

Part 4 – Section 9 – Role Profiles of Councillors and Office Holders

This document sets out the roles and responsibilities of elected members generally and also in relation to any specific roles that they be appointed to. It is not intended as an exhaustive list but should be used as guidance for councillors, prospective councillors and Members of the Public to understand the basics of what key members' roles entail.

1. All Councillors

1.1 Responsibilities

a) Serving and representing communities, for example by:

- i. Working collaboratively with local people, voluntary and community organisations, police, health partners and businesses to develop a shared understanding of local issues and to shape the future of the local area;
- ii. Spending time out and about, learning about the communities that you represent and ensuring that communities make the most of all the opportunities available to them;
- iii. Building strong relationships and earning the trust and respect of local partners, other members and council officers;
- iv. Being an active member of local networks and partnerships, for example by acting as a school governor;
- v. Attending meetings with local partners and organisations;
- vi. Communicating regularly with your community and keeping them informed about local issues and events, for example through email, newsletters, blogs, social media and in person;
- vii. Talking to constituents by phone, email and letter, social media, home visits, drop-in sessions, street or community meetings, and local events;
- viii. Responding to queries and issues from local people, investigating concerns and helping with solutions (this is called casework).

b) Attending formal council and committee meetings and ensuring the views of your community are brought into the Council's decision making process. Where making decisions on 'quasi-judicial' committees such as planning, licensing and regulatory, following the rules of natural justice;

c) Agreeing annually the Council's budget and policy framework;

d) Contributing actively and constructively to the formation and scrutiny of the Council's policies, budgets, strategies and services;

e) Balancing the different interests within their ward and representing the community as a whole, with a special duty to your constituents, including those who did not vote for you;

f) Holding decision makers to account, whether at Council meetings, Overview and Scrutiny committee meetings or elsewhere;

g) Representing the Council on outside bodies as required;

h) Supporting the delivery of the work of the Council within the framework set by law and guidance, and participating constructively in the good governance of the Council;

i) Being the 'corporate parent' for looked after children, as part of a shared responsibility held by all Councillors, the Council as a body, council officers and partner agencies;

j) Fulfilling the statutory and locally determined requirements of an elected Member of a local authority, including complying with all relevant codes of conduct, regulations, protocols and procedures and participating in those decisions and activities reserved for the full Council.

1.2 Key Tasks

- a) Attend and participate effectively as a Member of full Council and any committee to which you are appointed;
- b) Read committee meeting agendas and reports, as well as background papers, research and evidence, to understand issues and participate in discussions and decisions;
- c) Participate in the activities of any outside body to which the Councillor is appointed, providing two-way communication between the organisations, and reporting as required to the Council. To develop and maintain a working knowledge of the Council's policies and practices in relation to that body and of the community's needs and aspirations;
- d) Participate in the scrutiny or performance review of the services of the Authority including where the Council so decides, the scrutiny of policies and budget, and their effectiveness in achieving the strategic objectives of the Council;
- e) Participate in any advisory group to which the Councillor is appointed, as convened by the Executive from time to time;
- f) Participate, as appropriate, in consultation with the community and with other organisations;
- g) Read, understand and follow the Council's constitution and Codes of Conduct and other protocols;
- h) Develop and maintain a working knowledge of the Council's services, management arrangements, organisation and activities, powers/duties, and constraints;
- i) Actively encourage your community to participate in the governance of the Cumberland area;
- j) Maintain professional working relationships with all Members and Officers and follow the Member/ Officer Protocol;
- k) Identify and participate in opportunities for further development and training as a Councillor and keep abreast of developments in national and local government.

2. Leader of the Council

2.1. Responsibilities

- a) Ensure the delivery of efficient and effective services, relevant to the needs of the community and the responsibility of the Cumberland Council, in the short, medium and long term.
- b) Provide visible political leadership in relation to citizens, stakeholders and partners in the overall co-ordination of policies, strategies and service delivery affecting the locality.
- c) Chair meetings of the Executive, ensuring efficient use of time and active participation by Executive Members
- d) Lead the Executive in its work to develop the policy framework and budget and take overall political control of the council within the agreed policy framework.
- e) Lead the development of local and regional strategic partnerships.
- f) Ensure the appropriate representation of the Council on key outside bodies.

