their views into the Council's decision-making process and advise constituents on the best course of action to progress issues raised, giving the necessary personal support including attending relevant meetings ;
- (f) balance different interests identified within the ward and represent the ward as a whole;
- (g) deal with individual casework and act as an advocate for constituents in resolving particular concerns or grievances fairly and impartially;
- (h) In particular, to consider and advise constituents on the best course of action to progress issues raised, giving the necessary personal support including attending relevant meetings. Support could include:

- Advising on methods to get involved in Council and committee meetings or speak on behalf of the constituent at those meetings.
 - Arrange meetings with, or make representations to, appropriate officers or Cabinet Members.
- (i) Submit service requests or Member Enquiries.
 - (j) Respond to constituents' enquiries and representations, fairly and impartially;
 - (k) Participate in the governance and management of the Council as a whole;
 - (l) Be available to represent the Council on other bodies; and
 - (m) Comply with the Members Code of Conduct.

4 – The rights of the public

Members of the public who live, work or study in the borough have a number of rights in their dealings with the Council.

4.1 Voting and petitions

Residents on the electoral roll have the right to:

- (i) Vote
- (ii) Sign a petition requesting a referendum to replace the Council's Leader and Cabinet political management model.
- (iii) Sign a petition requesting the establishment of a parish council or similar Community Governance review.

Everyone who lives, works or studies in the borough has the right to create and sign petitions on any matter within the Council's purview.

4.2 Information

The public have the right to:-

- (i) contact their local councillors about any matters of concern to them
- (ii) attend meetings of the Council and its committees and Cabinet except where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, and the meeting is therefore held in private;
- (iii) have access to the forward plan showing what key decisions will be taken by the Cabinet and officers and when;
- (iv) inspect reports and background papers, and any public records of decisions made by the Council and the executive in printed copy format at Lambeth Town Hall (public reports and minutes are published on the website);
- (v) inspect the following documents:
 - (a) the Constitution
 - (b) the register of member interests
 - (c) the Council's accounts (and make their views known to the external auditor)
 - (d) monthly expenditure data reports
 - (e) Pay and remuneration policies for chief and senior officers.
- (iv) make a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to see information held by the Council.

4.3 Participation

The public have the right to and are encouraged to:

- (i) participate in the Council's meetings in accordance with the relevant rules of procedures for the meetings;
- (ii) ask public questions at Council committees (normally Overview & Scrutiny committee) on any aspect of the Council's functions,
- (iii) contribute to or be co-opted on any of the scrutiny committees, commissions and reviews,

- (iv) take part in the Council's consultation activities,
- (v) petition the Council (including via e-petitions) on any matters of concern to local people,
- (vi) be part of a deputation to raise a particular issue at Council meetings,
- (vii) initiate a Community Right to Buy, Community Right to Build, Community Right to Bid, Community Right to Challenge or participate in Neighbourhood Planning, as identified by the Localism Act 2011.

In addition to these more standard rights seen in all local authorities, in Lambeth the council has greater ambitions for the rights of local the public. The Council will actively encourage and support members of the public to engage in all that we do, by:

- (i) continuing to develop a vibrant and strong civil society.
- (ii) planning and delivering public services to improve outcomes, empower citizens and users, and strengthen society.
- (iii) Incentivising citizens to take part in the provision of public services.
- (iv) supporting employment opportunities and help unemployed residents developing their skills in a way that expands their employment opportunities.
- (v) ensuring services are as accessible as possible.

4.4 Complaints

We acknowledge that things do not always go to plan and we are committed to working together with our residents and service users to address problems before they need to become escalated as formal complaints. However, we recognise that in some instances a complaint will be necessary. In this event, Lambeth residents and service users have the right to complain to:-

- (i) the Council itself under its complaints scheme;
- (ii) the Ombudsman after using the Council's own complaints scheme; and
- (iii) the Council's Monitoring Officer (Director of Corporate Affairs) about councillors' conduct.

5 – Decision Making

5.1 How decisions are made

This section sets out the legal framework within which decisions are made by the Council and outlines how, over time, the approach to decision making may change to reflect the Cooperative Council ambition.

Decisions taken by the Council are divided, by law, into two types; executive and non-executive.

Executive Decisions

Executive decisions can be taken by Cabinet or by:

- individual councillors or officers; or
- committees of councillors or councillors and others

In each case, these decisions are taken under authority of Cabinet. When key decisions are to be discussed or made (see below for the definition), these are published in the executive's forward plan. Executive decisions have to be taken in line with the Council's overall Budget and Policy Framework.

