

# **Preface**

## **1.0 Introduction**

In 2000, the Government asked local authorities to review the way in which they organised themselves so they could better serve and lead their communities. The aim was to make local government more relevant to the people that it is there to serve and to gain their commitment and involvement in local affairs. It also sought to introduce a decision-making process that was more transparent and would achieve the efficient and effective delivery of services required by modern society.

The purpose of this document is to outline the way in which Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council is organised to carry out its affairs. It explains the structures and decision-making processes of the Council and brings together, in one document, the detailed rules and procedures that govern the behaviour of those who work for or represent the Council. "The Constitution", as this document is called, is available for public inspection at the Sandwell Council House in Oldbury, and is also available electronically via the Committee Management System ([Mod.gov](#)). The document is kept under constant review and updated to ensure that it remains valid and valued. A full review is undertaken every 12 months.

## **2.0 New Arrangements**

Before the publication of the Local Government Act 2000, the system of local government was based on a committee model of councillor decision-making and had remained largely unchanged since the nineteenth century. This approach was no longer appropriate for dealing with a modern complex society.

Local authorities were required to consult with their communities on a limited number of revised "Executive Arrangements" which were intended to strengthen local authorities' ability to deliver effective community leadership, democratic renewal and continuous improvement in services.

Sandwell was one of the leaders in the modernising field, being one of the first to pilot executive arrangements as early as 1999, and producing and gaining ministerial approval for its constitution in early 2001.

Following two years of piloting and an extensive public consultation exercise, the Council decided to operate a Cabinet and Leader form of executive with effect from September 2001.

This Cabinet and Leader system operated until 2009 when the Council reviewed its executive arrangements in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. Following a statutory consultation exercise, the Council in December 2009 adopted the Leader and Cabinet (England) model which closely reflects the 'strong leader' arrangements that were already in force in Sandwell. The new system was effective from the Municipal Elections in May 2010.

### **3.0 Sandwell's Constitution**

The Constitution is made up of articles and rules of procedure and associated material. Articles are intended to set the overall framework and, in general, will not be subject to frequent change although an annual review will normally be undertaken to highlight essential or procedural amendments. The Articles are about what is to be done and by whom. Procedure Rules, Codes of Conduct and other material located after the Articles are broadly about how the Articles are put into effect. They are subject to more frequent change, especially as we learn from the experience of new ways of working.

### **4.0 Your Chance to Comment**

Should you have any queries or suggestions on the Constitution, please send them to the address below:

**The Monitoring Officer**  
**Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council**  
**Sandwell Council House**  
**Oldbury**  
**West Midlands**  
**B69 3DE**

Alternatively, you may e-mail to: [suky\\_suthinagra@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:suky_suthinagra@sandwell.gov.uk)