

## Part 9 - Members – Role and Expectations

### 1 Members - Role and Expectations

This section sets out the responsibilities of all elected Members/Councillors of Shropshire Council. This is effectively a core “job description” for all 74 Members of the Council.

It is to be noted that Members have responsibilities both locally as representatives of their local community and also strategically to participate in the affairs of the Council as a whole. Both these roles whilst distinct are of equal importance.

#### 1.1 Elected Member Role Description

##### **Accountabilities:**

- To the Division and its communities and to Full Council.

##### **Role Purpose and Activity:**

##### ▪ **Community Leadership**

- To represent the community, to serve them all fairly and equally, promoting tolerance and cohesion.
- To engage with and champion the interests of the local community.
- To encourage the community to participate in the governance of the area.
- To develop an in-depth understanding of local concerns, by consulting the community especially the most vulnerable.
- To create and develop partnerships with and between all sections of the community to encourage them to do more for themselves and ensure resources are used effectively to meet the needs of the area.
- To regularly communicate with the community using e.g. newsletters, emails, phone or local media, to keep local communities informed and to manage expectations.

##### ▪ **Making Decisions and Overseeing Council Performance**

- To contribute to the debate at all Council meetings attended, reaching and making informed and balanced decisions, overseeing and improving the outcomes for both your Division and for Shropshire as a whole.
- To contribute to the formation and scrutiny of the council's policies, budgets, strategies and service delivery.

##### ▪ **Representing communities and the Council**

- To accurately represent the community to the Council and the Council to the community.
- When appointed, to represent the Council on local outside bodies, as an appointee of the Council, promoting common interest and co-operation for mutual gain.

## Part 9 - Members – Role and Expectations

- When appointed, to represent and be an advocate for the Council on national bodies and at national events.
- Attending meetings of each Parish Council in a Member's division annually.
- 
- **Internal Governance, Ethical Standards and Relationships**
  - To promote and support open and transparent government.
  - To adhere to the highest standards of behaviour in public office and promoting respectful and effective relationships.

### **Values and Behaviours:**

To be committed to the values of the Council which are :

- To focus on meeting our customers' needs.
- Working and learning together.
- Valuing our differences.
- Building trust together.
- Making resources count.

### **1.2 Skills Required to Carry Out Effective Role as a Member**

To fulfil their role as laid out in the role description, an effective Member requires the following:

#### **Community Leadership**

- Analytical thinking, including asking good questions and listening to enable people to feel heard.
- Facilitation and negotiation skills to enable different voices to be heard and to help groups work effectively together.
  - Creating conditions needed to build trust
  - Relationship building
- Self awareness, eg, being aware of own impact on situations and being able to manage own feelings and responses.
- Able to achieve results in different situations through influencing and using feedback effectively.
- Working with diverse groups to identify problems and find solutions effectively.

#### **Making Decisions and Overseeing the Council's Work**

- Knowledge and understanding of the Council's rules and procedures in relation to meetings.
- An understanding of strategic priorities and key policies.
- An understanding of the service contexts behind decisions.
- A basic understanding of local government finance and audit procedures.

## **Part 9 - Members – Role and Expectations**

- The ability to challenge ideas and contribute positively to policy development.

### **Representing the Community and the Council**

- Good public speaking skills.
- Good presentation skills.
- The ability to persuade others and act with integrity.
- The ability to work with the media and to identify when additional support from public relations is required.
- Identifying when additional support is required.

### **Internal Governance, Ethical Standards and Relationships**

- An understanding of the structure of the Council, roles of officers, members and different agencies and partners.
- Respect for, and desire to work with, different groups and individuals.
- Have knowledge and understanding of the Member/Officer Protocol.
- Have knowledge and understanding of Legal responsibilities e.g. Corporate Parenting, Safeguarding, Equality and Diversity and Regulatory Committees.
- A knowledge and commitment to the values of the Council.

## **1.3 Structures and Councillor Involvement**

### **(i) Full Council**

The Council meets at least four times a year. In these meetings, it decides overall issues of policy, holds the Cabinet to account, and reviews progress in overall performance. Annually the Council sets the budget and agrees a Corporate Plan.