Non-Executive Decisions

Non executive decisions cannot be taken by the Cabinet. Non executive decisions include setting the Council's overall Budget and Policy Framework, planning applications and licensing applications. With the exception of the issues covered by the Budget and Policy Framework, these decisions can also be taken by officers under the authority of Council.

5.2 Responsibility for decision-making

The Council will maintain a record of what part of the Council, or which individual has responsibility for particular types of decisions. Where individuals or committees are given the right to take decisions under the authority of Cabinet, a record will be kept showing:

- who has the right to take the decision
- where a committee has the right to take the decision, how the committee is to be made up and what (if any) particular voting and quorum rules apply
- the scope of the authority granted and any limitations or conditions attached to it

- for any new grant of authority, and in particular any grant of authority to an individual, how the grant reflects and supports the Cooperative Council Principles and in particular how communities affected by decisions are to be actively involved

5.3 Principles of decision-making

All decisions in the Council will be made in accordance with the following principles:-

- (i) Having regard to the Cooperative Council Principles and any relevant strategy or policy document;
- (ii) Having regard to involving citizens in decision making;
- (iii) Where decisions are taken by individual councillors or committees of councillors, they are taken in consultation with relevant officers and citizens so as to ensure that a proper basis for decision making is in place;
- (iv) Proportionality (i.e. the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome);
- (v) Due consultation and coproduction with citizens informed by professional advice from officers;
- (vi) Respect for human rights and equalities;
- (vii) A presumption in favour of transparency and openness;
- (viii) Clarity of aims and desired outcomes;

5.4 Types of decisions

- **Decisions reserved to the full Council**

Certain decisions will be made by the full Council and will not be delegated to any other body or individual.

- **Key decisions**

“A key decision is an executive decision, which is likely -

- (a) result in the local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the relevant local authority's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- (b) be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards or electoral divisions in the area of the relevant local authority.”

These decisions can be made the Cabinet collectively or individually, or by an officer.

At Lambeth, we have chosen to go beyond the legal requirement, as set out above, by defining a key decision as an executive decision that:

EITHER

1. Requires an amendment to the Community Plan Outcomes Framework or requires a recommendation to Council to amend the Budget and Policy Framework.

OR

2. Financial: Result in the local authority incurring expenditure, raising income or making of savings in excess of £500,000.

OR

3. Community Impact:

Has a significant impact on:

- communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in Lambeth, or
- the wellbeing of the community or the quality of service provided to a significant number of people living or working in an area, or
- Communities of interest

A decision taker may only make a key decision in accordance with the requirements of the Cabinet Procedure Rules and the Access to Information Procedure Rules.

5.5 Decision-making Procedures

The Council, Cabinet, committees and individuals will follow their relevant procedure rules, the Scheme of Delegation and the principles set out in this section when taking decisions.

5.6 Decision-making bodies

A summary of Lambeth's decision making bodies is set out below. The specific terms of reference are covered in more detail in section 2 of this Constitution.

Executive decision-making:

Cabinet

Health & Wellbeing Board

Non-executive decision-making:

Council

Corporate Committee

Appointments Committee

Licensing Committee

Planning Applications Committee

Standards Committee

6 – The Mayor

6.1 The Mayor

The Council will appoint the Mayor and Deputy Mayor at the annual meeting from amongst the councillors.

6.2 Role and function of the Mayor

The Mayor (and in their absence the Deputy Mayor) will have the following roles and functions:-

6.2.1 Ceremonial Role

The Mayor is a symbol of the authority of the Council and an expression of social cohesion. The Mayor is the first citizen of the Borough. The Mayor will attend such civic and ceremonial functions as s/he or the Council decides are appropriate. The Mayor represents the Council and gives recognition, appreciation and encouragement to all groups and individuals who contribute to the well-being of the borough's residents and to building social cohesion. The Mayor will act non-politically and in the interests of the whole Council.

6.2.2 Chairing the Council Meeting

As the Chair of the Council, the Mayor will have the following responsibilities:

- (i) To uphold and promote the Constitution, and to interpret the Constitution when necessary;
- (ii) To preside over meetings of the Council so that its business can be carried out efficiently;
- (iii) To ensure that the Council meeting is a forum for the debate of matters of concern to the local community and the place at which councillors can be held to account;
- (iv) To promote the Cooperative Council Principles and public involvement in the Council's cooperative activities.