2.2. Key Tasks

- a) Provide leadership to the Council and its political administration, and lead the presentation of the recommendations, plans, policies and decisions of the Executive and the Council;
- b) Represent the Council's political and strategic decision-making in the community and in discussions with regional, national and international organisations and others in order to pursue matters of interest to the Council and its communities and to keep the Council and the Executive informed accordingly;
- c) Appoint Members of the Executive and allocate Executive portfolios;
- d) Develop and maintain good working relations and effective channels of communication with the Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees, Audit and Risk Committee, Standards and Governance Committee and full Council;
- e) Ensure that Executive Committees promote cross party involvement in policy development and decision making;
- f) Direct, manage and chair meetings of the Executive and to take responsibility, individually and/or collectively for any specific portfolio, including providing a political lead in proposing new policy, strategy, budget and service standards and reviews, as well as acting as spokesperson for the Council;
- g) Consider the development and training needs of the Executive and members generally and arrange for training sessions or suitable briefings as appropriate;
- h) Receive and act as appropriate upon representations from councillors, the public, organisations and senior officers;
- i) Work closely with the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer, Section 151 officer and other senior officers;
- j) Perform annual appraisal of Head of Paid Service.

3. Additional Responsibilities and Tasks for Executive members

3.1 These role profiles should be read in conjunction with the role profile for all councillors:

3.2 All Executive Councillors with Portfolio

3.2.1 Responsibilities

- a) Take responsibility within the Executive on the basis of collective decision making and such individual delegation that may apply, for a portfolio of services or functions of the Council.
- b) Input into the Executive any information, intelligence or factors considered relevant to the issues under consideration by the Executive.
- c) Contribute actively through the portfolio and membership of the Executive to the formation, implementation, monitoring and scrutiny of the Council's policies, budgets, strategies and services.

3.2.2 Key Tasks

- a) Participate in the Executive and to implement agreed policies by taking responsibility individually and/or collectively for any portfolio allocated by the Leader of the Council, including proposing new policy, strategy, programming, budget and service standards, and leading performance review.
- b) Develop a clear understanding and in-depth knowledge of the respective portfolio, the scope and range of the relevant services for which he/she is responsible and an awareness of current agreed policies and budgetary implications in respect of those services.

- c) Consult and communicate with all members, council officers, key partners and the community as appropriate to ensure policies, strategies, budgets and decisions are well informed and that Council policies are widely understood and positively promoted.
- d) Ensure that the Council is briefed at the appropriate time on significant issues within the respective portfolio – i.e. those which have financial or other major resource implications, or which will result in a change to established policy.
- e) Act as spokesperson for the Council and answer and account to the Council and the community on matters within the portfolio.
- f) Work closely with the Chief Executive and senior officers responsible for the services within the portfolio and the relevant Scrutiny Committee Chair.
- g) Direct, manage and chair meetings of relevant Executive Committees and ensure that a cross party approach is employed to support the Council's governance arrangements.
- h) Work with officers on the implementation of agreed plans, policies and programmes within the portfolio and inform the Executive of progress and performance.
- i) Write reports for Council and answer questions arising on matters within your portfolio.
- j) Attend meetings of relevant Scrutiny Committees and answer questions arising on matters within your portfolio.
- k) Participate in scrutiny or performance reviews of services as requested by the relevant Scrutiny Committee.
- l) Represent the Council and the Executive in the community and elsewhere as required by the Leader.

4. Additional Responsibilities and Tasks for Non-Executive Councillors

4.1 Chair of the Council

4.1.1. Responsibilities

- a) Preside over meetings of the Council so that its business can be carried out efficiently and respectfully having regard to the rights of councillors and the interests of the community.
- b) Ensure that the Council meeting is a forum for council members to debate matters of concern to the local community and the place at which members are able to hold the Executive to account.
- c) Uphold and promote the purposes of the Constitution and to interpret the Constitution when necessary (with the support of the Monitoring Officer).
- d) Be the 'first citizen' of Cumberland who champions the role of the Council and promotes public involvement in the Council's activities (but note that the Chair is neither the political leader nor the Chief Executive of the Council).
- e) Act as the conscience of the Council, and act impartially and in a politically neutral way.
- f) Set the standard of conduct to be expected from all Councillors.
- g) Ensure that the dignity of the office and Council is maintained at all times.

