

# How you can get involved and have your say

## Guidance Leaflet

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- Electing your Councillor
- What do I need to do to be able to vote?
- What does my Councillor do?
- so how does the Scarborough Borough Council work then?
- Right, but what about direct involvement at Council meetings?
- How else can I get involved?



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*A great place to live, work & play*

A GUIDE TO HOW SCARBOROUGH  
BOROUGH COUNCIL WORKS AND HOW  
YOU CAN BECOME INVOLVED IN THE  
DECISION MAKING PROCESS.

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## How the Council Works

In most of the borough of Scarborough there are three councils that work together to provide services to the public.

These are:

- North Yorkshire County Council
- Scarborough Borough Council
- Parish Councils

The County Council has responsibility for things such as, Education, Social Care, Libraries, Highways and Transport (outside Scarborough town), registration of births, death and marriages, some planning applications and the disposal of rubbish. A full list of all the services provided by the County Council can be found by clicking onto their A-Z of services on their webpage, [www.northyorks.gov.uk](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk)

The Borough Council has responsibility for things such as, Elections, Highways and Transport (within Scarborough town), Leisure centres, parks and countryside, harbours, sea defence, regeneration, planning applications, licensing applications, housing benefits, council tax collection, environmental health and rubbish collection. A full list of all the services provided by Scarborough Borough Council can be found by clicking onto the A-Z of services on our webpage, [www.scarborough.gov.uk](http://www.scarborough.gov.uk)

Most areas in the borough, except the Scarborough town centre are parished, (have a parish council as well as the borough and county council) Parish councils act as a statutory consultee for planning applications and have responsibilities such as allotments, public seats, bus shelters and several other areas of interest to the community. A list of all the parishes and the parish clerks can be found on the Scarborough Borough Council website.

There are 50 Scarborough Borough Councillors and 74 North Yorkshire County Councillors. Additionally there are 39 parish councils in the Scarborough Borough and each parish council varies in size from 7 to 14 councillors. All of the different Councillors are elected by the public. The borough and parish council are elected in the same years, and the County council have their elections two years later. Elections for all the councils are every four years. The county council have elections in 2009. The borough and parish councils have elections in 2011.



## Electing your Councillor

Using your vote is a powerful way for you to influence decisions in Local Government. Each elected Councillor is able to make a difference to decisions made about what happens within the Borough, and to speak out on and influence issues of importance to your local community. It is crucial therefore that you use your vote to ensure that you choose the person you most want to represent you.

Councillors are acutely conscious of the importance of the ballot box. They will maintain close links with residents in their ward to ensure that where an issue is important to their electors, they are able to speak on behalf of their behalf.

### What do I need to do to be able to vote?

Make sure you are on the electoral register. The register is updated each year and you can check if you are on the register by either ringing Electoral Services or visiting the Customer First Centres in Filey, Scarborough or Whitby.

Maintaining your details is easy. We write to you to update our records every year, you can update your details by the internet or by post.

Voting is also easy as nowadays you can also vote by post if you are unable or do not wish to go to a polling station on the day of an election.

Further information on registering to vote is available on the web-site

[www.scarborough.gov.uk/voting](http://www.scarborough.gov.uk/voting)

The Electoral and Regulation Unit can be contacted on Scarborough (01723) 232307, 232309 or 383545 or email to [electors@scarborough.gov.uk](mailto:electors@scarborough.gov.uk)

## What does my Councillor do?

Councillors may represent a political party or they may be independent. All councillors represent all the citizens of the borough.

The role of councillor can be very varied and it is up to each individual councillor how they work. However, the three main areas of responsibility are:

- Representing the people in their area (ward) and becoming a representative of the borough of Scarborough
- Community leadership
- Helping to formulate Council policy





## So how does the Scarborough Borough Council work then?

### The Full membership of Council:

All Members of Council meet together every two to three months. As a group they have responsibility for establishing the framework for decision making by Councillors and Officers on a day to day basis. To do this they have responsibility for deciding:

- how the Council's Committees are structured to make decisions
- which members are appointed to those Committees
- the framework of policies within which decisions will be made by the Committees - ie how the Committees are required to approach key issues
- the budget within which the Committees must operate - ie how much money is available to spend on the day to day business (revenue) and investment for the future (capital)

The arrangements for managing this process are recorded in a document named the Constitution. You can find this on the Council's website

[www.scarborough.gov.uk](http://www.scarborough.gov.uk)