7 - The Council's Decision making structures

7.1 The Role of the Full Council

The Council is the supreme political body of the London Borough of Lambeth made up of all 63 elected councillors. The Council meets to decide on the policies and plans which will constitute the Budget and Policy Framework, will set the Council Tax and budget for the following year, undertake all other non-executive functions (unless undertaken by Corporate Committee on its behalf), and approve any Housing Land Transfers.

8 –The Cabinet

8.1 Introduction

There are 10 Cabinet Members. The Leader of the Council appoints and allocates portfolios to the Deputy Leaders and seven other Cabinet Members. The Leader has the power to remove and/or replace any Cabinet Member.

The Cabinet has the following responsibilities:

- (i) Undertaking all executive decision making except those decisions delegated under the arrangements described in Part 1, Section 5.
- (ii) To make decisions collectively.
- (iii) To propose the overall Budget and Policy Framework to the Council.
- (iv) To publish a forward plan of all the key decisions to be made by the Cabinet, individual cabinet members and officers.
- (v) If it so wishes, to establish one or more committees to discharge specific executive functions, or to establish working groups or panels to review or advise on specific issues.
- (vi) To recommend to Council, or approve and adopt the relevant plans and strategies

8.2 Leader of the Council

The Leader is a councillor elected to the position of Leader of the Council at the annual meeting of Council held after the four-yearly local election. The Leader holds office until:

- 1) s/he resigns from office; or
- 2) s/he is no longer a councillor; or
- 3) on the expiry date of his/her fixed term of office as Leader which is the date of the post-election annual meeting which follows his/her election as Leader (i.e. in May 2014); or
- (4) s/he is removed from office by Council resolution.
If the Council passes a resolution to remove the Leader, a new Leader is to be elected –
 - (a) at the meeting at which the Leader is removed from office; or
 - (b) at a subsequent meeting.

If a vacancy in the office of Leader of the Council arises for the reasons set out at (1) and (2) above (i.e. the former Leader resigns or is no longer a councillor), a new Leader is to be elected at the next scheduled meeting of the Council or at an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council, convened for this purpose in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 3.1.

8.3 Deputy Leader of the Council

The Leader must appoint one of the Cabinet Members as Deputy Leader, who will hold office until the end of the Leader's term of office, unless s/he resigns as Deputy Leader, ceases to be a councillor or is removed from office by the Leader. Where a vacancy occurs, the Leader must appoint another Deputy Leader. The Deputy

Leader must, if for any reason the Leader is unable to act or the office of Leader becomes vacant (and pending the election of a new Leader by the Council), discharge all roles and functions of the Leader. If, for any reason, both the Leader and Deputy Leader are unable to act or both offices become vacant, the Cabinet must act in the Leader's place or must arrange for another Cabinet Member to act in his/her place.

8.4 Other Cabinet Members

Cabinet Members hold office until:

- (a) they resign from office; or
- (b) they are no longer a councillor; or
- (c) the expiry date of their term of office (i.e. at the date of the Annual Meeting of the Council in any year) save that the Leader may remove the Cabinet Member from office at an earlier date.

8.5 Deputy Cabinet Members and Lead Members

Other Members of the Council may, from time to time, be designated by the Leader (subject to report for information to Council) as a Deputy Cabinet Member, Champion or Lead Member for a particular activity or range of activities. Such a Member will not be a Cabinet Member and will not participate in decision making but may work closely with the relevant Cabinet Member. Whilst a Deputy Cabinet Member shall not be a Member of any Scrutiny committee or sub-committee, this is permissible for Champions.

In addition, the Leader of the Council may appoint Community Champions to assist Cabinet with particular issues. These positions will be entirely voluntary with no allowances or expenses attached. It is anticipated that as we involve citizens more in all aspects of the council's work that Community Champions may act as a mechanism to acknowledge the work of particular citizens.

The Leader may also notify Council that the Cabinet are delegating some of their powers to individual officers, committees of Cabinet, or if Cabinet wish to appoint an advisory panel.

9 – Scrutiny

9.1 Introduction

Scrutiny is a key democratic mechanism for holding public-service decision makers and providers in Lambeth to account and facilitating the improvement of public services in the area.

