

# West Suffolk Council

## Section 6 - Member Role Descriptions

### Ward Councillor

#### 1. Overview

- 1.1 First and foremost, you will represent your Ward, engaging with residents and groups on a wide range of different issues and taking on an important community leadership role. At the Council, you will contribute to the development of policies and strategies, including budget-setting. You may also be involved in taking decisions on planning or licensing applications.
- 1.2 As a Councillor, you will be expected to balance the needs and interests of the Council, your local area, your residents and voters, community groups, local businesses and your political party (if you belong to one).
- 1.3 In balancing the varying needs and interests of your residents, it is important that you are able to pro-actively engage with the work of the Council and input the views of your communities to relevant committees.

#### 2. Representing the local area

- 2.1 Represent effectively the interests of the Ward for which you were elected and deal with residents' enquiries and representations, fairly and without prejudice.
- 2.2 Champion the causes which best relate to the interests of the community and campaign for improvements in the quality of life of the community in terms of diversity, safety, well-being, economy and environment.
- 2.3 Use local knowledge in the development of Council policies, including listening to the needs of local people and taking their views into account when considering policy proposals and decision-making.
- 2.4 Ensure that local people are informed about:
  - Services in their area;
  - Decisions that affect them;
  - The reasons why decisions were taken by the Council;
  - Their rights as residents.
- 2.5 Represent the Authority to the community and the community to the Authority, through the various forums available.

- 2.6 When appropriate, respond to any Council consultation regarding matters within your Ward.
- 2.7 Know your Ward, and be aware of its particular qualities, advantages and challenges.
- 2.8 Develop effective working relationships with other local representatives, including other local Ward Members and the County Councillors, and representatives of local organisations, associations, interest groups and businesses
- 2.9 Encourage people in your Ward to participate in the democratic decision-making process by engaging with consultations etc.
- 2.10 Above all, you are a leader in your community. You act as an important link between the Council and your community, and you need to ensure you keep both your Council, and your community, informed of the work that each other is doing. That will mean regularly communicating with and reporting to Parish/Town Councils, Community Groups and Residents Associations, and reporting back from their meetings to appropriate forums.

### **3 Participating in the work of the Council**

- 3.1 Participate effectively at all meetings of Council and at Committees, Groups or other Forums to which you are appointed.
- 3.2 Contribute actively to the formation and scrutiny of the Council's priorities, budget, strategies and service delivery.
- 3.3 Develop and maintain a working knowledge of the Council's services, management arrangements, powers/duties and constraints and develop good working relationships with the Council's Officers.
- 3.4 Fulfil the statutory and locally determined requirements of an elected Member, including compliance with all relevant codes of conduct and protocols.
- 3.5 Represent the Council on outside bodies to which it appoints you, ensuring that relevant Officers and Members in the Council are made aware of the work of the outside body and any matters arising from their meetings.
- 3.6 Support the Chair in promoting the civic life of the Council.
- 3.7 Participate in the scrutiny of the services and policies of the Council and their effectiveness in meeting the strategic objectives of the Council and the needs of its residents.
- 3.8 Actively engage with the Member Development Programme, ensuring you have the skills you need to discharge your role

effectively and comply with any compulsory training requirements and recommended training. Ensure you have sufficient IT skills to enable you to make use of the relevant Council systems.

## **General Roles and Responsibilities of all Cabinet Members**

### **1. Accountability and Leadership**

- 1.1 Each Portfolio Holder will be accountable, and provide the political leadership, for their specific areas of responsibility.

### **2. Shared Responsibility as a Member of the Cabinet**

Responsibility for:-

- 2.1 The co-ordination, promotion and implementation of the Council's statutory plans and strategies and for the setting of the Council's objectives.
- 2.2 The oversight, development, monitoring and promotion of all services provided by the Council within the appropriate performance management framework.
- 2.3 Suitable and proper arrangements being made for the procurement, development, monitoring and promotion of all services relating to Cabinet functions which are provided under contract to the Council.
- 2.4 The promotion of the interests of the District and the whole of West Suffolk and of all the residents, businesses, other organisations and stakeholders within West Suffolk.
- 2.5 A community leadership role being taken by the Council across the public, voluntary and business sectors involving the development of good and effective working links and partnerships with all sectors.
- 2.6 The promotion and implementation of an effective equal opportunity policy in relation both to the employment of staff by the Council and the delivery of services by the Council and other agencies.
- 2.7 The promotion of services which contribute to the Council's Corporate Priorities.
- 2.8 Improving arrangements for communicating, consulting and maintaining a dialogue with residents and service users.