### The Committees of Scarborough Borough Council have four distinct roles:

- The Executive - managing the day to day business of the Council and determining how the budget is spent within the policies set by Council
- Scrutiny - Reviewing the way that the Executive Committees decide to spend money, developing policy on behalf of the Community so that decisions that are made by the Council reflect Community values and undertaking research through identified "task groups" on ways that we can improve
- Regulation: making decisions on behalf of the Community on applications made to the Council by businesses and residents
- Governance - ensuring that the Council operates in accordance with the law, its policies and procedures and in good faith - Each of these Committees include Independent members of the community who are not elected members

### The Committees are arranged in this way:

Full Council			
The executive	Scrutiny	Regulation	Governance
Cabinet	Corporate Strategy	Planning	Standards
Area Committees	Projects and Partnerships	Licensing	Audit
	Service Performance	Appeals	Independent Remuneration Panel
	Human Resources		

## Right, but what about direct involvement at Council meetings?

The majority of Council meetings are open to the public. For many of these Committees there is an opportunity for you to attend and contribute to what takes place, these arrangements are described in the following pages.

### 1. Executive Committee meetings

#### (a) Area Committees

There are four Area Committees which each meet on a quarterly basis:

- Central Rural Area Committee
- Central Urban Area Committee
- Northern Area Committee
- Southern Area Committee

These Committees receive proposals from the Area Forums upon local issues and have a developing decision making role.

Area Committees are able to act as a sounding board to raised Community issues, as members of the public are entitled to attend and speak, and, with the consent of the Chairman, to participate in decisions being made on the basis of a consensus of those present. As an executive Committee, each Area Committee has an annual budget which it may use within the policy framework of the Council to promote community well being.

The budget can be used to provide assistance toward the capital costs of a project to be incurred by groups within the Community in pursuing a project of value to the area. The Area Committees consider grant applications at their May and October meetings.

*NB: The council divides costs into capital and revenue. Generally capital costs are one off purchases whereas revenue costs are ongoing payments. For example buying a photocopier is a capital cost but the paper and ink for the machine are revenue.*

Further information on area committees can be obtained from

[www.scarborough.gov.uk](http://www.scarborough.gov.uk)

#### (b) Cabinet

Cabinet is the main decision making committee of the council and is similar to the Westminster Cabinet. There are nine councillors in Cabinet who all have different areas of responsibility or “portfolios”. All the major day to day decisions of council are taken by the Cabinet. To ensure that the decisions are balanced, fair and the decision making process is open there are four Overview and Scrutiny committees who look at every decision made by the Cabinet and can “call in” or scrutinise a decision made in Cabinet. If the Overview and Scrutiny committee disagrees with the decision they can send it back to Cabinet with recommendations that the decision be reviewed.

Significant Issues (Key Decisions) that are coming before Cabinet for a decision are published on the Council’s Forward Plan, which can be seen at [www.scarborough.gov.uk](http://www.scarborough.gov.uk)

This is published monthly and sets out a programme of decisions for the next four months.

The Plan indicates who is responsible for a report that will be coming to Cabinet and how you can contact that person to access any documents that are relevant to the proposed decision.

The week before the meeting the officer's report in relation to the proposed decision is published on the Council's internet site so that you can read what is being proposed and speak to your ward councillor about it. This is important as any five ward Councillors who are jointly concerned about a decision can call a decision in for review by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Through this process the decision is suspended until the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have convened a meeting of the Committee to enable the public and members to have their say.

You are also permitted to write to raise a question in relation to a decision that is coming before the Cabinet, and that question will be considered at the meeting. At the discretion of the chair of the meeting you may be permitted to speak at and put your question directly to the meeting.

Questions may only be asked if notice has been given by delivering it in writing or by email to the Chief Executive (at the Town Hall, St Nicholas St, Scarborough, YO11 2HG e-mail: [admin@scarborough.gov.uk](mailto:admin@scarborough.gov.uk)) at least 2 clear working days before the day of the meeting (if it relates to an item on the agenda for the meeting), or at least 3 clear days before the day of the meeting (in any other case)

For further information contact:  
Democracy Services Section  
By telephone: 01723 232303  
By e-mail: [gill.wilkinson@scarborough.gov.uk](mailto:gill.wilkinson@scarborough.gov.uk)

## 2. Overview and Scrutiny Meetings

There are four Overview and Scrutiny Committees: Service Performance, Corporate Strategy, Projects & Partnerships, and Human Resources. These committees and their sub-groups, (known as Task Groups), act as a watchdog. Their role is to review decisions and policies of the Council and Cabinet (and sometimes of other public agencies), and to consider whether the decisions and policies are right for the Borough of Scarborough. Scrutiny also assists in the development of new Council policy. It is this process of review and development in which you can get involved.