4.1.2 Key Tasks

- a) Chair all meetings of the full Council;
- b) Read and understand the Constitution to enable effective running of Council meetings including ruling on points of order;

- c) Have oversight of Council agendas and take the final decision (on the advice of the Monitoring Officer) on whether motions, questions and other items of participation meet the criteria set out in the Constitution.
- d) Attend such civic and community functions as the Council and/or he/she determines appropriate.
- e) Help represent the Council in the community and in discussions with regional, national and international organisations and others.
- f) Act as host, and represent the Council, to visiting Royalty, civic dignitaries and other important visitors.
- g) Meet with relevant Council officers to ensure the receipt of appropriate advice to enable effective decisions.

4.2 Scrutiny Chairs

4.2.1 Responsibilities

- a) To chair meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, ensuring active participation by members and agreeing clear recommendations;
- b) To set expectations at meetings and ensure meeting runs efficiently;
- c) To promote the integral role and contribution of scrutiny within the authority's wider improvement planning and reporting arrangements;
- d) To lead joint scrutiny activities with other authorities or organisations when required and ensure that scrutiny upholds its statutory duties;
- e) To champion and promote the role of Scrutiny to the public, helping the public better understand and, crucially, contribute to and engage with the scrutiny process;
- f) To promote the role of Scrutiny to partner bodies, helping them to understand and engage with the Scrutiny function;
- g) To demonstrate an objective and evidence-based approach to scrutiny ensuring that scrutiny inquiries are methodologically sound and incorporate a wide range of evidence and perspectives;
- h) To follow-up scrutiny recommendations, evaluate the impact and added value of overview and scrutiny activity and identify areas for improvement;
- i) Work closely with scrutiny support staff to drive continual improvements in scrutiny;
- j) Assist in publicising the work of the scrutiny committee including writing and presenting reports for full Council describing the work of the committee, work being conducted outside meetings, the general focus of the committee, upcoming task and finish workshops and outcomes.

4.2.2 Key Tasks

- a) To provide confident, effective and impartial management of the committee;
- b) Develop and manage a balanced work programme for the Scrutiny Committee which includes pre-scrutiny of policies and key decisions, investigative scrutiny, task and finish groups, performance monitoring and holding the Executive to account by proactive use of the forward plan of key decisions;
- c) Conduct horizon scanning to identify items of concern or interest to the public for inclusion in the work programme;
- d) Ensure the work programme takes account of relevant factors such as the horizon scanning mentioned above, the forward plan of key decisions, work programmes of the executive and other committees, strategic priorities and risks, audit and regulatory reports and recommendations, partners' strategic priorities and relevant community issues;

- e) To report on progress against the work programme to Council, and others as appropriate;
- f) To ensure that recommendations to Executive are clear and precise and to follow up on recommendations by attending relevant meetings of the Executive;
- g) To ensure that task and finish/Panels have clear terms of reference with appropriate membership and witnesses and deliver the required outcomes;
- h) Conduct effective scrutiny of key decisions including by appropriate use of call-in and other methods.

5. Independent (Lay) members

5.1 Audit Chair

5.1.1 Responsibilities

- a) Chair all meetings of Audit and Risk Committee;
- b) Ensure meetings are properly conducted in line with the Council's Constitution (with support from Monitoring Officer) ensuring all views are heard and issues considered, incorporating a range of evidence and perspectives;
- c) Review the effectiveness of the Council's governance, risk management and internal control arrangements;
- d) Approve the Annual Governance Statement;
- e) Scrutinise and consider reports and monitor progress of the Council's internal and external auditors, including monitoring effectiveness;
- f) Consider reports on financial reporting, statement of accounts and treasury management;
- g) Review reports on fraud and consider the Council's ability to manage fraud risks;
- h) Report to full Council on the work of the Audit and Risk Committee and answer any questions which councillors may have;
- i) Support the Council in upholding high standards of governance and behaviour and identify areas for improvement;
- j) Refer any concerns around governance, risk management or financial standards to Executive or Council as appropriate, follow-up on recommendations.
- k) Champion and promote the role of Audit within the Council;
- l) Work closely with council officers to drive continual improvements in audit;
- h) Assist in publicising the work of the Audit and Risk Committee

5.1.2 Key Tasks

- a) attend all meetings of Audit and Risk Committee and relevant meetings of full Council;
- b) meet regularly with the Council's Head of Internal Audit and external auditors;
- c) attend training events and effectiveness review workshops arranged for Committee members;
- d) Be prepared for meetings by reading agenda, reports and background evidence and research to ensure all issues are understood and fully considered by the Committee;
- e) Following meetings to work with the Council's democratic services team to approve the minute of the meeting and record key actions.

