

# Appendix 1 – Office of County Councillor – Role and Expectations

## SHROPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Office of County Councillor - Role and Expectations

#### Core Duties - Local

1. County Councillors are elected to serve as advocates for their communities. They ensure the needs of communities - and issues facing communities - are represented to and effectively addressed by the County Council as a whole.
2. This path role is at the heart of local democracy. Serving as an effective community representative is the core role for all Members of Shropshire County Council.
3. Members meet the demands this places upon them in different ways. However, the County Council will expect all its Councillors to take steps to keep in touch with their communities. It is assumed that councillors will normally attend meetings of all Town and Parish Councils/Meetings on at least an annual basis to listen to the concerns of local people. There will be correspondence with constituents and with the council organisation, and telephone calls/fax/e-mail from local people. The demands on Members locally often involve evenings/weekends. Councillors will also be expected to support any local consultation exercises by the County Council in their area.

#### Core Role - County-wide

4. The second core role of Councillors is that of strategic participation in the affairs of the whole Council.
5. In these Council-wide activities, Members have to balance the needs and concerns of the whole of the Council's area - and crystallise county-wide priorities between services, and indeed between the competing needs of areas - in the interests of the whole County. Thus the focus of Councillor involvement has a county-wide perspective, but even then Councillors will be expected to be representing in to this strategic involvement the particular needs of their community.
6. These strategic decisions are made by the Council as a whole - meeting in plenary session - and by the Council's Executive. In addition there are a number of small Member Panels with a Scrutiny and Review Role.
7. The County Council meet nine times a year. In these meetings, it decides overall issues of policy, holds the Executive to account, and reviews progress in overall performance. Annually the County Council sets the budget and agrees a Corporate Performance Plan.
8. Councillors may be asked to serve on one of the Council's Scrutiny Panels. These are likely to meet at least bi-monthly. These roles involve, for example:
  - reviewing performance against published plans

## **Appendix 1 – Office of County Councillor – Role and Expectations**

- critically examining performance indicators
  - scrutinising some decisions either before or after they have been taken in the first instance.
9. There are also a number of Committees with specific delegated functions - for example, Planning, Rights of Way, Standards and Pensions and most Members will be asked to serve on at least one of these.
  10. 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.
  11. Councillors might also develop special interests - in which they will champion a particular issue or policy across all Council activities.
  12. Some councillors will also be involved in representing the Council at National, Regional and Sub-Regional Forums.
  13. 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 new political structures arrangements is for meetings to be shorter and more focused.

### **Payment Scheme**

14. To cover the expected demands for this core role as defined, and the role in county-wide strategic matters, Councillors receive a basic annual payment of £7,206.50.
15. The council has agreed an attendance target for each of the more formal activities - 75% attendance target for the scheduled meetings of each formally constituted Panel and Committee on which a Member is asked to serve. Actual attendance records are published. In addition, Members are expected to trigger the Council's substitution scheme for all pre-notifiable absences.

### **Extra Responsibilities**

16. Some Councillors will be appointed to posts with extra responsibilities.
17. These are reviewed from time to time. However, for the purpose of illustration, these are likely to include:
  - Leader of the Council
  - Leader of the Opposition
  - Other Group Leaders
  - Chairman of the Council
  - Member of the Executive (the Cabinet)
  - Chairman of Scrutiny Panels
  - Opposition Spokespersons
  - Chairman of Commissioning of Performance Panel

## **Appendix 1 – Office of County Councillor – Role and Expectations**

18. Each group is also able to allocate extra responsibilities to some of its Members.
19. 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.

### **Facilities**

20. All Members of the Council will:
  - be issued with a standard specification computer - much of the Council's routine business is conducted electronically.
  - have access to the Members' Secretary for office support in Shirehall
  - receive "induction" training on first election to the Council and be expected to participate in appropriate personal or skills-based developmental programmes.
  - expect to have regular contact with the officers responsible for service delivery and co-ordination in their area.
21. The Council also has a scheme for the reimbursement of child care costs.