### **(ii) Scrutiny**

Councillors may be asked to serve on one of the Council's Scrutiny Committees. These are likely to meet at least once every six weeks. These roles involve, for example:

- reviewing performance against published plans
- critically examining performance indicators
- scrutinising some decisions either before or after they have been taken in the first instance
- developing or advising on policy

### **(iii) Committees**

## **Part 9 - Members – Role and Expectations**

There are also a number of Committees with specific delegated functions for example, Strategic Licensing Committees, Planning and Licensing Committees dealing with Planning, Rights of Way and Licensing issues, Standards, Audit and Pensions Committees and most Members will be asked to serve on at least one of these. Members appointed to any Committee dealing with Planning or Licensing by their Group Leader must not participate in the work of the Committee until they have completed their specialist training.

### **(iv) Representational**

Some Councillors will also be involved in representing the Council at National, Regional and Sub-Regional Forums, as well as local community/groups where representation from the Council has been requested.

### **(v) Ad Hoc Groups**

The Council will also from time to time set up ad-hoc Member groups, possibly in conjunction with other organisations - for example, policy commissions to examine a particular strategic issue or policy consideration.

### **(vi) Member Champions**

The Council will specifically be seeking to appoint some Councillors to take a lead in certain areas to represent/focus/develop/champion a particular issue or policy across all Council activities.

### **(vii) Local Partnerships**

There will be three local community partnerships which will be the strategic voice of the North Central and South Shropshire areas. Some local members will be engaged with their local partnership in bringing together the issues across the area and ensuring that this is communicated to the Shropshire Strategic Partnership, while at the same time working with the Local Strategic Partnership to deliver actions across the area of the Partnership. Members will be expected to develop a wide experience of community issues and working in this wider context.

### **(viii) Council Meetings**

Meetings are held at a variety of times - the timings of which are intended to encourage the widest possible participation and public interest. The intention of the Council's political structures arrangements is for meetings to be shorter and more focused.

## **1.4 Members' Allowances**

To cover their roles and duties to their local and the County-wide community, dealing with a range of operational and strategic matters, Councillors receive a basic annual payment of £11,514.00.

The Council also has a scheme for the reimbursement of child care costs.

## **Part 9 - Members – Role and Expectations**

### **1.5 Extra Responsibilities**

Some Councillors will be appointed to posts with extra responsibilities. Each group is also able to allocate extra responsibilities to some of its Members. Each of these extra responsibilities carries a defined entitlement to extra payment - over and above the basis annual payment. A separate document has been prepared illustrating the nature of these responsibilities.

### **1.6 Facilities and Personal Development**

All Members of the Council:

- will be issued with a standard specification computer - much of the Council's routine business is conducted electronically.
- will have access to the Members' Secretary for office support
- will receive "induction" training on first election to the Council and be expected to participate in appropriate personal or skills-based developmental programmes.
- will expect to have regular contact with the officers responsible for service delivery and co-ordination in their area.
- appointed to any Committee dealing with Planning or Licensing by their Group Leader should not participate in the work of that Committee until they have completed their specialist training.

### **1.7 Conduct**

All Councillors have to undertake to abide by the Members' Code of Conduct. This incorporates the provisions of the Model Code of Conduct for Members to which have been added some specific Council requirements.

Suspected breaches of the Code of Conduct will be referred in the first instance to the Standards Committee.

Councillors are also expected to establish and maintain effective working relationships and a climate of mutual respect with all Council staff, external bodies and of course their local communities.

### **1.8 Political Activities**

The Council is a political organisation. There are formally constituted political groups which Councillors can apply to join. Councillors are also free not to join a formally constituted group.

