

## **Councillor Job Role**

All Councillors must adhere to the code of conduct and the 7 Nolan Principles of Public Life

Councillors need to balance the needs and interests of their community, their political party or group (if they are a member) and the council as a whole.

As a councillor you would have an important role in the major decisions that affect people's lives. Local councils are responsible for a whole range of services; waste, recycling, environmental services, planning, housing, benefits, leisure facilities and many more. As a councillor you will help determine the way these services are provided, funded and prioritised.

All councillors are advocates for their communities and are 'case workers' for their individual constituents when advice or support is requested. Whilst councillors do spend time in council meetings, much of a councillor's time is spent within their communities speaking and working with members of the public and community groups.

All councillors are members of the full Council which sets the overall policies and budget.

A common role for all councillors however, irrespective of any formal position or membership of a committee is that of 'community leadership'. For the individual councillor, being a community leader can mean a number of things. Acting as an advocate for the best interests of one's ward; lobbying for local concerns; influencing partner organisations to work to a common vision; resolving conflict amongst community organisations; encouraging community organisations to develop solutions in their own communities; balancing competing demands for resources when making decisions in the best interests of the whole authority area.

In your role as a Mid Devon District Councillor you may be appointed to serve on outside bodies such as a partnership between the council and other organisations, or to the committee or board of a local voluntary organisation. These are important positions for the council to fulfil its community leadership role. Some of these positions can be very demanding and some may require you to build up new knowledge or develop specialist skills. Some positions have legal responsibilities and liabilities as you may be accepting the position of director of a company or trustee of a charity, depending on the legal structure of the organisation concerned. If in doubt, ask for full advice before being nominated for a position.

### **All Councillors:- Community Leader**

- Champion your Ward
- To represent individual constituents and local organisations, undertaking casework and enquiries on their behalf
- Represent the community within the Council and other agencies
- Campaign on local issues

- Able to engage with all groups within your Community
- Keep in touch with community issues and be accessible to constituents

### **Decision maker and influencer**

- Make well informed decisions at Council meetings
- To represent the Council (subject to appointment) on outside bodies
- Liaise with Town and Parish Councils and Parish Meetings
- To contribute actively to the scrutiny of the Council.

### **Day to Day Councillor**

- Adhere to the various codes of conduct and protocols that the Council may adopt and to act at all times with probity
- Develop and maintain a general working knowledge of the Council and other organisations and services within the District
- Develop good working relationships with Council officers
- Prioritise and manage own workload, managing conflicting demands on your time
- Understand, challenge and interpret information
- Maintain confidentiality in all relevant Council business and constituent casework
- Communicate effectively with different audiences
- Act as a facilitator.
- Participate in training and development provided for Councillors by the Council
- Feedback information to the other Councillors from representation on an outside body or from any relevant training
- Being prepared for meetings – reading agendas and if you have questions contact the relevant department

### **Rights of Councillors**

- Submit a motion to Council
- Participate in a debate at Council
- Ask a question at Council
- Question the decision-making process by using the 'call-in' facility in respect of Cabinet decisions (if the principles of decision-making in Article 12.02 have not been followed)
- In your capacity as a Ward Councillor call in a planning application to the Planning Committee if there is an appropriate material planning consideration

### **Duties and responsibilities of Councillors**

- To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Personal Interests as and when appropriate
- Councillors will not make public information which is confidential or exempt or divulge information given in confidence to anyone other than a Councillor or officer entitled to know it
- Find a substitute for a meeting for which substitution is permissible, when personal attendance is not possible and to brief the substitute on the meeting to be attended

## **Chairman of non-regulatory Committees**

The non regulatory Committees are the Policy Development Groups, Audit Committee and Standards Committee

For information on the roles of the Policy Development Groups, the Audit Committee and Standards Committee please see Article 6

The Policy Development Group(PDG)/Committee chairman will:

- Provide leadership and direction to the PDG/Committee
- Ensure that adequate resources (including officer support) are identified and sought from the Council
- Encourage Committee members to obtain necessary skills to contribute the work of the Committee and to work with officers to provide training if necessary
- Chair the PDG/Committee meetings and ensure that the PDG/Committee achieves its terms of reference
- Lead the PDG/committee in prioritising its work so as to ensure effectiveness
- Endeavour to engage all members of the PDG/Committee within the work of the PDG/Committee
- Develop a constructive relationship with relevant Cabinet Members and Heads of Service
- To co-ordinate work with the Scrutiny Committee and PDGs/Audit Committee

