

PART 9 – MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

C – COUNCILLOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

COUNCILLOR ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**1. WARD COUNCILLOR****Role Purpose and Activity**

As the democratically mandated local community leader, Ward Councillors will engage different communities and bring local interests together to help resolve issues and shape future provision. In particular they will:

Representing and Supporting Residents and Communities

- i. represent their ward's interests;
- ii. be recognised as a local community champion and leader for the area, helping to provide direction, resolve local concerns and reconcile competing views and interests;
- iii. encourage the involvement of local people in policy development, service planning and decision-making;
- iv. promote effective relationships with public, private, voluntary and community organisations in their area;
- v. be the Council's link with existing town and parish councils and play a key role in supporting local campaigns or groups looking to establish new town and parish councils in their area;
- vi. monitor the performance of local public services in their area;
- vii. hold poor performers to account and help plan improvements to local services;
- viii. promote both the principles and practices of community cohesion, social inclusion and equality and diversity;
- ix. keep in touch with constituents, through regular surgeries, meetings, phone, letter, e-mail and personal contact so as to know and understand their views and concerns;
- x. speak freely in support of their area in order to influence Council decision-making, including the consideration of issues such as planning and licensing;
- xi. campaign for measures that will secure stronger and safer communities for local people, a high quality of life, and effective response delivery of services;
- xii. take up any opportunities for Councillor development to help improve their role as an effective and influential councillor;

- xiii. fulfil the statutory and locally determined requirements of an elected member of the Council, including compliance with all relevant codes of conduct.

Making Decisions and Overseeing Council Performance

- xiv. to participate in full Council meetings, reaching and making informed and balanced decisions, and overseeing performance;
- xv. to adhere to the principles of democracy and collective responsibility in decision-making;
- xvi. to promote and ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of Council and other public services; and

Representing the Council/Outside Bodies etc.

- xvii. to represent the Council on nominated outside bodies as an appointee of the Council.

2. CABINET MEMBER

Role Purpose and Activity

As a member of the decision-making Cabinet, a Councillor will be responsible for making key decisions on a wide range of issues which affect and shape quality of life in the Borough. In particular they will:

- (a) act as the main focus of day to day political leadership, decision making and democratic accountability at a whole authority level;
- (b) be a publicly recognisable and accountable 'key decision-maker' with whom the 'buck stops' for Council performance;
- (c) collectively provide strong and fair executive leadership and clear political guidance to other Councillors and Officers and the community;
- (d) develop with partners a clear vision for what the Borough needs and develop policies and take decisions which respond to local peoples' needs and aspirations;
- (e) take tough and strategically driven decisions on competing priorities;
- (f) champion the vision and interests of the council and the Borough on the regional and national stage;
- (g) be instrumental in building and nurturing local and thematic partnerships;
- (h) provide leadership and direction within the Council for designated portfolio areas;

- (i) hold senior officers within the Council to account for the performance of services, allowing performance to be assessed from the perspective of customers and citizens;
- (j) develop the financial and investment strategies to fulfil the Council's commitments to the sustainable community strategy for the Borough, working with partners in the public, business, voluntary and community sectors;
- (k) ensure that there is proper support for frontline Councillors in their various roles, responding to them when they raise issues and ensuring that their local knowledge is brought to bear when developing policy; and
- (l) develop a clear understanding of their portfolio the scope and range of the areas for which they are responsible, and Council policies in respect of those areas.

3. **MAYOR/CHAIR OF COUNCIL**

Role Purpose and Activity

The Chair of the Council will:

- (a) provide strong, fair and visible civic and ceremonial leadership to the Council and in relation to citizens, stakeholders and partners;
- (b) attend or be represented at such civic and ceremonial functions as the Council or he/she determines appropriate;
- (c) be an ambassador for the Council and the Borough, both at home and abroad;
- (d) promote public involvement in the Council's activities;
- (e) uphold and promote the Council's Constitution and interpret the Constitution when necessary;
- (f) preside 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;
- (g) request such additional meetings of the Council as may be considered necessary or appropriate and cancel any meetings where there is no business to transact at a meeting;
- (h) ensure the Council meeting is a forum for the debate of matters of concern to the local community and a place at which Councillors who are not on the Cabinet can hold the Cabinet to account;

- (i) be consulted on any matter in relation to which consultation with the Chair of the Council is required under the Constitution; and
- (j) determine any matter referred to him/her under the urgency provisions of the Access to Information Procedure Rules or the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules in the Council's Constitution.

4. **DEPUTY MAYOR / VICE-CHAIR OF COUNCIL**

Role Purpose and Activity

The Vice-Chair of the Council will:

- (a) undertake a full deputising role in the absence of the Chair;
- (b) preside over meeting of the Council in the absence of the Chair;
- (c) undertake specific tasks and responsibilities as requested by the Chair; and
- (d) share and support in general the full workload range of the Chair.

5. **LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

Role Purpose and Activity

The Leader of the Council will:

- (a) Chair meetings of the Cabinet.
- (b) provide strong, fair and visible political leadership and direction to the Council and in relation to citizens, stakeholders and partners in the co-ordination of Council policies, strategies and service delivery.
- (c) lead the Council's efforts to achieve its mission.
- (d) lead in promoting the aims and core values of the Council.
- (e) lead the development of local, regional, national and European policy and strategic partnerships.
- (f) assume overall responsibility for guiding the development and formulation of corporate priorities and strategic policy direction and for presenting those policies to the Council and the wider community, acting as the principal political spokesperson on corporate and strategic issues.

