

## FUNDAMENTAL ROLE OF A COUNCILLOR

### Main Role

- 1 To contribute actively to the formation and scrutiny of the authority's policies, budget, strategies and service delivery.
- 2 To contribute towards the good government of the area and actively encourage community participation and citizen involvement in the democratic decision making processes.
- 3 To represent effectively the interests of the ward and of individual constituents and deal with constituents' enquiries and representations, fairly and without prejudice.

### Duties and Responsibilities

#### A The Policy, Political and Managerial Role

- 1 To fulfil the statutory and locally determined requirements of an elected member of a local authority and the authority itself, including compliance with all relevant codes of conduct.
- 2 To participate in those decisions and activities reserved to the full Council (e.g. setting budget, overall priorities, strategy).
- 3 To participate effectively as a member of any committee, working party or task group to which the councillor is appointed, including related responsibilities for the services falling within the remit of the organisation.
- 4 To participate in the activities of any outside body to which the councillor is appointed, providing two-way communication between it and the Council.
- 5 To participate, as appointed, in the scrutiny of the services and policies of the authority and their effectiveness in meeting the strategic objectives of the authority and the needs of its residents.
- 6 To represent the authority to the community and the community to the authority, through the various forums available.
- 7 To develop and maintain a working knowledge of the authority's services, management arrangements, powers/duties and constraints (including attending training events when required) and develop good working relationships with relevant officers of the authority.
- 8 To develop and maintain an understanding of the organisations, services, activities and other factors which impact upon the community's well being and identity.
- 9 To participate in the activities of any political group of which the councillor is a member.

## **B The Representative Role**

- 1 To participate actively in the local community and to be instrumental in involving local people in the development of council policy and decision making.
- 2 To meet regularly with key local stakeholders, through the area forums and any other means.
- 3 To use local knowledge in the development of council policies, including listening to the needs of local people and taking their views into account when considering policy proposals and decision making.
- 4 To ensure that all sectors of the community are informed about:-
  - services in their area
  - decisions that affect them
  - the reasons why decisions are taken by the Council
  - the rights of residents of Uttlesford
- 5 To campaign for improvement in the quality of life in the community of Uttlesford.
- 6 To carry out casework on behalf of constituents and to represent their interests to the Council.
- 7 To contribute constructively to open government and democratic renewal through actively encouraging the community to participate in the government of the area and take up their roles in terms of effective citizenship.

## **ROLE OF LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

- 1 To work with the whole Council in providing strategic direction to its work.
- 2 To provide leadership and guidance to Members.
- 3 With the Administration Group and the appropriate officers to prepare the Council's programme and priorities and the Budget framework for the preparation of each year's estimates.
- 4 To co-ordinate the work of the Council's Committees in conjunction with the Chairmen of the Policy Committees.
- 5 To provide strategic direction and leadership to the Chief Executive and the Corporate Management Team in line with agreed principles and policy.
- 6 To ensure the implementation of the Council's programme through the Chief Executive and the Corporate Management Team.
- 7 To act as the principal political spokesman for the Council.
- 8 To carry out the appraisal of the Chief Executive in conjunction with the Regional Employers' Director.
- 9 To ensure that issues of concern and contention between members and officers are addressed in a positive manner and, where possible, resolved.
- 10 To liaise with group leaders to achieve agreement on key issues where possible.

**ROLE OF THE LEADER OF THE MAIN OPPOSITION GROUP**

- 1 To work with the main Opposition Group and other groups in providing strategic direction to its work.
- 2 To provide leadership and guidance to Members, and to ensure opposition views are voiced.
- 3 To liaise with the Leader of the Council and other group leaders to achieve agreement on key issues where possible.
- 4 With the Opposition Group and the appropriate officers to produce alternative strategies, programmes, budgets and priorities for the Council.
- 5 To ensure effective scrutiny of the development and implementation of Council policy in liaison with the Chairmen of the Scrutiny Committees, and where appropriate challenge Administration policies.
- 6 To ensure effective liaison between the Opposition group and the Chief Executive, Corporate Management Team and relevant senior officers.
- 7 To liaise with members of other groups on the Council, and with organisations and individuals outside the Council, on behalf of the Opposition group.
- 8 To act as the principal political spokesman for the Opposition group.
- 9 To ensure that issues of concern and contention between members and officers are addressed in a positive manner and, where possible, resolved.

**ROLE OF POLICY COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN**

- To chair meetings of the relevant committee
- To liaise with the senior management and staff to ensure that the Committee's policies and decisions are initiated and decisions carried forward.
- To represent the Council at various meetings with other authorities, making sure Council policy is recognised.
- To represent the Council on various outside bodies relating to their Committee.
- To be available to the public if they wish to raise a committee related subject with the Chairman.
- To keep up to date with Government Policies and legislation relating to their Committee.
- To act as principal spokesman for the Committee.
- To liaise with the opposition spokesmen to achieve agreement on urgent key issues where possible.
- To discuss policy development with chairmen of Scrutiny Committees.
- To ensure that adequate resources (financial and officer support) are provided to the Committee.
- To meet with relevant Officers, together with the Vice-Chairman, in a briefing to discuss issues pertaining to a forthcoming meeting to ensure the efficient management of the Committee's meetings.
- To facilitate and encourage community and public involvement in the Committee's work.

**ROLE OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN**

- To chair meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny committee.
- To provide leadership and direction for the Overview and Scrutiny committee.
- To ensure that work of the Committee is member-led, e.g. that members lead on developing a work programme.
- To ensure that members have the necessary skills through appropriate training and development.
- To ensure that adequate resources (financial and officer support) are provided to the Committee.
- To prioritise with the Committee its main work.
- To co-ordinate work with other scrutiny committees and chairmen (and sharing learning).
- To develop a constructive 'critical friend' relationship with policy committee chairmen.
- To develop a constructive 'critical friend' relationship with the chief officers in the department that the Committee scrutinises.
- To act as principal spokesman for the Committee.
- To meet with relevant officers, together with the Vice-Chairman, in a briefing to discuss issues pertaining to a forthcoming meeting to ensure the efficient management of the Committee's meetings.
- To facilitate and encourage community and public involvement in the Committee's work.

**ROLE OF OPPOSITION SPOKESMEN**

- 1 With the Opposition Group and the appropriate officers to prepare Opposition policies and alternative committee programmes, budgets and priorities, and propose these at committee as appropriate.
- 2 To provide leadership and guidance to Members in relevant subjects, and to lead and encourage Opposition debate at the Committee and in Council.
- 3 To liaise with the Chairmen of policy committees to achieve agreement on key issues when possible.
- 4 To advise the chairmen of Scrutiny Committees on matters that the committee might consider and which it might call-in.
- 5 To question members of the Corporate Management Team on proposals and communicate the outcome to Opposition members, and other members where appropriate.
- 6 To communicate within the Council, Opposition policy and comment on Administration policy as appropriate.
- 7 To act as the principal external Opposition political spokesman on matters within the Committee's remit.