## Part 9 - Members – Role Descriptions

### 2. Member Role Descriptions

#### 2.1 Introduction

- i. The previous section set out the responsibilities of **all** elected Members. Effectively, this is a core “job description” for all Councillors within the Council.
- ii. In addition to this core role, certain Members carry extra responsibilities.
- iii. The statements that follow attempt to define the nature of the additional roles and are issued as a guide to the duties of this position. They may be varied from time to time to meet new working requirements.
- iv. The additional roles that are defined are as follows:-
  - **Chairman of the Council**
  - **Leader of the Council**
  - **Deputy Leader of the Council**
  - **Portfolio Holder**
  - **Cabinet Member**
  - **Group Leader**
  - **Scrutiny Committee Chair**
  - **Scrutiny Committee Member**
  - **Planning Committee Chair**
  - **Member Champion**
  - **Deputy Portfolio Holder**

## Part 9 - Members – Role Descriptions

### Chairman of the Council

#### Role

The Chairman of the Council is elected annually by full Council. The Chairman will chair meetings of the Council and will be the civic leader of the Council. He/she will be the principal representative of the Council on ceremonial occasions and in representing the Council at other ceremonial occasions.

The term of office for the Chairman will be for the period of one year after which the Vice Chairman shall have the opportunity to take the office of Chairman.

The **Chairman's** role and key responsibilities are:

- To preside over meetings of the Council so that its business can be carried out effectively and efficiently and with regard to the rights of Members and the interests of the community
- To ensure that the Council meeting is a forum for the debate of matters of concern to the local community and the place at which Members who are not members of the Cabinet are able to hold Cabinet to account.
- To uphold and promote the principles of this Constitution and to interpret the Constitution when necessary to do so.
- To promote public involvement in the Council's activities
- To preside at other meetings in connection with the Council's activities, as required.
- To help ensure that all Members of the Council are able to discharge their responsibilities to the best of their ability
- To maintain regular contact with political group leaders and any Members who do not belong to a political group
- To be the conscience of the Council
- To represent the Council at civic and ceremonial functions and to host such functions on behalf of the Council as necessary
- To act as host to royalty, civic dignitaries and similar visitors to the County or Council

## Part 9 - Members – Role Descriptions

### Leader of the Council

#### Role

The Council elects one of their Members as the Leader of the Council in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000.

The **Leader of the Council's** role and key responsibilities are:-

- To lead the development and delivery of the Council's Vision, its overall policy framework, the resulting policies and strategies.
- In furthering the achievement of policy objectives to represent the Council in its relationship with key partner organisations and stakeholders
- To provide political direction and leadership to Members, setting standards and expectations and encouraging Members to play a full part in the running of the Council and being effective community leaders
- To be the political representative and advocate for the Council
- To chair the meeting of the Cabinet and to lead the Cabinet's activities
- To set the agenda for Cabinet meetings and ensure publication of the work of Cabinet where appropriate in the Forward Plan
- To ensure appropriate Council responses to all issues and to the needs of the community
- To ensure that Cabinet's activities are reported to Council meetings including answering questions from Members in relation to business considered by Cabinet
- To provide political direction for the Council's senior managers and in particular to work closely with the Chief Executive to secure co ordination of the Council's leadership and management
- To establish effective working relationships with the Chief Executive, Directors, Monitoring Officer and other key staff
- To be aware of the views of all Members of the Council and of other key influencers and ensure appropriate consideration of those views in the formation of policy and decision taking
- To promote effective working relationships across the Council's Party groups
- To assist the activities of the Scrutiny Panels
- To develop effective working relationships with Council committees and their Chairs
- To appoint Members to the Cabinet and to determine their Portfolios
- To keep other Members of the Council informed as to the Leader's activities through an annual report to Council
- To exercise decision making responsibilities delegated to Portfolio Holders where the Portfolio Holder is absent or unable to act for any reason



## Part 9 - Members – Role Descriptions

### Deputy Leader of the Council

#### Role

This appointment is made by the Leader and should be a Member of the Cabinet.

The **Deputy Leader's** role and key responsibilities are:-

- To deputise for the Leader in his/her absence in respect of all areas of the role of the Leader unless statutory requirements prevent this or the Leader provides otherwise
- To discharge such other specific roles and responsibilities as the Leader may decide
- To establish effective working relationships with the other Members including the Chairs of the Council's committees
- To establish effective working relationships with the Chief Executive, Directors, Monitoring Officer and other key staff
- To participate fully in the Cabinet's activities
- In the absence of the Leader to exercise decision making responsibilities delegated to Portfolio Holders where the Portfolio Holder is absent or unable to act for any reason
- To take responsibility for a specific Portfolio if required to do so

## Part 9 - Members – Role Descriptions

### Portfolio Holder

Portfolio Holders are appointed annually by the Council. Their titles and areas of responsibility are also agreed annually by the Council. Portfolio Holders are Cabinet Members and have a range of corporate and specific responsibilities.