### **Political Activities**

22. 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.

### **Conduct**

23. All Councillors have to undertake to abide by the Code of Conduct for Councillors. This incorporates the provisions of the National Code of Practice to which have been added some specific County Council requirements.
24. Suspected breaches of the agreed Code of Conduct will be referred in the first instance to the National Standards Board.
25. Councillors are also expected at all times to show leadership to the organisation as a whole - and be effective representatives of the Council within their communities.

# Appendix 2 – Office of County Councillor – Roles with Special Responsibilities

## SHROPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Office of County Councillor Roles with Special Responsibilities

#### Introduction

1. The paper, “Office of County Councillor - Role and Expectations” sets out the responsibilities of all elected Members. Effectively, this is a core “job description” for all 48 County Councillors within the proposed political structures.
2. In addition to this core role, certain Members carry extra responsibilities. It is these post-holders, within the new structure of Member payments, that will receive the equivalent of special responsibility payments.
3. The statements that follow attempt to define the nature of these responsibilities.

#### Posts with Extra Responsibilities

4. Extra responsibilities are defined for the following posts:
  - Chairman of Council (and Vice)
  - Leader of Council and Deputy Leader (if appointed) (and Opposition Leader)
  - Group Leader
  - Member of the Executive (the Cabinet)
  - Chairmen of Scrutiny Panels (and Vice)
  - Chairman of Commissioning and Performance Panel
  - Chairmen of other Standing Committees (and Vice)
  - Chairman or Vice-Chairman of Combined Fire Authority (when office held by SCC Member)
  - Opposition Spokespersons
  - Young Persons Champion
  - Old Persons Champion

#### Role Statements - Outline

5. Chairman of Council:
  - civic/ceremonial representation of Council
  - civic leadership of Council
  - advocate for whole membership of the Council
  - chairmanship of meetings of Council
  - chairmanship of Standards Committee
  - accountability to Council.

## **Appendix 2 – Office of County Councillor – Roles with Special Responsibilities**

6. Leader of Council:
  - political leadership of the County Council
  - development of overall County Council Policy stance
  - achievement of consensus in a ‘balanced’ Council
  - political representation of, and advocate for whole Council
  - external networking and liaison with key partner organisations and stakeholders
  - leadership of County Council Cabinet
  - appointing Members of the Cabinet and determining their Portfolios
  - setting the agenda for Cabinet and publishing forward work programme
  - determining where decisions of the Executive will be taken
  - ensuring appropriate Council response to all issues, and to the needs of the community
  - accountability to Council.
  
7. Group Leader (one post for each political group):
  - leadership of Political Group
  - development of overall Group stance on Council-wide issues
  - external representation of County Council Group views
  - discipline/housekeeping issues - for the Group
  - accountability to Group
  
8. Member of the Executive (the Cabinet):

See following Appendix 3
  
9. Chair of Corporate Support Services Scrutiny Panel:
  - control of all resources
  - ad-hoc scrutiny investigations
  - scrutiny of the activities of Chief Executive’s Office, Resources and Legal and Democratic Services
  - accountability to the Council

## Appendix 2 – Office of County Councillor – Roles with Special Responsibilities

10. Scrutiny Panel Chair  
See following Appendix 4.
11. Chairman of Commissioning and Performance Panel:
  - chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Performance
  - Commissioning and Performance Panel will have overall responsibility for the Corporate Performance Management Framework
12. Chairman of the other Standing Committees (e.g. Pensions, Planning, Rights of Way, Standards)
  - chairmanship of Committee
  - urgency decisions between meetings
  - accountability to Council.
13. Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Shropshire Combined Fire and Rescue Authority. The County Council hold either the Chairmanship or Vice-Chairmanship of the Fire Authority by rotation:
  - political leadership of Fire Authority
  - political representation of, and advocate for Fire Authority
  - external representation of Fire Authority
  - liaison with County Council on Fire Authority issues.
14. Opposition Spokespersons (to “shadow” the Leader of Council and Members of the Executive):
  - parallel responsibilities
  - accountability to groups.

