

PART 12

Role Profiles

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Section 1

Role Profile of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council

The Chair and Vice-Chair will be elected by the Council annually. The Chair and, in his/her absence, the Vice-Chair, will have the following responsibilities:

- 1 To Chair Council Meetings.
- 2 To focus his/her activities on the communities of the District (including communities of interest, as well as geographical ones) and, by focusing on the Council's priorities, strengthen links between those communities and the Council.
- 3 To act as an enabler and ambassador by arranging meetings between the Council and other parties for the benefit of the District.
- 4 To celebrate those people or groups in the District who do extraordinary things to help others in the community, and to recognise those whose everyday lives are a challenge but who succeed in spite of their difficulties.
- 5 To celebrate successes of partners involved in major projects with the Council, particularly projects steered by the voluntary sector.
- 6 To encourage activities that recognise and support staff, (eg the annual garden party).

The Chair may appoint a Consort of their choice if they so wish. The Chair may take their Consort along to appropriate events although such Consort shall not be expected to have a role to play at the event.

Section 2

Role Profile of All Councillors

- To collectively be the ultimate policy-makers and carry out a number of strategic and corporate management functions fulfilling statutory and any additional locally determined requirements including participating effectively as a member of any committee to which the councillor is appointed;
- To respond to constituents' enquiries and representations fairly and impartially;
- To balance different interests identified within their ward and represent the ward as a whole;
- To be involved in decision-making where appropriate;
- To participate in councillor training and development;
- To be available to represent the Council on other bodies developing and maintaining a working knowledge of the authority's policies and practices in relation to the bodies;
- To maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics and comply with all the relevant Codes of Conduct and protocols;
- To develop and maintain a working knowledge of the Council's services, management, arrangements, powers, duties and constraints and develop good working relationships with the relevant officers of the Council;
- To contribute constructively to open government and modernisation through active encouragement to the community to participate in the governance of the district;
- To participate in the activities of any political group of which the councillor is a member;
- To champion the causes which best relate to the interests and sustainability of the community and campaign for the improvement of the quality of life of the community in terms of equality, economy and environment.

Ward Councillor Compact

The purpose of this voluntary two-way agreement between the Council and councillors is to:

- set out the Council's expectations of the role, encouraging basic minimum standards of activity in each of the dimensions and functions of the job, combining specific tasks with suggested approaches, skills and behaviour;
- help define best practice for ward councillors and to suggest how to take that forward;
- set out the Council's commitment to provide support and training for councillors.

Expectations of the Role of Ward Councillor

Councillors should:

- communicate with the public in a variety of ways including electronically and in person
- work with officers and political groups to identify and address their training needs
- identify areas suitable for scrutiny and involve the public and communities in the process
- look for ways to promote democracy and increase public and community engagement including town and parish councils and interest groups
- represent effectively and be an advocate for local residents, their communities and wards in their relations with the District Council and other local and national government bodies
- provide a conduit through which residents can make better use of council services and be the key link between council officers and local communities
- keep up-to-date with local concerns by drawing information from diverse sources including hard to reach groups

The Council's Commitment

The Council will:

- provide basic induction training, including how to contact relevant officers, plus continuous development in a variety of time slots and formats (including external training opportunities), strategically planned and including support and development in appropriate skills

- provide sufficient IT equipment and support to enable councillors to undertake their role
- disseminate relevant and useful ward intelligence to councillors including contacts for local organisations
- support councillors to enable them to engage actively with residents and community groups

Suggested activities to help councillors fulfil the compact and their constitutional role

Communications:

- Make full use of IT provision including email and individual councillor website
- Provide local newsletters, surveys and surgeries

Training:

- Participate fully in the training available to councillors
- Take advantage of a “buddy” scheme for new councillors

Community Engagement:

- Use the Scrutiny process to raise community and ward issues
- Raise ward issues at Council and encourage the use of public question time at Council and Cabinet
- Participate in community organisations and establish how they can better connect with Council services and resources

Section 3

Role Profile of the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council

- To provide effective strategic leadership to the Council and ensure that the Council successfully discharges its overall responsibilities for the activities of the organisation as a whole;
- To provide visible political leadership in relation to citizens, stakeholders and partners in the overall co-ordination of Council policies, strategies and service delivery;
- To lead the Cabinet in its work to develop the policy framework and budget and be responsible for overall political control of the Council within the agreed policy framework;
- To contribute actively through the portfolio allocated by Council and membership of the Cabinet to the formation of the Council's policies, budget, strategies and service delivery;
- To lead the development of local, regional, national and European policy and strategic partnerships;
- To have a clear understanding and in depth knowledge of Lead Councillor portfolios, the scope and range of all services and an awareness of all policies;
- To provide leadership to the Council and its political administration;
- To chair the Cabinet in accordance with the remit set out in Part 11 of the Constitution;
- To conduct meetings in accordance with the Council's rules and procedures contained in the Constitution;
- To be the Lead Councillor for Policy and Financial Strategy;
- To have power to grant discretionary rate relief of up to £5,000 to any person/body within guidelines approved by the Cabinet;
- To act in the place of any Lead Councillor, in the Lead Councillor's absence;
- To make recommendations (jointly with the Leader of the Minority Group) to the annual meeting of Council as to the membership of Cabinet, committees etc and outside bodies;
- To act as Lead spokesperson for the Council;
- To ensure effective communication between party group members, other political groups, officers, partners and the community;

- To attend, if required, a Scrutiny Committee or a Scrutiny Panel to explain in relation to matters within the Lead Councillor's remit any particular decision or series of decisions, the extent to which the actions taken implement Council policy and/or their performance;
- To answer questions from members of the public at meetings of Council and Cabinet;
- To answer questions from Councillors at Council upon an item in a report of the Cabinet or a committee when that item is being received or under consideration by Council;
- To answer questions from councillors at Council on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the District;
- To be responsible for the proper recording of decisions made as an individual Lead Councillor and their subsequent notification to the Council's Officers.

