

ARTICLE 2 - MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

2.1. Composition and Eligibility

(a) Composition

The Council will comprise 37 Members, otherwise called Councillors. Two, or in some cases three, Councillors will be elected by the voters of each ward in accordance with a scheme drawn up by the Local Government Boundary Committee and approved by the Secretary of State.

(b) Eligibility

Only registered voters of the Borough or those living or working there will be eligible to hold the office of Councillor.

2.2. Election and Terms of Councillors

The ordinary election of a third (or as near as may be) of all Councillors will usually be held on the first Thursday in May in three years out of four. The ordinary term of office of Councillors will be four years starting on the fourth day after being elected and finishing on the fourth day after the date of the regular election four years later.

However, following the outcome of periodic electoral reviews, all Councillors will come up for re-election.

An order may be made by the Secretary of State at least six months before the local election day to provide that in a year in which a European Parliamentary general election is held, the ordinary day of election of Councillors for the Borough be changed so that it is held on the same day as the European Parliamentary general election.

The Leader will be a Councillor appointed by Full Council for a 4-year term (or until the expiry of the Leader's term of office as a Councillor). The Leader will be elected for the first time at the Annual Council meeting when the new executive arrangements are brought into force (commencing with the May 2011 Elections).

2.3. Roles and Functions of All Councillors

(a) Key Roles

- (1) To be familiar with what is going on in their ward, bringing any concerns to the Council's attention and representing the interests of their constituents on the proposals.
- (2) To be easily accessible to constituents, helping individuals in their dealings with the Council.
- (3) To balance different interests in their ward and to represent the ward as a whole, at the same time being mindful of the interests of the whole Borough.
- (4) To represent the Council at meetings of other organisations to which they have been appointed by the Council.

- (5) To provide support to community groups/charities operating in the town to which they have been nominated by the Council.
- (6) To abide by the Councillors' Code of Conduct and the protocols contained in the Council's Constitution.
- (7) To be clear about the responsibilities of the Committees and groups of which they are a full voting member; and to keep abreast of the business of these bodies.
- (8) To participate in the governance and management of the Council.
- (9) To be the ultimate policy makers, carrying out strategic and corporate management functions and overseeing the implementation of the Council's Corporate Plan.
- (10) To embrace the cultural values set out in the Corporate Plan.
- (11) To contribute to good decision making, actively encouraging community participation in the process.
- (12) To be committed to continuous improvement and development as a Councillor, attending appropriate training courses, seminars and briefings for this purpose.

(b) Rights and Duties

- (1) Councillors will have such rights of access to such documents, information, land and buildings of the Council as are necessary for the proper discharge of their functions and in accordance with the law.
- (2) Councillors will not make public information which is confidential or exempt without the consent of the Council or divulge information given in confidence to anyone other than a Councillor or employee entitled to know it.
- (3) For these purposes "confidential" and "exempt" information are defined in the Access to Information Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution
- (4) In addition to the rights conferred in Council Procedure Rule 11.4, a Member may ask any Member of the Cabinet or the Chair of any Committee a formal question in writing under this Article about any issue relevant to their portfolio or relating to the Committee concerned at any time during the Committee cycle. The Member asking the question should expect a written reply within ten working days, and the question and the response will be published in the Councillors' Information Bulletin.

2.4. The Role of a Committee Chair

- (a) To prepare for and chair meetings in a fair, impartial and competent manner;
- (b) To have a clear understanding of the scope and range of the services and current agreed policies for which their Committee is responsible;

2.5. The Role of Opposition Group Leader

- (a) To give political leadership to the group.

- (b) To be spokesperson for the opposition group, expressing views on behalf of the group at the Cabinet (with the prior permission of the Chair) and at Full Council meetings.
- (c) This sub section does not affect the speaking rights of every Member of the Council conferred in Cabinet Procedure Rule 2.2 and in the Council Procedure Rules
- (d) To represent the opposition group's interests on issues concerning the political management of the Council, meeting regularly with the Chief Executive.

2.6. **Conduct**

Councillors will at all times observe the Members' Code of Conduct and the Protocol on Member/Employee Relations set out in Part 5 of this Constitution.

2.7. **Allowances**

Councillors will be entitled to receive allowances in accordance with the Members' Allowances Scheme set out in Part 6 of this Constitution.

2.8. **Attendance**

If any Member of the Council fails for six consecutive months to attend any Committee, Sub-Committee or a meeting of the authority as defined in section 85 of the LGA 1972, then, unless the failure is due to some reason approved by the local authority, she or he will cease to be a Member of the local authority.