

APPENDIX 'A'

Guide to the Constitution

We are here to provide essential services across East Herts, working with agencies such as Hertfordshire County Council and the Police to meet the needs of everyone who lives, works or visits the district.

The decisions we make on your behalf are really important. We want to encourage you to have more say in how our organisation is run, the types of services we provide and our plans for the future.

This guide is a summary of our Constitution. It explains how the different parts of the Council work together; how we make our decisions and how you can have your say. You can see the full Constitution on our web site at -----***link to current version***

The People who make up your Council

Councillors

Our organisation is made up of 50 Councillors elected by you at the local elections every four years. There is an up-to-date list of Councillors on our website -----
link

The district is divided into wards, you can find out who your local ward members are on our web site. - ***link***

To stand for election, Councillors have to live or work in East Herts, the most recent elections for Ward members were held in 2007.

Councillors have two main roles:

- Represent the whole community by making decisions about our services, finances and policies.
- Represent the interests of people in their wards.

Councillors are your vital link to us and will give you advice and help you if you need it. You can phone, email or write to your Councillor. Their contact details are on our website ...***link*** or you can contact Democratic Services on 01279 655261.

Staff

We have about 350 staff who are responsible for putting our decisions into action and delivering our services, our staff are led by the Chief Executive and the management team.

Our services are spread across the following divisions:

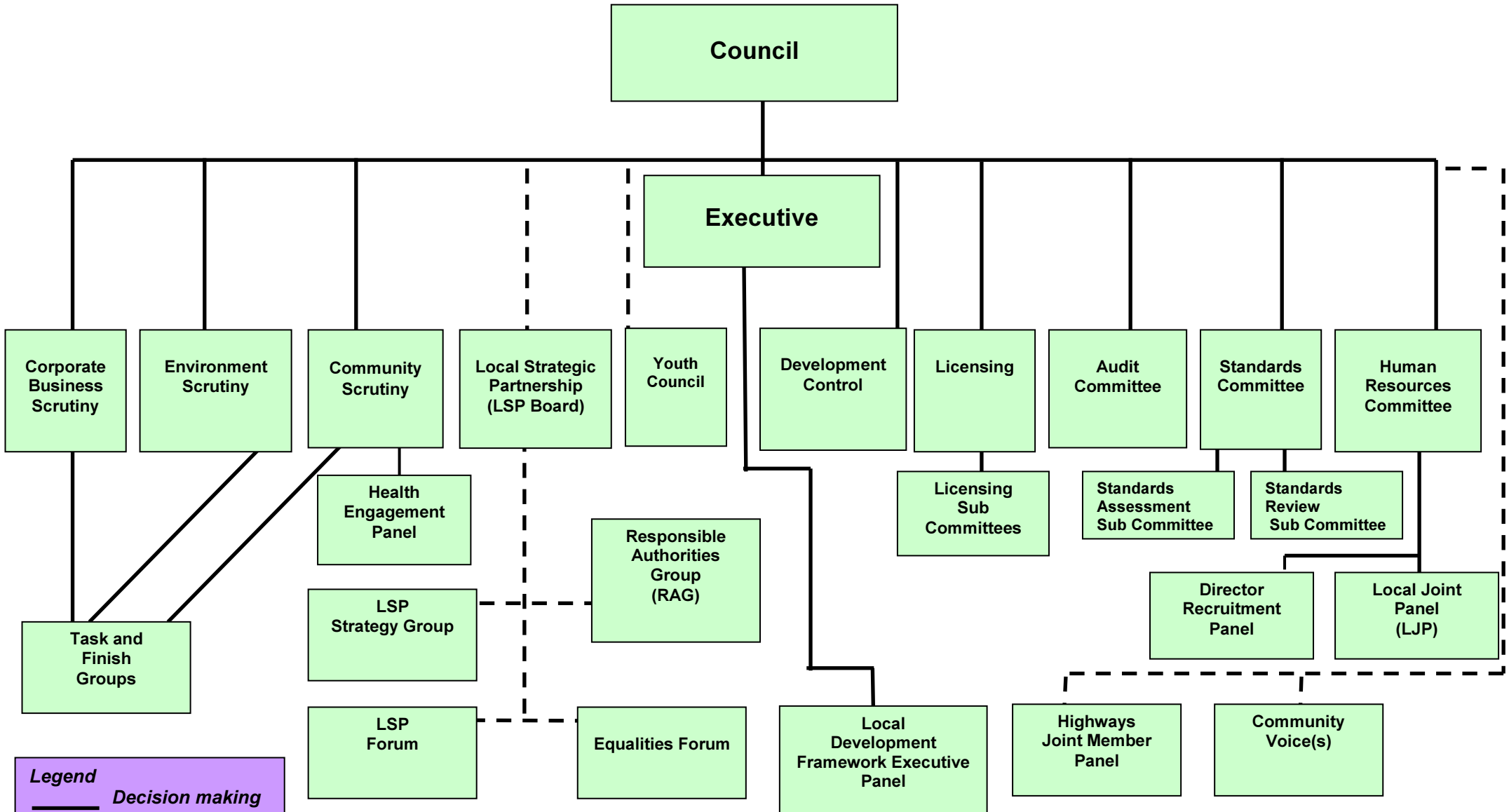
Internal Services	Neighbourhood Services	Customer & Community Services	Strategic Direction
<i>Business Support Services Democratic and Legal Support Services Financial Support Services People and Organisational Services Revenues and Benefits</i>	<i>Community Safety and Licensing Health and Housing Planning and Building Control</i>	<i>Community and Cultural Services Customer Services and New Media Environmental Services</i>	<i>Communications Performance and Policy</i>