### **3. Specific Responsibilities**

Portfolio Holders will:-

- 3.1 Take the leading role in the development and implementation of the policies and covered by their Portfolio.

3.2 Be responsible for ensuring the effective management and delivery of the services or functions covered by their Portfolio within the following framework:-

- (a) The Council's overall strategic, corporate and policy objectives.
- (b) All statutory and other plans and strategies approved by the Council.
- (c) The statutory and local obligation to ensure best value.
- (d) The approved revenue and capital budgets.
- (e) The law and the Council's Constitution; and
- (f) The decisions made at meetings of the Cabinet.

#### **4. Specific roles of Cabinet Members**

Will include:-

- (a) Advising the Council, Cabinet or the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on matters concerning the implementation, monitoring and performance of services, groups of services, initiatives and projects.
- (b) Monitoring the performance of portfolio functions and activities to ensure corporate objectives and targets are achieved.
- (c) Advising and consulting with Officers on matters of significance for Council policy and its implementation.
- (d) Representing the Council's views to other agencies, community interests and local media.
- (e) Formally representing the Cabinet at meetings and Working Groups of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Performance and Audit Committee.
- (f) Liaising with other lead Members and Officers on strategic matters to ensure proper co-ordination, consistency and seamless delivery of services within Council policy.
- (g) Chairing, from time to time, meetings of members and officers and with Council partners.
- (h) Assisting in the development of work programmes, Decisions Plans and the setting of agendas.
- (i) Presenting and reporting issues to the Council, its Committees and Members' seminars.
- (j) Being consulted as part of any decision-making processes within their Portfolio (if held) which have been delegated to Officers; and
- (k) Being consulted on any matters of urgency which an Officer needs to act upon prior to a Member decision.

## **Deputy Leader of the Council**

### **1. General**

- 1.1 The Deputy Leader of the Council is responsible for supporting the Leader in providing political leadership for the Cabinet, the Council and the District.
- 1.2 In the absence of the Leader, the Deputy Leader is authorised to act on their behalf in accordance with the Council's Constitution, in particular:-
  - (a) Chairing Cabinet meetings, conduct the Cabinet's business and present reports to Council.
  - (b) Enabling the preparation of the Decisions Plan.
  - (c) Consulting with the Chief Executive on strategic or policy matters where an urgent decision or action must be taken; and
  - (d) Where necessary, consulting with Group Leaders of other political groups, the Chair of the Council and the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee to expedite the efficient and effective delivery of Council business; and
  - (e) To perform any other duties of the Leader, as set out in the Constitution and the Job Description for the Leader.

### **2. Specific duties include:**

- 2.1 On behalf of the Leader, to represent the Council on local, regional and national bodies.
- 2.2 On behalf of the Leader, to represent Council policy to the community, partners and the media.
- 2.3 With the Leader, to attend quarterly meetings with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee and to ensure the work of these Committees is properly co-ordinated.
- 2.4 To carry out the duties identified in the role descriptions for Cabinet Members and their own Cabinet portfolio (if they hold one).

## **Leader of the Council**

### **1. General**

The Leader of the Council will represent the Council and provide political leadership for the Cabinet, the Council and the District.

### **2. Specific Responsibilities will be to:-**

- (a) Appoint Members of the Cabinet and determine portfolios, chair meetings of the Cabinet, agree the schedule and venue

for Cabinet meetings and make arrangements for special meetings and co-ordinate and manage Cabinet Members.

- (b) Enable preparation of the Decisions Plan.
- (c) Have an overview of, and advise on, the policy making of the District, act as lead Member on overall strategy and monitor the overall performance of the Council in delivering the agreed policies of the Council.
- (d) Represent Council policy to the community and partners.
- (e) Work closely with the Chief Executive on strategic matters to ensure the co-ordination, consistency and delivery of Council services and consult with the Chief Executive on strategic or policy matters where an urgent decision or action must be taken.
- (f) Represent the Council on local, regional and national bodies.
- (g) Promote and develop partnership working with other agencies, ensuring that the Council's priorities are met.
- (h) Where necessary consult with Group Leaders of other political groups to expedite the efficient and effective delivery of Council business.
- (i) Liaise with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee to ensure that work programmes are properly co-ordinated.