The relevant Portfolios are:

- Reputation Management and Communications
- Children's Services - Transformation and Safeguarding
- Adult Services - Transformation and Safeguarding
- Leisure, Libraries, Culture/Commissioning
- Health
- Growth, Profitability and IP&E
- Business Growth
- Resources, Finance and Support
- Built Environment - Strategic Planning, Planning, Housing – Local Commissioner
- Highways/Transport/Commissioning

In addition to the role and key responsibilities of a Cabinet Member the **Portfolio Holder's** role and key responsibilities are:-

- As a Cabinet member, to promote and represent the interests of the Council corporately both internally and when representing the Council on outside bodies and when working with partner organisations
- To participate fully in Cabinet's activities in addition to balancing the interests of the relevant Portfolio with those of the Council overall
- To develop expertise knowledge and responsibility for the Portfolio
- To respond to consultation as specified in the Council's Scheme of Delegation
- To act as the Council's lead spokesperson and political contact as regards the Portfolio's activities
- To ensure the development of policy and operational issues for decision by Cabinet and Council using the support of the relevant Scrutiny Panel as necessary, to present these issues to Cabinet and Council and to assist with their implementation
- To monitor the performance of the Portfolio's activities
- To assist the activities of the relevant Scrutiny Panel
- To inform Members about their activities, including answering Members' questions at Council meetings and presenting an annual report of activity to full Council
- To establish and maintain an effective working relationship with the Chief Executive, Directors, Monitoring Officer and other key staff
- To establish appropriate contacts with other bodies and with individuals to exchange views and information
- To represent the Council on outside bodies and within specified partnerships
- For Portfolios covering cross cutting areas of policy, to work across all Council services and to develop policies and plans and monitor their delivery as set out above

## Part 9 - Members – Role Descriptions

### Cabinet Member

#### Role

In accordance with the Local Government Act 2000 the Council appoints a Leader of the Council who in turn appoints Members of the Council to form the Cabinet.

Cabinet Members are accountable to the Council for the development and delivery of services and cross cutting policies, the specific allocation of which is agreed by the Council.

The **Cabinet Member's** role and key responsibilities are:-

- To take part in the consideration and determination of matters coming before meetings of the Cabinet
- To act within the general Scheme of Delegation as agreed by the Council and within the extent of the delegated authority to Cabinet Members as agreed at the Annual Council meeting
- To work within the Corporate Plan's Aims and Priorities
- To positively promote the values of the Council
- To work within cash limited budgets and the Council's Financial Rules
- To follow and promote the principles of best value
- To be informed about the Council's activities particularly insofar as they relate to the powers and duties of the Cabinet
- To assist the activities of the Scrutiny Panels as they relate to matters dealt with by Cabinet and to develop a positive relationship with relevant Scrutiny Panels
- To develop strong links with other Members of the Council
- Together with other Cabinet Members to take collective responsibility for the work of Cabinet as a whole
- To establish effective working relationships with the Chief Executive, Directors, Monitoring Officer and other key staff

## Part 9 - Members – Role Descriptions

### Group Leader

#### Role

The purpose of the statutory requirement to designate a Group Leader is to identify and publicise a Member of the Group to act as a focal point for the Group and its activities