Council meetings

Our Council meetings aim to:

- Involve people more in their communities and the way they are run.
- Involve the community more fully in our work.
- Action your views more effectively.
- Make it clear where decisions are made and who is responsible for them.
- Improve joint working arrangements between the Council and its partners.

Council Structure September 2008



Legend

———— Decision making

- - - - Consultative

We make our major decisions about our business at meetings. The meetings are open to the public and we publicise the details beforehand. Everyone has the right to attend these meetings (although we will ask you to leave when we are considering personal or confidential matters).

The two main decision-making meetings are Council and the Executive.

LINK THESE TO THE STRUCTURE CHART as hover links

Council

Council is responsible for:

- Agreeing main Council policies
- Setting our yearly budget and Council Tax.

All 50 Councillors are members of the Council.

The Executive

The Executive is responsible for:

- Developing policies and budgets for the Council to agree.
- Making decisions about our strategies, services and finances based Council policies

Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee

Responsible for:

- Monitoring the performance of the Council.
- **Developing and scrutinising policies for:** communications, the Local Strategic Partnership, customer services, financial and support services.
- Scrutinising the draft budget which is recommended to the Council by the Executive.

Community Scrutiny Committee

Responsible for:

- **Developing and scrutinising policies for:** licensing, CCTV building control, environmental health, Police liaison, development control, emergency planning, community development, leisure, housing, and health scrutiny.

Environment Scrutiny Committee

Responsible for:

- **Developing and scrutinising policies for:** planning policy, transport, parking, economic development, energy conservation, waste management, parks, conservation and the green agenda.

Task and Finish groups

Look at specific topics or policies and report back to the relevant Scrutiny Committee.

Health Engagement Panel

Scrutinises local health issues and health care provision.

Development Control Committee

The committee meets monthly to consider planning applications.

Licensing Committee

The Licensing Committee deals with licensing and regulatory matters.

Licensing Sub Committees

Deal with licenses for the sale of alcohol, gambling, taxis and other licenses.

Human Resources Committee

The Committee deal with human resource policies and procedures.

Audit Committee

The Audit Committee provides independent assurance of the adequacy of risk management, independent scrutiny of the Council's financial performance and non-financial systems and controls.

Standards Committee

The Standards Committee promotes and maintains high standards of behaviour by District, Town and Parish Councillors and their employees.

Standards Assessment Sub Committee

Assess complaints made by the public against Councillors.