Members on the PDG/Committee will:

- Assist with the development of an effective work programme
- Be responsible for the outputs and outcomes of the work of the PDG/Committee
- Receive evidence in an impartial manner
- Analyse and challenge information presented to the PDG/Committee
- Make recommendations based on the PDG's/Committee's deliberations
- Obtain necessary skills to carry out the role and to work with officers to provide specialist training if necessary
- Find a suitable substitute and brief them on the meeting due to be attended, on occasions when personal attendance is not possible and where substitutes are permissible
- Ensure that they treat visitors, whether other members or officers or people from outside of the Council, with respect, courtesy and politeness

## **Chairman of regulatory Committees**

The regulatory Committees are Planning Committee, Licensing Committee and the Licensing Regulatory Committee

For information on the roles of the Planning Committee, Licensing Committee and Licensing Regulatory Committee please see Article 8

The Planning, Licensing or Licensing Regulatory Committee chairman will:

- Provide leadership to the Committee
- Demonstrate to the public, applicants, objectors etc, fair and open decision making by or on behalf of the Committee
- Ensure that adequate resources are identified and sought from the Council
- Chair and manage Committee meetings and ensure the Committee achieves its terms of reference.
- Encourage Committee members to obtain necessary skills to contribute the work of the Committee and to work with officers to provide training if necessary
- Endeavour to engage all members of the Committee in its activities
- Lead the Committee, in consultation with officers, in prioritising its work
- Develop a constructive relationship with the relevant Executive Director and their staff and where appropriate, with relevant portfolio holders
- Be willing to learn about the professional disciplines and services relevant to the work of the Committee
- Find a suitable substitute and to brief them on the meeting due to be attended, on occasions when personal attendance is not possible
- Chair the committee in a fair and open manner in accordance with the procedures of the committee, applicants and objectors to put their arguments to the committee
- Guide, with the assistance of officers, the committee to reach decisions based on the information presented to it.
- Chair all planning working groups and site visits in accordance with the specific procedures

Members on the Planning Committee will:

- Undertake specialist planning committee training
- Have up to date knowledge of planning and development control, law and regulations
- Have up to date knowledge of local and national planning policy (including Local Development Plans, Code of Good Practice for Planning and the National Planning and Policy Framework)
- Have an understanding of case law
- Have an understanding of the Mid Devon District Council Local Plan

Members on the Licensing & Licensing Regulatory Committees will:

- Undertake specialist training
- Have up to date knowledge of licensing regulations
- Have up to date knowledge of the Licensing Act 2003 and the Gambling Act 2005
- Have up to date knowledge of local and national licensing policy
- Have an understanding of case law
- Have an understanding of Community Plans and Crime and Disorder Strategies

## **Chairman of the Council**

The Chairman of the Council is elected annually by Full Council at the Annual General Meeting

For information on the role of the Chairman of the Council please see Article 5

Chairman of the Council and in his/her absence, the Vice-Chairman will have the following roles and functions:

- Chairing the Council meeting, upholding and promoting the purposes of the Constitution, and interpreting the Constitution when necessary
- Presiding over meetings of the Council so that its business can be carried out efficiently and with regard to the rights of councillors and the interests of the community
- Ensuring that the Council meeting is a forum for the debate of matters of concern to the local community and the place at which Members who are not on the Cabinet are able to hold the Cabinet to account
- The Chairman and/or the Leader to attend such civic and ceremonial functions as the Council, the Chairman or the Leader determines appropriate
- Be consulted by the Chief Executive (along with the Leader) in respect of any motions submitted by Councillors to ensure that all appropriate and relevant motions are included on the Council agenda

## **Leader of the Council**

- Provide an overall cohesive, corporate and strategic leadership and direction for the Council
- Appoint, manage and remove the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Members
- Lead and chair the Cabinet and ensure its overall effectiveness
- Work with Cabinet Members to ensure effective delivery of services
- Ensure effective communication and explanation of all Cabinet's decisions and recommendations to Council and the public
- Ensure that the Cabinet manages the business of the Council within the financial limits set by the Council
- Encourage Cabinet members to obtain necessary skills to contribute the work of the Cabinet and to work with officers to provide training if necessary
- Line manage the Chief Executive Officer
- Communicate the Administration's policies and priorities to the Management Team and to receive their advice
- Be the main representative of the Council, with others as appropriate, in dealing with the Community, business, voluntary sector and other local and national organisations
- Ensure effective liaison with other political groups within the Council
- Call the annual State of the District debate
- The Leader and/or the Chairman to attend such civic and ceremonial functions as the Council, the Chairman or the Leader determines appropriate

