

West Suffolk Council

Article 2 – Members of the Council

2.1 Composition and eligibility

The Council comprises 64 Councillors who are elected by the voters of the district. There are 43 wards in the District and one or more Councillors will be elected to each ward in line with a scheme which was drawn up by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England and approved by Parliament.

To be eligible to stand for election as a Councillor, a person must:

- be at least 18 years old
- be a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of any member state of the European Union, and
- meet at least one of the following four qualifications:
 - (a) You are, and will continue to be, registered as a local government elector for the local authority area in which you wish to stand from the day of your nomination onwards.
 - (b) You have occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the local authority area during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election.
 - (c) Your main or only place of work during the 12 months prior to the day of your nomination and the day of election has been in the local authority area.
 - (d) You have lived in the local authority area during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election.

2.2 Elections and term of office

The regular election of Councillors is held on the first Thursday in May, every fourth year. The term of office of Councillors will start on the fourth day after being elected and finish on the fourth day after the date of the next regular election, with the exception of the Leader and Chair who will hold office until the Annual Meeting which follows the election. (Provisions for the resignation or removal of the Leader at other times are set out in Article 6).

2.3 Roles and functions of councillors

2.3.1 The role and function of Councillors are set out in Section 3 of the Constitution (Member Role Descriptions).

2.3.2 Some Councillors are appointed to specific roles, such as chairing Committees or acting as a member of the Cabinet. These roles have a high level of responsibility associated with them, and can be very demanding on the Councillor's time. It is desirable that Councillors would only take up one special responsibility role (such as acting as Chair or Vice-Chair of another Council Committee) at any point. The Council recognises that there are some exceptional situations where it may be necessary for a Councillor to take on additional special responsibility roles to ensure all posts are filled by Councillors with sufficient experience, training or knowledge

2.4 Rights and duties

2.4.1 Councillors have rights of access to Council documents, information, land and buildings as are necessary for them to be able to carry out their role properly and in accordance with the law.

2.4.2 Councillors will not make any information public if it 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.

2.4.3 For these purposes, 'confidential' and 'exempt' information are defined in the Access to Information Rules contained in Part 4 of the Constitution.

2.5 Conduct

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

2.6 Allowances

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