Standards Review Sub Committee

Reviews the decisions of the Assessment Sub Committee.

Local Joint Panel

A consultative panel between the Council and its employees.

Director Recruitment Panel

Appoints Director and Chief Executive. *link to officer structure*

Highways Joint Member Panel

A partnership panel with Hertfordshire County Council which provides advice and recommendations on the management and maintenance of the roads network.

Community Voices

Reaches out to the public to listen to their views on a range of topics.

Responsible Authorities Group

Partnership working with the Police with responsibility for community safety and crime reduction.

Local Strategic Partnership Board

The LSP Board has overarching responsibility for the development and delivery of the **community strategy** [link](#) It has strategic responsibility to matters relating to the Hertfordshire-wide LSP and the Local Area Agreement. [link](#)

Local Strategic Strategy Group

Advises the LSP Board on strategic partnership and LAA matters, is responsible for the development and delivery of the community strategy and action plan and identifying local contributions to the delivery of the LAA.

Local Strategic Forum

Partnership working with local organisations and agencies – sharing ideas and information, creating new initiatives, identifies ways of achieving priorities set out in the strategy.

Equalities Forum

Consults with local organisations and agencies on equalities issues.

Youth Council

A body of young people (13-19) who represent the views and voices of young people in the community.

Local Development Framework Executive Panel

Makes recommendations to The Executive on issues associated with East Herts Local Development Framework. [link](#)

Other meetings

A call-in procedure allows Councillors to question the Executive's decisions at the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.

Meetings are open to the public unless stated otherwise.

We have a number of joint arrangements and partnerships with other authorities and associations to provide quality services. There are more details in the full Constitution. www.eastherts.gov.uk -----
--ask for straightforward link

Frequently Asked Questions – answer will be in link form

How do I?

- Contact a Councillor
- Look at the full Constitution
- Look at agendas and minutes for formal meetings and see reports?

Find out about?

- Council meetings
- Take part in Council meetings?
- Find out what's coming up at future meetings?
- Complain about a Councillor?

Have a say?

East Herts Council provides a wide range of cost effective and high quality services for the community. We're committed to consulting our service users and residents on the way these services are run and the work of the Council generally.

We're keen to receive all types of feedback – so if you have a complaint, compliment or suggestion we would be pleased to hear from you. You can also play your part in the democratic process by talking to your Councillor or suggesting a topic for Scrutiny.

We consult widely, in a variety of different ways, to ensure we understand and meet the needs and views of local communities. Some examples of when we might choose to consult with the public are:

- To look for unmet needs
- To shape the way a service is delivered
- To measure satisfaction with a service/services
- To prioritise future spending
- To look for quality improvements
- To meet statutory duties

East Herts Council operates a **Citizens Panel**. The Panel is used to investigate a range of diverse areas including service satisfaction and key priorities for the Council. The Citizens' Panel is our biggest think-tank. The panel is made up of more than 2,000 people who share their views and ideas on a wide range of issues. The panel includes people from all backgrounds and all areas of East Herts. To ensure that the panel mirrors the population of the district, people are selected on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity, disability and where they live. It is currently maintained by Opinion Research Services.

Vote at elections?

Before anyone can vote at elections they must ensure their name appears on the Electoral Register for their local authority's area. This is usually undertaken through an annual canvass of every household process commencing in late August/early September each year. This process involves, amongst other things, a registration form being sent out to each household for completion and return.

To be included within the register you must be 18 years of age (or will turn 18 during the life of a register (1 December to 30 November the following year)) and be a British, or Commonwealth or Irish or European Union citizen. You must register to vote based on the address you normally reside on 15 October each year.

European Union Citizens can vote at local council elections but not UK Parliamentary elections. European Union Citizens may also vote in European Parliamentary elections in this country on completion of a further electoral form.

British, Commonwealth and Irish Citizens can vote in local, Parliamentary and European Parliamentary elections in this country.

Once registered you can vote in person at your allocated polling station (details of which will be sent to each elector during an election) or by post on completion of a separate application form.