- Be consulted by the Chief Executive (along with the Chairman of the Council) in respect of any motions submitted by Councillors to ensure that all appropriate and relevant motions are included on the Council agenda

Note: The above duties and responsibilities are in addition to the member's role as a Councillor and as a Cabinet Member (see separate job profile)

## **Deputy Leader**

- Assist and work with the Leader of the Council in delivering his/her responsibilities to the Council
- Deputise for the Leader of the Council in his/her absence from Cabinet meetings and all other responsibilities
- Carry out the requirements of his/her role so far as legally possible in the absence of the Leader of the Council
- Carry out such other duties and undertake portfolio responsibility as delegated by the Leader of the Council

Note: The above duties and responsibilities are in addition to the member's role as a Councillor and as a Cabinet Member (see separate job profile)

## **Cabinet Member**

The Cabinet is responsible for all local authority functions which are not the responsibility of any other part of the Council, provided the decisions made are within the Council's agreed policy and budget framework.

For more information about the roles and functions of the Cabinet Member please see the Cabinet Member functions list

- Act as the Lead Member for a particular portfolio as may be determined by the Leader of the Council, but in doing so, have regard to the overall collective responsibilities of the Cabinet and the Council's corporate policy objectives. Champion the portfolio concerned with that strategic context
- Participate effectively as a Cabinet Member at Cabinet Meetings taking joint responsibility for all actions and be collectively accountable
- Make delegated decisions within the portfolio
- Build good relationships with appropriate officers and work with them in developing policy or strategic issues prior to formal reporting. Be supportive in dealing with any problems at a strategic level
- Take a proactive approach to the early engagement of overview through Policy Development Groups to help in policy development
- Give political direction to Officers working within the portfolio
- Ensure up to date knowledge of related developments and policies at national, regional and local level
- Enhance the Council's reputation through taking the national stage where possible and participating in regional and national networks
- Attend Scrutiny Committee meetings in relation to Portfolio responsibilities and decision making

- Have an overview of performance management, efficiency and effectiveness of the portfolio
- Act as a strong, competent and persuasive figure to represent the portfolio and be a figurehead in meetings with stakeholders
- Be prepared to take part in learning and development opportunities to ensure that the role is undertaken as effectively as possible
- Represent the Council on external bodies and feed back to Cabinet or Council any issues of relevance and importance.
- Influence operational decisions relating to the Portfolio.
- Deal with the media on issues relating to the Portfolio.
- With colleague Cabinet Members and the Management Team be available and accessible to other Members to discuss queries or matters of concern
- Communicate with ward members any issues taking place in their area and of any visits or meetings that are taking place in their ward area

## **Scrutiny Committee**

For information on the role of the Scrutiny Committee please see Article 6

### **Scrutiny Committee Chairman**

The Chairman of Scrutiny is elected annually by Full Council at the Annual General Meeting

The Scrutiny Committee chairman will:

- Provide leadership and direction to the Committee
- Ensure that adequate resources (including officer support) are identified and sought from the Council
- To chair the Scrutiny Committee meetings and ensure that the Committee achieves its terms of reference
- Lead the committee in prioritising its work so as to ensure effective scrutiny
- Endeavour to engage all members of the Committee within the Scrutiny process
- Develop a constructive relationship with Cabinet, especially with relevant Cabinet Members
- Develop a constructive relationship with Management Team
- To co-ordinate work with the Policy Development Groups and Audit Committee
- To encourage Committee members to obtain necessary skills to contribute the work of the Committee and to work with officers to provide training if necessary

### **Scrutiny Committee Member**

Members on the Scrutiny Committee will:

- Assist with the development of an effective work programme

- Engage with all stages of the scrutiny process
- Be responsible for the outputs and outcomes of scrutiny
- Receive evidence in an impartial manner
- Analyse and challenge information presented to the Committee
- Make recommendations based on the Committee's deliberations
- Obtain necessary skills to carry out the Scrutiny role and to work with officers to provide training if necessary
- Find a suitable substitute and brief them on the meeting due to be attended, on occasions when personal attendance is not possible and where substitutes are permissible
- Ensure that they treat visitors, whether other members or officers or people from outside of the Council, with respect, courtesy and politeness