

# Members of The Council

## 1. Composition and Eligibility

- (a) **Composition.** The Council will comprise 63 members, otherwise called councillors. Councillors will be elected by the voters of each electoral division in accordance with a scheme drawn up by the Electoral Commission and approved by the Secretary of State.
- (b) **Eligibility.** Only registered voters of the County or those living or working there will be eligible to hold the office of councillor.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Election and Terms of Councillors

The regular election of councillors will normally be held on the first Thursday in May every four years beginning in 2001. The terms of office of 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. Roles and Functions of all Councillors

### (a) Key roles

All councillors will:

- (i) collectively be the ultimate policy-makers and carry out a number of strategic and corporate management functions;
- (ii) contribute to the good governance of the area and actively encourage community participation and citizen involvement in decision making;
- (iii) effectively represent the interests of their electoral divisions and of individual constituents;
- (iv) respond to constituents' enquiries and representations, fairly and impartially;
- (v) participate in the governance and management of the Council; and
- (vi) maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics
- (vii) take part in the Council's Locality Meeting for their area, the purpose of which is for members within that locality to share information with, and receive updates from, senior managers about the services, priorities and issues affecting that locality.

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<sup>1</sup> Sections 79 & 80 of the Local Government Act 1972

**(b) Rights and Duties**

- (i) Councillors will have such rights of access to such documents, information, land and buildings of the Council as are necessary for the proper discharge of their functions and in accordance with the law.
- (ii) Councillors will not make public information which is confidential or exempt without the consent of the Council or divulge information given in confidence to anyone other than a councillor or officer entitled to know it, unless otherwise legally entitled to do so.

For these purposes, “confidential” and “exempt” information are defined in the Access to Information Rules in this Constitution. Further details on rights and responsibilities of members are set out in the Protocol on Members’ Rights and the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations in this Constitution.

**4. Role and Duties of Member Champions**

From time to time, the Cabinet will designate member champions and appoint councillors to, and remove them from, these roles. The profile, role and appointment process are set out in Appendix 1.

**5. Conduct**

Councillors will at all times observe the Members’ Code of Conduct and the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations set out in this Constitution. If in doubt, members should seek advice from the Monitoring Officer.

**6. Allowances**

Councillors will be entitled to receive allowances in accordance with the Members’ Allowances Scheme set out at Part 10.1 of this Constitution.

## **MEMBER CHAMPION ROLE**

### **GUIDANCE NOTES**

#### **1. Introduction**

This guidance outlines the responsibilities of a Member Champion including a person profile and an appointment process.

#### **2. Person Profile**

Key role: promoting and facilitating proper consideration of the issues in the execution of all aspects of the Council's roles and engaging with the community to promote support. The following bullet points list the qualities which a champion will either have or develop as he/she exercises this role.

You should be:

- A councillor who is familiar with the topic. You could be a Cabinet Member or a Chairman or Deputy Chairman of a Committee or other member of the Council. You will have support from officers as appropriate. You would be expected to demonstrate your knowledge base and/or your enthusiasm for the topic.
- A good communicator and able to use your skills to promote the benefits of the topic within the Council and externally. You should be able to persuade colleagues both within the Council and in the wider community of the benefits which the topic can offer.
- A consensus builder, able to bring together the various stakeholders within the authority, interest groups and the wider community.
- Able to see the 'bigger picture' and help develop a vision.

You should have:

- A commitment and passion for the topic. While a working knowledge of current issues relating to the topic would be an advantage, it is by no means essential. Professional skills within Council will complement your enthusiasm for the subject.
- An understanding of the workings of the Council and an appreciation of the role that each can play in promoting and encouraging the topic.
- A track record of supporting the topic would be an advantage.

### **3. Duties**

The key objective for an elected member nominated to act as a Member Champion is to support and encourage the Council in its work to ensure that the promotion and encouragement of the topic plays a central role in the development and implementation of all its policies and strategies. This will involve engagement with stakeholders and other partners both within the Council and externally. The key responsibilities and tasks will depend on you and the time you can devote to the role. You might be thought of as the “conscience” of the Council for this topic. However, your support for the topic would need to be tempered by financial and economic realities and by other pressures which the Council faces. You might serve the Council best by bringing examples of innovative and “out of the box” thinking to the role.

### **4. Nomination**

Nomination can be by the following means, or a combination:

- A scrutiny or other committee can nominate a suitable person.
- Members or officers can nominate a suitable person.
- Local interest groups can identify and approach an elected member to take on the role.
- A suitable councillor can volunteer.

### **5. Procedure**

Member Champions will be asked to report either:

- formally: to the nominating body in a specified cycle (e.g. annually); or
- informally: through internal journals, briefings.

This must be formally advised at the time of appointment.