



SERVING LOCAL COUNCILS IN SHROPSHIRE AND TELFORD & WREKIN

Affiliated to the National Association of Local Councils

How to Become a Councillor

25 June 2013

Topics areas to be covered

- ▶ **What are local councils?**
 - ▶ **What do local councils do?**
 - ▶ **What do local councillors do?**
 - ▶ **How to get involved**
 - ▶ **Where to get more information**
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What are Local Councils

- ▶ **Statutory Bodies, first tier of local government, closer to the community than any other tier**
 - ▶ **Independently elected and raise a precept, form of council tax (locally)**
 - ▶ **A voice for their community, helping them to feel involved in the decisions that affect them**
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What do Local Councils do?

Work towards improvements and better services at a local level which generally falls into 3 categories:

- ▶ **Representing the local community**
- ▶ **Delivering services to meet local needs**
- ▶ **Striving to improve quality of life and community wellbeing**

Through a range of discretionary powers – provide and maintain a variety of important and visible services

“Parish and town councils are the pride of their communities. For well over a century they’ve been making a difference in towns and villages up and down the land. Parish and town councils are rooted in their areas and care passionately about the places they belong to. We want to see you leading the localist vanguard. Using community rights to revolutionise public services, decide where new homes and shops go in your area, and safeguard much loved assets. Because parishes leading from the front will help local people call the shots.”

Secretary of State, Department of Communities and Local Government - Eric Pickles, MP

Roles and responsibilities as a councillor

- ▶ **Attend meetings and collectively make decisions (budget setting, planning etc)**
- ▶ **Determine Council Policy and provide community leadership**
- ▶ **Monitor and review council performance in delivering services**
- ▶ **Impartial local person accountable for your actions, and custodian of the public purse**
- ▶ **Act as advocates for their constituents**
- ▶ **Represent the Council externally**
- ▶ **Work as a team and act as a corporate body**
- ▶ **Work with partner organisations**



- ▶ **Participate in the Governance and management of the Council, understanding the role of the clerk, the chairman and Council as a whole**
- ▶ **Encourage community participation and resident involvement in setting the Council's vision, priorities and delivery of services**

Duties...

- ▶ **Must sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office**
- ▶ **Complete a register of disclosable pecuniary interests (within 28 days of taking office)**
- ▶ **Behave ethically, respecting others and not bring the Council into disrepute (abide by your Council's Code of Conduct)**
- ▶ **Attend Council meetings when summoned to do so and take part in the decision process**

... You must not

- **Not take part in meetings where you have a disclosable pecuniary interestleave the meeting for that item (otherwise it's now a criminal offence)**
- **Or if you consider you have a bias – where the public might think you would be biased to vote in a particular way**
- **Or if you have declared the way you will vote (eg: on a particular planning application - predetermination)**
- **Not take a decision on behalf of the Council – not legal**
- **Use your position for personal gain**
- **Express your own views as those of the Council**

How to get involved

- **By election or co-option**
- **You have to be qualified:-**
 - ❖ **Over 18, and a commonwealth, Republic of Ireland or EU Citizen, and either**
 - ❖ **An elector in the parish, or**
 - ❖ **Owned land or other premises there for the preceding 12 months, or**
 - ❖ **Principal place of work during that twelve months in that area, or**
 - ❖ **During the whole of those 12 months resided either in the parish or within 4.8 km of it**

Contacts:

Shropshire Association of Local Councils

▶ 01743 252744 – www.2shrops.net/alc

▶ National Association of Local Councils

www.nalc.gov.uk

OR

▶ Contact your local council clerk – contact details are on our website

You really can make a difference!