Working with citizens and professionals, scrutiny councillors undertake the following roles:

- (i) Monitor, question and investigate the performance of the council's Cabinet, individual decision makers and council services taking into account the Cooperative Council Principles and;
- (ii) Develop, review and make recommendations for the improvement of services and activities commissioned by the council;
- (iii) Hold the Cabinet and officers making decisions on behalf of the council to account in public; and
- (iv) Scrutinise other public service providers' work and its impact on the local community

Effective scrutiny enhances accountability, ensures transparency of decision-making, contributes to service improvement and acts as a 'check and balance' on decision-makers.

10 – Regulatory Committees

Legislation excludes specific issues from being Executive decisions, including: the Council's overall Budget and Policy Framework; quasi-judicial matters (such as planning and licensing applications); issues related to staffing, pensions, audit and standards, amongst others. The following table lists main committees that have been set up to deal with these types of issues.

Regulatory Committees do their work by reference to strategy and policy documents adopted by the Council and the Council is committed over time to ensuring that all these documents reflect and support the Cooperative Council ambition. Regulatory Committees are also required to consider the Cooperative Council Principles so far as they may lawfully do so when discharging their functions. The terms of reference for the following committees are set in part 2, section 1 of the constitution.

- Planning Applications Committee
- Licensing Committee
- Corporate Committee
- Appointments Committee

11 – The Standards Committee

11.1 Introduction

The Standards Committee is responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by councillors and non-elected co-opted representatives. The Standards Committee is required to consider the Cooperative Council Principles so far as it may lawfully do so when discharging its functions.

11.2 Membership

Members of the Standards Committee are appointed by Council. Membership is cross-party. Non-voting co-opted members may also be appointed.

11.3 Independent person(s)

The Council must appoint at least one independent person, whose views are to be sought and taken into account before any decision is made on an allegation that the Members' Code of Conduct may have been breached. Independent person(s) will be sought by advertisement in the press. Prospective candidates will be required to go through a recruitment process led by the Chief Executive, who will recommend the appointment/s to the Council. The Chief Executive may take into account the extent to which prospective candidates understand the Cooperative Council Principles and their application to the work of the Council in making his/her recommendation.

An independent person must be impartial and will not be appointed if:

- (a) s/he is, or has been during the previous 5 years, a councillor, co-opted member or officer of the Council or is related to, or is a close friend of a councillor, co-opted member or officer of the Council. (Note that the reference to a 'co-opted member' does not include a former independent member of the Council's Standards Committee).

Co-opted members will not be entitled to vote at the Standards Committee meetings.

12 – Health and Wellbeing Board

From April 2013, Local authorities, such as Lambeth Council, are required to establish Health & Wellbeing Boards. Their purpose is to build strong and effective partnerships, which improve the commissioning and delivery of services across the NHS and local government, leading to improved health and wellbeing for local people. The partnership arrangements underpinning the Board were established by following our cooperative principles through a co-production approach

13 - Joint arrangements and principal consultative and partnership bodies

13.1 Introduction

The Council has a number of methods of establishing bodies for decision making or consultation with other local authorities, partners, residents and officer representatives. These bodies may be set up for a specific purpose or to more generally promote the economic, social, or environmental well-being of its area. In all arrangements of this kind the Council will inform other parties of the Cooperative Council Principles and their application to the work of the Council and will seek so far as possible to agree an approach to joint working which reflects the Cooperative Council Principles.

13.2 Joint arrangements

- (i) Joint arrangements with other local authorities may be established to exercise executive and/or non-executive functions.
- (ii) The Leader of the Council must agree to the establishment of joint committees that exercise Executive powers. Council must approve the establishment of joint committees that exercise non-executive powers.
- (iii) Political balance rules apply to joint committees that exercise non-executive powers and where the Council appoints to three or more seats. If any executive functions are to be exercised then a Cabinet Member must be appointed if Council appoints to two or more seats on the committee.
- (iv) Political balance rules do not apply to joint arrangements that only exercise executive powers. Only Cabinet Members may be appointed to these joint committees.
- (v) Details of all joint arrangements are listed in Part 2 Section 5 of the Constitution (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

13.3 Principal Consultative and Partnership Bodies

The following list is likely to increase as we continue to develop our cooperative working.