A **Group Leader's** role and key responsibilities are:-

- Together with other Group Leaders, to support the democratic process by ensuring that the activities of the administration are examined and, where considered necessary, challenged
- To bring forward alternatives to policies, strategies and budgets or operational decisions proposed by the administration, as appropriate
- To provide leadership to the Group to ensure effective, positive and constructive opposition to the Council's majority party
- To participate in the opposition through the effective review of the Council's policies, strategies and budgets, the performance against targets and objectives set, and the achievement of best value
- To meet regularly with his/her Group members to ensure good communication and to inform effective opposition
- To maintain effective relationships with the Leader of the Council, members of the Cabinet, the Chief Executive, Directors and other relevant senior officers, and to meet them, as required, to ensure he/she is sufficiently and effectively briefed on service and relevant corporate areas and any other relevant issues relating to the Council
- To nominate Council Members of his/her group to serve on scrutiny panels, planning committees and, if appropriate, local outside bodies
- To provide guidance and support to Group spokespersons and committee Chairs/Vice Chairs as appropriate
- To assist in ensuring effective arrangements for policy review
- To appoint councillor members of his/her Group to "shadow" particular service or corporate areas of the Council's activity
- To ensure effective contact with community representatives and other local stakeholders, as appropriate, and represent their views in ensuring effective opposition to the majority party
- As requested by the Council, to represent the Council on county-wide, regional and national bodies and national and international events relating to, or organised by, those bodies
- To liaise with the Group Leader of any other political group on the Council
- That Group Leaders shall be expected to assist officers to ensure that all members of their respective groups have undertaken the essential training, together with any additional specific training, that is required for them to perform their specific and generic roles as a Councillor.
- That Group Leaders be requested to ensure that all members of their Groups, included those elected mid term, undertake the essential training as soon as practicable after their election and that appropriate sessions be scheduled after Full Council meetings to assist in the achievement of this requirement.

## Part 9 - Members – Role Descriptions

### Scrutiny Committee Chair (and in their absence, the Vice Chair)

#### Role

Within the relevant statutory provisions and the requirements of the Council's Constitution the purpose of the Chair's role is to provide leadership for the Committee's activities and at its meetings.

The Scrutiny Committee Chair's role and key responsibilities are:-

- To take the lead in scrutinising the activities of the Cabinet, in particular by co-ordinating the activities of the Scrutiny Committee by liaising with relevant Members and officers
- To take the lead in scrutinising the performance of services in carrying out the Council's policies
- To chair the Scrutiny Committee, co ordinate its activities and take a lead role in the work of the Committee
- To lead and oversee the proper process of call in of Cabinet decisions, once made, in accordance with Council Procedure Rules
- To provide advice to Cabinet on major issues or policies before final recommendations are made to Cabinet
- To contribute effectively to the Council's scrutiny process by ensuring that the questioning of relevant Cabinet Member on the development of policy and strategies and performance against such strategies and policies, whether at the Scrutiny Committee, full Council or by other means
- To scrutinise external reports on Council performance
- To identify cross cutting issues and to ensure a corporate approach to scrutiny in such areas
- To lead the investigation of policy proposals referred to the Committee by Cabinet by leading the Committee in obtaining preliminary background information
- To lead on the selection of witnesses and determining whether evidence is to be given orally or in writing
- To lead on determining a timetable for investigation
- To commission formal research to deliver the Committee's work programme
- To ensure regular contact with non Cabinet Members, community representatives, local stakeholders and the public to inform the effective scrutiny of policies, strategies, budgets and performance
- To establish and maintain effective working relationships with the Chief Executive, Executive Directors, Monitoring Officer, Statutory Scrutiny Officer and other key staff
- To contribute to meetings of the Scrutiny Committee Chairs as appropriate

## Part 9 - Members – Role Descriptions

### Scrutiny Committee Member

#### Role

A Committee Member will contribute to the good government of the area by monitoring decision making, standards of service provision and examining policy issues. The role will involve monitoring the work of the Cabinet and the work of officers in carrying out Council policy through decision making.

The Scrutiny Committee Member's role and key responsibilities are:-

- To participate constructively in the activities of the Committee under the guidance of the Chair
- To monitor the Council's decision making process as part of the Scrutiny Committee
- To investigate the basis on which key decisions are taken and ensure that they are consistent with Council Policy as part of the Scrutiny Committee
- To monitor the effect of national legislation on the Council
- To hold Cabinet Members and officers to account in respect of their actions in carrying out Council policy
- To investigate the quality of services provided in accordance with the Scrutiny Committee's programme
- To participate in targeted reviews of the implementation of existing policies and the development of new policies by the Council through the scrutiny arrangements available and through Group consultation
- To participate constructively in any task groups or select committee work agreed by the Committee
- To establish and maintain effective working relationships with the Chief Executive, Executive Directors, Monitoring Officer, Statutory Scrutiny Officer and other key staff

## Part 9 - Members – Role Descriptions

### Planning Committee Chair

#### Role

A Planning Committee is chaired by one of its Members who is elected by the Committee itself.