5.2 Audit Member

5.2.1 Responsibilities

Independent members will need to:

- a) commit time and energy to prepare for and attend meetings of Audit and Risk Committee, as well as attend workshops and training sessions as required throughout the year;
- b). Willingness to learn and to bring their wider experience to the work of the Committee;
- c) Contribute actively and constructively to the discussion at meetings and bringing an independent, objective view to the debate.
- e) Support the Council in upholding high standards of governance and behaviour.

5.2.2 Key Tasks

- a) Prepare for meetings by reading agenda and reports including background research and evidence to ensure an understanding of the issues;
- b). Should be willing to learn and to bring their wider experience to the work of the Committee;
- c) Make an active and constructive contribution to the work of the Committee in particular to the consideration and discussion of reports.

5.3 Independent Person

5.3.1 Responsibilities

- a) Participate as an Independent Person in hearings in relation to Code of Conduct complaints;
- b) Actively promote ethics and standards within the Cumberland area to ensure public and member confidence in the Council's member standards arrangements;
- c) Apply knowledge of the Code of Conduct in relation to matters alleging breaches of the Code of Conduct;
- d) Assist in the preparation of reports and provide advice and guidance as an Independent Person together with the Monitoring Officer and the Chairman/Members of the Standards and Governance Committee;
- e) Analyse and exercise fair and impartial opinion on Code of Conduct issues;
- f) Demonstrate high standards of ethical behaviour in respect of Elected Councillors;
- g) Possess and continue to develop a sound understanding of the ethical and wider regulatory framework.
- h) Undertake training and participate in training events organised by the Council to promote awareness of the Code of Conduct;
- i) Attend meetings of the Independent Persons Panel, to advise on Statutory Officer discipline or grievance matters, and where appropriate prepare a report on same;
- j) To play a wider role in the promotion and maintenance of an effective standards regime, and bring an external and independent perspective to the standards process, aimed at providing assurance of high standards of decision making and fairness in the process.

5.3.2 Key Tasks

- a) To act as an impartial consultee when a complaint has been made about a Councillor;
- b) Provide advice to the Monitoring Officer (or the Deputy Monitoring Officer) at each stage of the process for determining whether to investigate a complaint about an elected member;
- c) Provide advice to the Monitoring Officer about how a complaint might be investigated or resolved;

- d) Prepare written advice to the Monitoring Officer at Stage Two of the complaint assessment process;
- e) Provide advice to complainants and elected or co-opted members who are the subject of a complaint. (The Independent Person is not expected to provide advice to elected or co-opted members in other circumstances).
- f) Review the report following investigation of a complaint about an elected or co-opted member and provide written advice on how the Council might determine the findings of the investigation;
- g) Attend any hearing following investigation of a complaint, which is held by the Standards and Governance Committee to decide whether there has been a breach of the Code of Conduct and if so what if any sanction to apply;
- h) If it is decided at a hearing that there has been a breach of the Code of Conduct, provide advice to the Standards Panel as to what if any sanction should be applied;
- i) Advise on reviews of the Member Code of Conduct and the procedures for dealing with complaints about elected members;
- j) Contribute to discussions at the Standards Committee and with the Monitoring Officer to ensure the continuous improvement of the Council's regime for promoting and maintaining high standards of member conduct;
- k) Read and understand the Council's Code of Conduct for Members and Arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct complaints and keep abreast of developments in the ethical and wider regulatory framework;
- c) Attend training sessions and workshops as required.

5.4 Co-opted Members of Committees

5.4.1 Responsibilities

- a) Contribute to discussions, bringing any specialist of local knowledge, skills, experience and expertise to inform the Committee's decisions;
- b) Ensure there is effective, constructive independent challenge to the Committee to support members in carrying out its role;
- c) Act as a politically neutral voice to represent those who live in the Panel area (for co-opted members of Community Panels) or to inform better decision making for the benefit of the wider community and the Council itself (for those co-opted members of other Committees);
- d) Support the Council in promoting high standards of governance and behaviour by following the Member's Code of Conduct and showing leadership.

5.4.2 Key Tasks

- a) Attend meetings of the Committee and actively take part in the business of the Committee by participating in discussions, asking questions and offering the benefit of experience and knowledge;
- b) Prepare for meetings by reading the agenda and reports as well as background research and evidence to ensure an understanding of the issues;
- c) Attend training sessions and workshops;
- d) Keep abreast of relevant issues to encourage informed debate;
- e) Read and follow the Council's Constitution, Code of Conduct for Members and related policies and protocols.