# Appendix 3 – Role Description for Cabinet Members

## ROLE DESCRIPTION FOR CABINET MEMBERS

### General

1. Cabinet members are accountable to the County Council for the development and delivery of services and cross-cutting policies, the specific allocation of which is agreed by County Council.
2. For portfolios covering the development and delivery of services, cabinet members:
  - a. define community need;
  - b. develop policy and when appropriate plan for implementing policy change;
  - c. consult with stakeholders, communities, users and employees;
  - d. monitor delivery.
3. For portfolios covering cross-cutting areas of policy, cabinet members work across all council services and will develop policies/plans and monitor their delivery as described above.

### Limitations

4. Cabinet members must:
  - a. act within the general scheme of delegation as agreed by the County Council and the extent of delegated authority to Cabinet Members agreed at the Annual Council meeting;
  - b. work within the corporate plan aims and priorities;
  - c. positively promote the values of the County Council;
  - d. work within cash limited budgets, and the financial rules, as agreed by the County Council;
  - e. follow and promote the principles of Best Value.

### Linkages

5. Cabinet members will develop:
  - a. strong links with non-executive members of the Council;
  - b. a positive relationship with relevant scrutiny panels.
6. Cabinet members will take collective responsibility for the work of the executive as a whole.
7. Day to day management decisions as delegated to the Council's chief officers and their senior colleagues.
8. The Leader of the Council has overall political accountability for the services of the Council.

### Review

9. From time to time, the performance of cabinet members will be appraised by the Leader of the Council.

## Appendix 4 – Scrutiny Panel Chair

### ***Principal Accountabilities***

Take a lead in scrutinising the activities of the Executive, in particular by co-ordinating the activities of the scrutiny committee by liaising with relevant councillors and officers.

Take a lead in scrutinising the performance of services in carrying out the council's policies.

### ***Key Duties***

Chair the scrutiny committee, co-ordinate its activities and take a lead role in the work of the committee.

Lead and oversee the proper process of call-in of executive decisions, once made, in accordance with council procedure rules.

Provide advice to the Executive on major issues or policies before final recommendations are made (by the Executive).

Contribute effectively to the council's scrutiny process by ensuring the questioning of the relevant executive councillor on the development of policy and strategies and performance against such strategies and policies, whether at the scrutiny committee, the Full Council or by other means.

Scrutinise external reports on council performance. Scrutinise performance across the performance assessment frameworks and in respect of best value.

Identify cross-cutting issues and ensure a corporate approach to scrutiny in such areas.

Lead the investigation of policy proposals referred to it by the Executive by leading the committee in obtaining preliminary background information.

Lead on the selection of witnesses and determining whether evidence is to be given orally or in writing.

Lead on determining a timetable for investigation.

Commission formal research to deliver the committee's work programme.

Ensure regular contact with non-executive councillors, community representatives, local stakeholders and the public to inform the effective scrutiny of policies, strategies, budgets and performance.

## Appendix 5 – Scrutiny Panel Member

### ***Principal Accountabilities***

Contribute to the good government of the area by monitoring decision-making, standards of service provision and examining policy issues.

Monitor the work of the Executive and the work of officers in carrying out council policy through decision-making.

### ***Key Duties***

Participate constructively in the activities of the committee under the guidance of the chair.

Monitor the council's decision-making process as part of the Scrutiny Panel.

Investigate the basis on which major decisions are taken and ensure they are consistent with council policy as part of the Scrutiny Panel.

Monitor the effect of national legislation on the council.

Hold executive councillors and officers to account in respect of their actions in carrying out council policy.

Monitor the council's performance, especially in relation to delivering best value, jointly, where appropriate, with the executive member.

Investigate the quality of services provided in accordance with the Scrutiny Panel's programme.

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 mechanism.

Participate constructively in any short-life task groups or select committee work agreed by the committee.