

ARTICLE 2 - MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

2.1 COMPOSITION AND ELIGIBILITY

• **Composition**

The Council will comprise 99 Members, otherwise called Councillors. 3 Councillors will be elected by the voters of each Ward in accordance with a scheme drawn up by the Local Government Commission and approved by the Secretary of State.

• **Eligibility**

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

2.2 ELECTION AND TERMS OF COUNCILLORS

In 2005 and every fourth year after there will be no regular election. The ordinary election of a third (or as near as may be) of all Councillors will be held on the first Thursday in May in each year beginning in 2006. The terms of office of Councillors will usually be four years¹ starting on the fourth day after being elected and finishing on the fourth day after the date of the regular election four years later

2.3 ROLES AND FUNCTIONS OF ALL COUNCILLORS

• **Key Roles**

All Councillors will:

- (i) collectively be the ultimate policy-makers and carry out a number of strategic and corporate management functions;
- (ii) represent their communities and bring their views into the Council’s decision-making process, i.e. become the advocate of and for their communities;
- (iii) contribute to the good governance of the area and actively encourage community participation and citizen involvement in decision making;
- (iv) deal with individual casework and act as an advocate for constituents in resolving particular concerns or grievances;
- (v) balance different interests identified within the Ward and represent the Ward as a whole;

¹ Boundary changes in 2004 meant that the elections in that year were for all seats. In order to re-establish the pattern of election by thirds, it was agreed that the candidate in each Ward with the most votes would hold office for the usual four year period, the candidate who came second in the poll would hold office for three years and the candidate who came third in the poll for that Ward would hold office for two years only.

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- (vi) be included in decision making;
- (vii) participate in the governance and management of the Council;
- (viii) be available to represent the Council on other bodies; and
- (ix) maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics.

• **Rights and Duties**

- (i) 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.
- (ii) 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 Officer entitled to know it.
- (iii) For these purposes, “confidential” and “exempt” information are defined in the Access to Information Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution.

2.4 CONDUCT

Councillors will at all times observe the Codes and Protocols set out in Part 5 of this Constitution.

2.5 ALLOWANCES

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

2.6 INSPECTION OF LAND/PREMISES ETC.

A Member of the Council unless authorised to do so by the Council or a Committee shall not inspect any lands or premises which the Council have the right or duty to inspect or enter upon or issue any order respecting any works which are being carried out by on or behalf of the Council.

2.7 USE OF COMMITTEE ROOMS

Committee Rooms at the Civic Hall and other Council offices when not otherwise in use, shall be available, for use by any Member or group of Members of the Council for the purpose of conducting any business or discussing any matter relating to the work of the Council.

2.8 ACCESS TO THE CONSTITUTION

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The Constitution and such statutory provisions as regulate the proceedings and business of the Council, shall be published in accordance with Article 16.3. Upon receipt of the Member's declaration of acceptance of office on the Member's being elected to the Council the Chief Executive shall inform the Member that these documents are available.

2.9 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Members will be provided with training and development to enable them to perform their duties as a councillor. Some training will be designated as essential² and Members will be supported and encouraged to take up that training.

² A list of essential training will be maintained by the Member Development Officer in conjunction with Member Management Committee.