Overview and Scrutiny's vision is that: 'through a process of questioning, discussion and seeking a wider representation of views outside the Executive, the quality of the Cabinet and Council's decisions can be improved'.

This is why your views are important to us.

### How can I get involved in Overview and Scrutiny?

There are four ways you can get involved in the Overview and Scrutiny process:

- Attending and listening to debate at Committee meetings
- Speaking or asking questions at Committee meetings
- Giving evidence to a scrutiny review
- Suggesting items to go on the Work Programme

Further information on getting involved can be obtained from

Scrutiny and Governance Unit  
By telephone: 01723 383556/232310  
By e-mail: [stjohn.harris@scarborough.gov.uk](mailto:stjohn.harris@scarborough.gov.uk) or  
[lynn.mellor@scarborough.gov.uk](mailto:lynn.mellor@scarborough.gov.uk)

### 3. Regulatory committees

#### a) Planning and Development

All decisions on planning matters are subject to public consultation. Details of planning applications are published through the Council's Public Access internet at [www.scarborough.gov.uk](http://www.scarborough.gov.uk) and in the local media. About 90% of all applications are decided by Officers and not considered by Councillors at Committee and you should take the opportunity to respond to the Planning Service directly in relation to these matters. If the decision must be considered by the Planning and Development Committee the report in relation to the proposed decision is published on the internet pages the week before the meeting.

#### How can I get involved at Planning Committee?

The Borough Council operates a scheme which allows a limited right for the public to speak at Planning and Development Committee.

The Committee allows one speaker to speak on behalf of the applicant and one speaker can represent objections to the application.

The speaker representing the applicant must have the permission of the applicant to represent him/her.

An applicant can speak even though an objector does not, and vice-versa.

The speaker representing the objector(s) can be a neighbour, interested individual or a representative of a residents' association/ amenity group or potentially a Town Council/ Parish Council.

In addition, to ensure the views of the wider community are represented, the Ward Councillor(s) for the area in which the application is located and the Parish or Town Council are also permitted to address the meeting.

Speaking at Committee is voluntary and nobody has to attend Committee to speak about a planning application.

Further information on public speaking at Planning Committee can be found by contacting Planning Services by telephone on Scarborough (01723) 232323 or e-mail: [planning.services@Scarborough.gov.uk](mailto:planning.services@Scarborough.gov.uk)

#### (b) Licensing Committee

As with Planning Committee, applications that are coming before the Committee for determination are published in the media and on the Council's website and responses to the proposed decisions are sought in writing.

Most uncontested decisions are made by officers with delegated authority however, contested decisions are referred to the Committee for a decision.

Contested Decisions are ordinarily made at specific sub-committee meeting convened to consider the matter and the applicant and the objectors are permitted to make representations to inform the Sub-Committee's decision.

Further information can be obtained from:

Elections and Regulation Unit

By telephone:

01723 232307/383545

By e-mail: [anne.smith@scarborough.gov.uk](mailto:anne.smith@scarborough.gov.uk) or  
[christine.armitage@scarborough.gov.uk](mailto:christine.armitage@scarborough.gov.uk)



## 4. The Governance Committees

### (a) Standards Committee

This Committee comprises 5 councillors (or members) of Scarborough Borough Council and 5 members from outside Scarborough Borough Council. The 5 members from outside Scarborough Borough Council are made up of 2 Parish Councillors and 3 members of the local community who have been appointed to the committee and are known as lay members. The Chair is a lay member.

The primary roles of the Committee are to promote high standards of ethical conduct among Councillors and to undertake hearings in relation to allegations that such conduct has fallen below the expected standard. The Standards Committee of Scarborough Borough Council is responsible for monitoring the conduct of both Parish as well as Borough Councillors.

Public Questions may be taken at Committee meetings, and the public are welcome to attend.

### (b) Audit Committee

This Committee comprises 6 councillors of Scarborough Borough Council and one lay member. The Committee meets directly with the Council's External Auditors and reviews their comments upon the Council's performance through the Annual Management Letter produced by the Council's external auditors. It also approves the Accounts and the Audit Plan for the Council and importantly refers issues concerning member remuneration to the Independent Remuneration Panel for guidance and receives their report for initial debate before making recommendations to Council.

Members of the Public are welcome to raise Public Questions to the meeting in accordance with the scheme. Further information can be obtained from

Scrutiny and Governance Unit

By telephone:

01723 383556/232310

By e-mail: [scrutiny@scarborough.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@scarborough.gov.uk)



## How Else Can I Get Involved?

### 1. In your Community:

#### Local Area Forums

The North Yorkshire Coast Community Partnership is the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for the Borough of Scarborough. The purpose of the Partnership is to bring together people from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors, to work together and improve well being and quality of life in the Borough.