The **Planning Committee Chair's** role and key responsibilities are:-

- To chair meetings of the Planning Committee
- To act as the Council's lead spokesperson in respect of the Committee's activities
- To ensure that the Committee's activities are publicised to other Members of the Council
- To ensure that the Vice Chair is adequately briefed on relevant issues
- To develop and maintain a working knowledge of the functions dealt with by the Committee and the procedures and practices that govern its operation
- To give guidance to officers as necessary about the Committee's business
- To respond to officers' requests for advice on issues they propose to deal with under the Council's Scheme of Delegation
- To ensure that all the Committee's Members are adequately trained to discharge the Committee's functions
- To establish effective working relationships with the Chief Executive, Directors, Monitoring Officer and other officers involved in the functions exercised by the Committee

## Part 9 - Members – Role Descriptions

### Member Champion

#### Role

Member Champions are appointed to ensure that communities of interest as well as geographic communities have a strong voice. These appointments are open to all Members of the Council.

There following are the areas of community interest:-

- Champion for older people
- Champion for young people
- Champion for the business sector
- Champion for affordable housing
- Champion for equalities and diversity
- Champion for the third sector
- Champion for assets

The **Member Champion's** key role and responsibilities as regards their particular area of community interest are:-

- To be the Member “expert” and act as a “critical friend”
- To provide leadership within and outside the Council
- To keep abreast of legal/policy implications
- To assist the relevant Portfolio Holder if requested to do so
- To assist officers with the development of policy
- To act as the Member points of contact internally and for external agencies
- To provide improved political support and work towards increased awareness within the Council as well as to the relevant local communities
- To support the Council's performance and join up as necessary with other Directorates and Member Champions on cross cutting areas
- To support the Council's partnership working and to encourage other organisations and people to become involved
- To work with colleagues in other similar roles on local government nationally to develop national policy
- To establish effective working relationships with the Chief Executive, Directors, Monitoring Officer, Heads of Service and other officers involved in the functions exercised by the Committee



## **Part 9 - Members – Role Descriptions**

### **Deputy Portfolio Holder**

- The purpose of the Deputy Portfolio Holder role is to support the work of the designated Cabinet principal, particularly in those areas of Special Responsibility assigned by the Leader of the Council.
- Deputy Portfolio Holder appointments shall be at the discretion of the Leader and may be varied by him at any time.
- Deputy Portfolio Holders shall not be members of the Cabinet and may not exercise any executive powers, which shall be reserved to their Cabinet principals, either collectively or individually. Deputy Portfolio Holders may, however, be invited to speak at Cabinet or other Council meetings on matters where they have assisted their Cabinet principal, but may not vote.
- Deputy Portfolio Holders shall not sit on any Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Task Groups or Working Parties which are established to consider any matter on which they have undertaken any work for the Executive.
- Deputy Portfolio Holders may assist in the design and development of strategic priorities of the Council, as these relate to their allocated Portfolio area or in such other areas as the Leader of the Council may decide.
- Deputy Portfolio Holders may assist in the monitoring of performance in areas designated by the Leader of the Council or in such other areas as he shall decide.
- Deputy Portfolio Holders may, where appropriate under the Council's Constitution, represent their designated Cabinet principal at meetings or visits, both within the County and beyond.
- Deputy Portfolio Holders shall provide guidance to their Cabinet principal on budget and service development/improvement priorities within their area of responsibility.
- Deputy Portfolio Holders shall work constructively and in an open and transparent way with Backbench and Opposition Members, and with Council officers, to ensure that the process of Overview and Scrutiny is appropriate, effective, and proportionate.
- Deputy Portfolio Holders shall support their Cabinet principal in driving forward the process of transformation, continuous improvement, and the responsiveness in Council services within their area of Special Responsibility.
- Deputy Portfolio Holders shall ensure that activities within their area of responsibility take proper account of the Council's vision, core values, agreed standards, and outcomes for local people.