- (g) provide political guidance to the Chief Executive and the senior management team on the implementation of the Council's priorities and objectives and revenue and capital budgets.
- (h) appoint the Deputy Leader of the Council and other Executive Councillors to form the Cabinet.
- (i) chair and manage the business/work programme of the Cabinet, ensure a coordinated and coherent approach is taken to policy development and the delivery of services and also where relevant, and taking into account any advice from the Chief Executive, the Council's Monitoring Officer or Chief Finance Officer, ensure that proposals are made to the Council for decision within appropriate timescales, and in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework of the Council and all legislative and procedural requirements.
- (j) determine the frequency and timing of meetings of the Cabinet and placing items on its agenda as he/she thinks appropriate.
- (k) ensure the development of effective corporate policies reflecting the Council's commitment to continuous improvement and co-ordinate the work of the Cabinet in:
 - i. developing corporate policies and programmes;
 - ii. delivering high quality services to the people of the Borough;
 - iii. monitoring performance;
 - iv. preparing and monitoring revenue and capital budgets;
 - v. reviewing the effectiveness of the Council's organisation and management process;
 - vi. developing policies to promote the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the Borough.
- (l) delegate executive functions to any individual Member of the Cabinet and establish protocols for consultation between Cabinet Members and Officers in such circumstances.
- (m) ensure that decisions are taken properly, openly and, where appropriate, publicly and that key decisions are properly programmed and subject to effective public consultation.
- (n) involve local people and communities in the business and activities of the Council as fully as possible.
- (o) encourage scrutiny of the Council's policies and service delivery and the input to policy by all Councillors.

- (p) ensure that Councillors are treated responsibly and responsively in representing their constituents.
- (q) maintain and promote the highest standards of conduct in the Council's affairs and in the appointment of its staff.
- (r) be consulted on any matter in relation to which consultation with the Leader is required under the Constitution.
- (s) represent the Council at all levels, liaise with government and other relevant agencies where appropriate and act as the principal ambassador for the Council in advocating and explaining its roles and functions and promoting it as a listening and accessible organisation.
- (t) consider learning and development needs of all Councillors and arrange suitable briefing and learning opportunities to take place through appropriate mechanisms.

6. **DEPUTY LEADER**

Role Purpose and Activity

The Deputy Leader of the Council will:

- (a) undertake a full deputising role in the absence of the Leader;
- (b) undertake portfolio responsibilities of a Cabinet Councillor as determined by the Leader;
- (c) undertake specific tasks and responsibilities as requested by the Leader;
- (d) work actively with the Leader to co-ordinate the work of the Cabinet;
- (e) share and support in general the full workload range of the Leader;
- (f) chair the Cabinet in the absence of the Leader of the Council;
and
- (g) promote and co-ordinate liaison between the Leader, the Cabinet and non-executive Councillors.

7. **CHAIR OF A COMMITTEE**

Role Purpose and Activity

A Committee Chair will:

- (a) provide leadership and direction for the Committee;
- (b) chair and manage the business of the Committee, ensuring effective engagement by all Committee Members;
- (c) request such additional meetings of the Committee as may be considered necessary or appropriate;
- (d) promote the role of the Committee both within and outside the Council;
- (e) represent the Council and the Committee on relevant external bodies as required;
- (f) guide Councillors through those functions delegated by the Council to the Committee;
- (g) be consulted on matters of business between meetings;
- (h) ensure that the Committee takes balanced decisions based on all relevant evidence, always with impartiality and fairness;
- (i) ensure, where appropriate, that there is full consultation with and participation by all interested parties on issues to be considered by the Committee;
- (j) ensure that Committee decisions are properly recorded with full justifications;
- (k) liaise and consult with relevant officers wherever appropriate; and
- (l) consider learning and development needs of Councillors and arrange suitable briefing and learning opportunities to take place through appropriate mechanisms.

8. **VICE-CHAIR OF A COMMITTEE**

Role Purpose and Activity

A Committee Vice-Chair will:

- (a) provide a full deputising role in the absence of the Chair;
- (b) in the absence of the Chair, to chair meetings of the Committee;
- (c) undertake specific tasks and responsibilities as requested by the Chair;
- (d) share and support in general the full workload range of the Chair; and

- (e) work actively with the Chair to co-ordinate the work of the Committee.

9. **LEADER OF OPPOSITION**

Role Purpose and Activity

The Leader of an opposition Group will:

- (a) provide strong, fair and visible leadership and direction to the Group within the Council;
- (b) act as a spokesperson for the Group and as a representative of the Council to external bodies and organisations as appropriate;
- (c) represent the interests of the Group in any discussions with the Leader of the Council, other Group Leaders, other senior Members of the Council or senior Officers;
- (d) be responsible for the appointment of Group Members to seats on Council Bodies in accordance with the Council's political balance apportionments;
- (e) comment on, challenge and review the majority Group's performance in the coordination and implementation of its policies and procedures;
- (f) be the Group's principal consultee on Council business in general and establish and represent the views of the Group on issues of policy and probity;
- (g) with other Group Leaders, work with the Chief Executive and Executive Directors on relevant corporate matters; and
- (h) support the learning and development needs of all Members of the Group.