

PART 3 - RESPONSIBILITIES FOR FUNCTIONS

SECTION D

ROLES OF DIFFERENT COUNCILLORS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Councillors are elected by local residents to represent them in making decisions about how the Borough is governed.
- 1.2 The Council appoints councillors annually to the positions of Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and chairmen and vice-chairmen of committees. The Leader is appointed by the Council for a four year term of office. The political groups of the Council will elect their own leaders.
- 1.3 The Leader appoints the Deputy Leader and at least 1, but not more than 8, councillors to form the Executive. The Leader may assign portfolios areas to the members of the Executive. These councillors will normally all be members of the administration.
- 1.4 Each year, the Council will also establish committees to oversee its work and councillors will be appointed to serve on those committees as Chairmen, Vice-Chairmen or members. The political balance of the committees reflects the political balance of the Council as a whole and Membership of committees is on the recommendation of the political group leaders.
- 1.5 This section indicates the different roles a councillor may undertake as a member of the Council. The role of all councillors as representatives of their communities is set out in Article 2. The roles of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are set out in Article 5. The other roles referred to in the Constitution are set out below.

2. Leader

The role profiles for the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council should be read in conjunction with the role profile for a Portfolio Holder.

- 2.1 The role of the Leader is to
 - (a) provide strong political and community leadership;
 - (b) identify and promote the Council's core values and strategic objectives, develop and implement the Council's core plans and strategies;

- (c) lead the development of local, regional, national and European policy and strategic partnerships to drive forward the Council's strategic objectives and policies;
- (d) maintain effective working relationships of councillors with the Chief Executive, chief officers and all employees of the Council;
- (e) chair the Executive and oversee the preparation of business for its consideration; and
- (f) appoint the Deputy Leader and other members of the Executive.

3. Deputy Leader

- 3.1 The role of the Deputy Leader is to support the Leader in discharging his/her role and to deputise for the Leader in his/her absence or at the specific request of the Leader.

4. Portfolio Holder

- 4.1 The role of the Portfolio Holder is

- (a) to have strategic responsibility for their named portfolio of services, by providing political leadership in this area;
- (b) to have responsibility for, and provide a lead on, the initiation of policy in respect of the relevant portfolio;
- (c) to be accountable for those services within their portfolio areas, taking the lead publicly in relation to the Executive's activities in those areas both inside and outside the Council;
- (d) to create, build and nurture a focus on outcomes for residents for the activities within the relevant portfolio;
- (e) to represent the Council on outside bodies of a strategic nature which relate to their portfolio and feedback to the Council any issues of relevance or importance;
- (f) to take the lead on discussions at Executive meetings on their portfolio areas;
- (g) report to, and account, for their actions on matters within their portfolio areas to Council; and
- (h) to attend Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings in respect of their portfolio and to respond to issues and questions raised by the scrutiny committees on their portfolio areas.

5. Committee Chairman & Vice Chairman

It is generally accepted that should the Chairman of a Committee be absent for any reason then the Vice-Chairman will assume the role.

5.1 The main role of a chairman of a committee is to:

- (a) to ensure the effective conduct of meetings and open and transparent decision making;
- (b) to chair meetings in a clear, disciplined and fair manner, making sure that decisions are made using the correct protocols and in a way which demonstrates high standards of behaviour and ethics and in accordance with the Constitution;
- (c) to ensure that the Committee fulfils its Terms of Reference;
- (d) to provide confident and effective management of meetings facilitating inclusivity, participation and effective decision making;
- (e) ensure that the Committee deals with its functions in a fair and proper manner having regard to the Council's policies and statutory provisions relating thereto;
- (f) to liaise with appropriate senior officers to ensure that appropriate member training programmes and seminars are arranged;
- (g) act as spokesman for the committee; and
- (h) oversee the preparation of the business for consideration by the Committee.

6. Chairman of a Regulatory or Non-Executive Committee

(i.e. Planning Applications, Licensing, Audit & Standards and Employment Committees)

The role of the Chairman of regulatory and non-executive committees should be read in conjunction with the Committee Chairman Role description above.

- (a) to ensure that applicants and other interested parties are satisfied as to the transparency of the regulatory processes;
- (b) to ensure that the Committee understands the legal, Constitutional and policy requirements relating to their decision making; and

- (c) to ensure that contributions by the public, and other interested parties, to meetings are facilitated in accordance with agreed procedures and that they understand the process.

7. Chairman of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The role of the Chairman of an overview and scrutiny committee should be read in conjunction with the role of Committee Chairman.

7.1 The main role of a chairman of an overview and scrutiny committee is:

- (a) to facilitate the Committee in considering and making recommendations to the decision maker as an effective 'critical friend';
- (b) to facilitate the call-in process, in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure rules.
- (c) to model, and encourage, effective use of questioning and listening skills;
- (d) to model, and ensure, an objective and evidence based approach to the work of overview and scrutiny, including the receipt of evidence in an impartial manner;
- (e) to build constructive working relationships with Executive members, senior officers and partners working within the Committee's remit;
- (f) to promote cross party working; and
- (g) to ensure that recommendations to decision makers are constructive and evidence based.

8. Leader of an Opposition Group

8.1 In addition to their roles and duties as an elected representative, opposition group leaders shall also:

- (a) make sure there is effective and constructive challenge to the Council's administration;
- (b) be the focal point for the opposition group's views on the design, preparation and implementation of the Council's policies, strategies, budgets and service delivery;
- (c) establish and maintain good working relationships between members of the opposition group and all employees of the Council; and

- (d) to be responsible for nominating members of the group to serve on committees, panels, sub-committees and outside bodies for consideration by Council.

9. Ward Councillor

9.1 The role and duties of all Councillors are detailed at Article 2. As representatives of their ward, Councillors are also expected:

- (a) to represent and provide visible leadership to local constituents, and the community of Surrey Heath as a whole, and to balance those roles as necessary and appropriate;
- (b) to engage local residents, key stakeholders and partners in the Council's work, seeking feedback on the services provided and developing an understanding of the needs of residents to enable the delivery of better services and better decision making;
- (c) to proactively identify opportunities for the Council to improve the services it offers our residents and the people and prosperity of Surrey Heath, balancing and respecting the needs of both urban and rural, as well as opportunities to deliver our work more effectively and resourcefully;
- (d) to signpost constituents, and to facilitate them in achieving appropriate support within the Council and with partners, supporting constituents with day to day service issues dealing with constituents' enquiries and representations fairly and without prejudice;
- (e) to champion the causes which further the interests, quality of life and sustainable development of the community;
- (f) to develop a working knowledge of the organisations, services, key local stakeholders, activities and other factors important to the community's well-being and identity; and
- (g) to ensure that local people are informed about services in their area, decisions which affect them, reasons why decisions have been taken, the rights of constituents.