To be personally responsible for the following functions within his/her area of responsibility:

- To act as the Council's spokesperson on policy issues;
- To issue press releases and to present the Council's position on any issue to the media;
- To initiate a process of consultation with the public and other interested parties on any topic;
- To initiate work on a new strategy (or amendment to a strategy) and approve the programme of consultation on proposals in the draft strategy with the public and any organisation or body;
- To respond to consultation documents issued by the government or any agency or body where the Council has been asked to give a response (provided that an electronic copy of any response is made available to all councillors);
- To authorise payment of a sum up to £500 to compensate any person who suffers inconvenience as a result of a failure of a service standard by a department of the Council (provided that a summary of circumstances in which the payment is made is subsequently reported to the Cabinet);
- To approve bids to external bodies to support a project that is within the Council's approved programme and to which funds have been committed subject to matching funding from external resources.
- The Deputy Leader will be expected to fulfil the role of the Leader as set out above, in the absence of the Leader.

Section 4

Role Profile of Lead Councillors in the Cabinet

- To provide effective strategic leadership to the Council and ensure that the Council successfully discharges its overall responsibilities for the activities of the organisation as a whole;
- To take responsibility for decision making within the Cabinet on the basis of individual and/or collective responsibility for the portfolio allocated by Council;
- To contribute actively through the portfolio and membership of the Cabinet to the formation of the Council's policies, budget, strategies and service delivery;
- To have a clear understanding and in depth knowledge of the portfolio, the scope and range of the relevant services for which he/she is responsible and an awareness of current agreed policies in respect of those services;
- To consult and communicate with members of all party groups, council officers and key partners as appropriate to ensure decisions are well informed and that Council policies are widely understood and positively promoted;
- To attend, if required, the Scrutiny Committee to explain in relation to matters within the Lead Councillor's remit any particular decision or series of decisions, the extent to which the actions taken implement Council policy and/or their performance;
- To answer questions from members of the public at meetings of Council and Cabinet;
- To answer questions from Councillors at Council upon an item in a report of the Cabinet or a committee when that item is being received or under consideration by Council;
- To answer questions from councillors at Council on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the District;
- To be responsible for the proper recording of decisions made as an individual Lead Councillor and their subsequent notification to the Council's Officers.
- To be personally responsible for the functions set out in Part 3 of the Constitution:

Section 5

Role Profile of Non-Lead Councillors in the Cabinet

- To provide, with the Leader and other councillors, effective strategic leadership to the Council and ensure that the Council successfully discharges its overall responsibilities for the activities of the organisation as a whole;
- To contribute actively through membership of the Cabinet to the formation of the Council's policies, budget, strategies and service delivery;
- To answer questions from members of the public at meetings of Council and Cabinet if necessary;
- To answer questions from councillors at Council delegated to the non-Lead Councillor on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the District;
- To attend Cabinet and callover meetings and contribute to the debate as necessary on any matter;
- To lead and project manage strategic projects or programmes, as allocated by the Leader or relevant Lead Councillor;
- To make regular update reports to the Leader/Cabinet on the progress of such projects or programmes;
- To undertake research and general investigative work as required by the Leader and present the same to Cabinet as appropriate;
- To utilise their expertise to provide advice on the area(s) of expertise not already employed in Cabinet positions;
- To meet and provide an advisory role in their own area(s) of expertise when required;
- To deputise for the Leader/Lead Councillor at meetings and conferences as required;
- To liaise with local organisations and partnerships on behalf of the Leader as required.

Section 6

Role Profile of Committee Chairs

- To chair the committee to which they have been appointed in accordance with the remit set out in Part 11 of the Constitution and in accordance with the Council's rules and procedures contained in the Constitution;
- To answer questions at a committee raised by a member of that committee on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affect the district and which fall within the terms of reference of that committee;
- To develop and maintain a working knowledge of the practices, procedure, services and functions which fall with the committee's terms of reference;
- To meet regularly with relevant officers to ensure the receipt of appropriate "independent" advice to inform the committee's activities;

Section 7

Role Profile of Scrutiny Committee and Panel Chairs

- To chair the Committee and Panel in accordance with the remit set out in Part 11 and Article 6 of the Constitution and in accordance with the Council's rules and procedures contained in the Constitution;
- To develop and maintain a working knowledge of the practices, procedures, services and functions which fall within the Committee or Panel's terms of reference;
- To contribute actively to the formation and scrutiny of the Council's policies, budget, strategies and service delivery through the work of the Committee or Panels;
- To meet with relevant officers to ensure the receipt of appropriate "independent" advice to inform effective scrutiny;
- To ensure regular contact with councillors, community representatives and local stakeholders to inform effective scrutiny of policies, strategies, budgets and performance.

Section 8

Role Profile of a Leader of a Political Group

- To provide leadership to one of the Council's political groups;
- To contribute as appropriate to the formation, amendment and scrutiny of the Council's policies, strategies, budget and service delivery;
- To act as lead spokesperson for the Group and appoint spokespersons on specific issues;
- To ensure effective communication between party group members, other political groups, officers, partners and the community;
- To make recommendations to the annual meeting of Council as to the membership of Cabinet, committees etc and outside bodies (Leader of the Minority Group only; the Leader of any other group shall provide the names of the members of that group for inclusion in the report to Council)