Name of body	Summary description
Local Strategic Partnership Board (Lambeth First)	The council works with key agencies, businesses and the community as part of a Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) to promote economic, social and environmental well-being of the borough's residents. The LSP oversees a number of theme partnerships such as Safer Lambeth and the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership

Name of body	Summary description
Young Lambeth Cooperative (YLC)	The YLC is a multi stakeholder Cooperative body which has been set up as a separate legal entity working to cooperative principles as an Industrial and Provident Society to improve the opportunities for children and young people in Lambeth to co-ordinate and support the early adopter services which are being provided by a range of provider organisations under the early adopter programme and to support the development of new cooperative and mutual arrangements for the provision of services for children and young people in Lambeth
Housing Related Forums	Resident Involvement forms an intrinsic part of cooperative approach to delivering a quality housing management service. Key bodies to support this include Tenants' Council. Leaseholders' Council, Area Hosing Forums and Tenant Management Organisations
Lambeth Living Housing Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO)	An ALMO manages Lambeth's council housing. It has it's own constitution and Board to oversee its decision making. The board includes local residents, council nominees and independent members.
Other Forums	There are many other forums that are regularly consulted by the Council. These include bodies such as: Pensioners Forum, the Head Teachers Forum, the Governors Forum, Parks Management Advisory Committees and the Joint Strategy Forum comprising our Trade Unions

14 – Officers

14.1 The Council's Staff

The Council has people working for it (called 'officers') to give advice, implement decisions and manage the day-to-day delivery of its services and activities. Where decisions are made by the Council, the Cabinet or under powers delegated under the arrangements set out in Part 2 Section 4, the role of officers is to provide information and professional advice so as to provide a proper basis for decision making. The Chief Executive is the Head of Paid Service and is responsible for all staff in the authority. Some officers have a specific duty to ensure that the Council acts within the law and uses its resources wisely. A code of practice governs the relationships between officers and councillors (**Error! Reference source not found.**). All the Council's staff need to be aware of the Cooperative Council Principles and are required to act consistently with them in the functions they carry out, and in the advice they give.

A full list of Chief Officers is contained within the scheme of delegation.

15 – Finance, Contracts and Legal Matters

15.1 Financial management

The management of the Council's financial affairs will be conducted in accordance with the Financial Regulations. The Council's detailed financial systems and processes, setting out how the regulations will be implemented, are contained in the Financial Procedures appended to the Financial Regulations in Part 2 Section 4 (**Error! Reference source not found.**)

15.2 Financial Procedures & Lambeth Procurement Guide

Every contract made by the Council will comply with the Financial Procedures and the Lambeth Procurement Guide.

15.3 Authentication of documents

Where a document is required to support any legal procedure or proceedings on behalf of the Council, it will be signed or authenticated by either the relevant officer, as set out in the scheme of delegation, or as required by law.

Any contract entered into on behalf of the Council in the course of the discharge of any of its functions shall be made in writing and must be signed by at least two officers of the Council. Contracts in excess of £100,000 will usually be made under the Common Seal of the Council and attested to.

15.4 Common Seal of the Council

The Common Seal of the Council is the official seal used to authenticate official council documentation. It will be kept in a safe place in the custody of the Director of Corporate Affairs. A decision of the Council, or of any part of it, will be sufficient authority for sealing any document necessary to give effect to the decision. The Common Seal will be affixed to those documents which in the opinion of the Director of Corporate Affairs should be sealed.

The affixing of the Common Seal will be attested to by either the Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer, Director of Corporate Affairs, the Head of Legal Services or their duly authorised nominees and a record shall be kept of all documents sealed.

16 – Changing, interpreting and suspending the Constitution

16.1 Duty to monitor and review the Constitution (Director of Corporate Affairs (Monitoring Officer))

The Director of Corporate Affairs (the Monitoring Officer) will work with citizens and members to monitor and review the operation of the Constitution to ensure that the principles and aims of the Constitution are given full effect. The Corporate Committee and Standards Committee may make such recommendations to Council as they see fit in relation to proposed changes to the Constitution.

16.2 Protocol for monitoring and reviewing the Constitution by the Director of Corporate Affairs (Monitoring Officer)

A key role of the Director of Corporate Affairs is to be responsible for improvements and changes to the Constitution and to make recommendations for ways in which it could be amended. In undertaking this task the Monitoring Officer may:

- observe Member and officer meetings;
- undertake an audit trail of a sample of decisions;
- record and analyse issues raised with him/her by councillors, officers, the public and other relevant stakeholders; and
- compare practices in this Council with those in other comparable authorities, or national examples of best practice.
- work in partnership with a range of citizens and members.

16.3 Changes to the Constitution

Unless expressly provided for elsewhere in the Constitution, only the full Council will approve changes to the Constitution after consideration of the proposal by the Monitoring Officer, Corporate Committee and/or the Standards Committee.