To do this the Partnership develops the Community Strategy which is like a “grand plan” for the area which sets out the important issues for the Borough and what needs to be done to tackle them.

To enable local people and organisations to influence the work of the Community Partnership, the Partnership has four Area Forums. These enable local people to give their views and influence the work of the organisations who deliver local services. They also provide a forum for members of the public, elected councillors (including Parish and Town Councillors), and organisations such as the Police, the Councils and Health Service to work together to address issues of concern.

The forums are open, public meetings held quarterly. There are four forums covering the whole Borough and each forum sets its own agenda. They have already covered topics such as transport, young people, environment, community pride and services for older people. Each forum has a support group made up of local residents and organisations that provide services. It's the role of the support group to progress issues from the forum.

The Local Area Forums have a direct link into the Council through the Council's Area Committees.

For more information on the work of the forums and how you can get involved visit the website [www.mycoast.org.uk](http://www.mycoast.org.uk) or contact one of the team on 01723 383562/4.

### 2. Through Consultation undertaken by the Council:

The Council is committed to enhancing the quality of life for people in the Borough by providing services that people need. In order to do this we need to consult and involve people. We are always keen to find out what people think of the way we run things for the community. Feedback received helps us to improve services. In addition when policy documents are considered by the relevant Scrutiny Committee you can attend the meeting and put your views directly to the Committee.

This is an opportunity to find out about the various consultations taking place in the Borough by looking at our current consultations and searching through past consultations via the link below  
[www.scarborough.gov.uk](http://www.scarborough.gov.uk)

### 3. Through the Council's Residents' Panel:

In order to improve the services and facilities we provide, we consult with our Residents Panel on a regular basis throughout the year. The panel consists of approximately 1,000 local residents throughout the Borough from all ages and backgrounds to ensure that it is fully representative of the Borough's population of 108,000.

We regularly refresh our Residents Panel to provide new members with the opportunity to participate in consultation and local decision-making.

As a member of the panel, you will be sent a number of questionnaires on a range of topics in connection with the services we provide and specific to your area. These questionnaires will also be made available via email and our website and in alternative formats if required. On occasions, panel members may be asked if they would like to participate in Focus Group meetings at the Town Hall to discuss issues in more detail.

Information on Council services will also be sent to you on a regular basis. On joining the resident's panel, we will send you an information pack which will include a copy of the Council's Corporate Plan, detailing our aims and objectives and vision for the future, and our Annual Report which sets out the performance of our services and future targets.

We are always looking for new people from all age groups, backgrounds and areas to join our Residents Panel. To express an interest in joining our Residents Panel, complete the form, which is available on our website, write to us, or email your details to: [consultation@scarborough.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@scarborough.gov.uk)

### Through Volunteering opportunities

You can get involved in your community by volunteering, either at a community group or in a particular role such as School Governor, Magistrate or a Local Councillor.

## How can I become a Councillor?

What are the requirements for becoming a Candidate for election as a Councillor?

To stand for election, on the day of nomination, you must be:

- 18 or over
- be a UK, EU or Commonwealth citizen
- be registered to vote in or have either worked or lived in the area for one year.

You cannot stand if:

- you work for Scarborough Borough Council
- you hold a politically restricted post for another local authority
- you are bankrupt
- you have served a prison sentence (including suspended sentences) of 3 months or more within 5 years prior to the election
- you have been disqualified under any legislation relating to corrupt or illegal practices.



## How do I become a candidate?

When there is to be an election, a Notice of election is published by the Council. This gives details of the electoral areas, date and time of election, the number of councillors to be elected, and the timetable for proposing a candidate (known as submitting “nomination papers”).

A copy of the election timetable and a nomination pack can be obtained from Electoral and Regulation Services at the start of a formal election period. The pack will contain all the forms and information you will need to become a candidate. After the close of nominations, if there are more candidates than vacancies then an election will be held.

For more information on standing as a councillor contact the Elections team  
Tel 01723 232309  
E-mail [sue.bedford@scarborough.gov.uk](mailto:sue.bedford@scarborough.gov.uk)

## Other Civic Roles

You can get information about other roles such as becoming a magistrate or a School Governor, or other forms of volunteering by clicking onto the website [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

### The Mayor

The Mayor is the first citizen of the borough and is a councillor elected by their fellow councillors after they have been on the council for at least five years. For further information about the role of the Mayor and how you can invite them to functions contact  
Civic Officer  
Tel 01723 232311  
E-mail: [Irene.webster@scarborough.gov.uk](mailto:Irene.webster@scarborough.gov.uk)





