

ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCILLOR ROLE PROFILES

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Accountable to:

- Full Council
- Electorate

The Leader's role is to:

- Represent the Council externally in terms of policy position as directed by the Council
- Provide leadership to Councillors – for example co-ordinating cross-party discussions
- Be the point of contact for officers when seeking a political steer from the Council's administration
- Be available to respond to questions at Full Council meetings
- Represent the Council as the employer of the Head of Paid Service and take responsibility for their annual appraisal in accordance with the Council's scheme
- Ensure the Council manages its business within agreed financial limits.
- Discharge any delegated authority given to them by the Full Council
- Represent and pursue the interests of the Council in the community and at international, national and regional levels
- Be the key contact & principal spokesperson for outside organisations (including central Government, Local Authority Associations and Council partners and the Media)
- Meet regularly to progress the Council's objectives with Committee Chairs, the Chief Officers, Group Leaders, partner organisations, stakeholders, community representatives, government representatives, local Members of Parliament, etc.
- Promote high standards of corporate governance and ethical and inclusive conduct throughout the Council
- Promote and maintain professional working relationships and mutual respect between all Members and officers
- Lead in establishing the Council's policy direction and priorities (to be set out in the Council's Corporate Plan) and facilitate discussion thereon, and

lead in providing policy direction and guidance to the Chief Executive and Chief Officers

- Be involved in arrangements around major emergencies.

Desirable Skills:

1. Leadership skills:

- a. The ability to develop a vision for the Council and to drive the Council and its partners towards achieving that vision.
- b. 'Ambassadorial' skills – the ability to represent the Council within the authority, as well as outside of it on a sub-regional, regional and national level.
- c. The ability to lead the Council along the path of continuous improvement.
- d. The ability to provide political leadership for their particular group.

2. Political understanding:

- a. The ability to communicate values and promote a political vision.
- b. The ability to encourage democratic processes and public engagement.
- c. The ability to address difficult issues with other groups in a politically sensitive manner, whilst preserving their own political integrity.

3. Regulating and monitoring:

- a. Working knowledge and experience of chairing meetings.
- b. The ability to plan and prioritise the business of Council and its committees with regard to their terms of reference and the key challenges facing the Council.

4. Communication skills:

- a. The ability to facilitate effective communication within and across the Council and to ensure that the community can engage in the Council's decision-making processes.
- b. An ability to work with the media and to identify when additional support is required from public relations specialists to ensure that the Council is positively represented.

- c. Advanced listening and questioning skills.
 - d. Confidence in presenting and public speaking.
5. Partnership working:
- a. The ability to use tact and diplomacy to work across the full range of Council services, partners and political groups, to the benefit of the community.
 - b. The ability to build effective relationships with other parts of the political management and decision-making structure, such as full Council, Committees, and other political groups.
 - c. The ability to address difficult issues across all groups in a politically sensitive manner.

Desirable Knowledge:

1. A detailed understanding of the strategic role of the Leader of the Council.
2. A detailed understanding of the legally defined role of the Chief Executive and other senior officers.
3. Detailed knowledge of the work of national, regional and sub-regional organisations and the role of the Leader and Council within them.
4. A detailed understanding of the national policy framework and its impact on local policy development.
5. Detailed knowledge of the role of local partners and the services they deliver.
6. A detailed understanding of the Council's Constitution, Code of Conduct, budget and audit processes and key internal policies.
7. Understanding of the relationship between national politics and local political leadership.
8. An understanding of the wider, national issues facing Councillors and the practical implications for the Council's Councillors.
9. An understanding of project management principles.

DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Accountable to:

- Full Council
- Electorate
- Leader of the Council

The Deputy Leader's role is to:

- Assist the Leader of the Council in representing the Council to its citizens, stakeholders and partners and in providing political leadership for the Council and the District
- Assist the Leader in carrying out the key responsibilities associated with the role of Leader (as set out above)
- Undertake the powers, functions and responsibilities of the Leader in their absence.

Desirable Skills:

1. Leadership skills:

- a. The ability to develop a vision for the Council and to drive the Council and its partners towards achieving that vision.
- b. 'Ambassadorial' skills – the ability to represent the Council within the authority, as well as outside of it on a sub-regional, regional and national level.
- c. The ability to lead the Council along the path of continuous improvement.
- d. The ability to provide political leadership for their particular group.

2. Political understanding:

- a. The ability to communicate values and promote a political vision.
- b. The ability to encourage democratic processes and public engagement.
- c. The ability to address difficult issues with other groups in a politically sensitive manner, whilst preserving their own political integrity.

3. Regulating and monitoring:

- a. Working knowledge and experience of chairing meetings.

- b. The ability to plan and prioritise the business of Council and its committees with regard to their terms of reference and the key challenges facing the Council.

4. Communication skills:

- a. The ability to facilitate effective communication within and across the Council and to ensure that the community can engage in the Council's decision-making processes.
- b. An ability to work with the media and to identify when additional support is required from public relations specialists to ensure that the Council is positively represented.
- c. Advanced listening and questioning skills.
- d. Confidence in presenting and public speaking.

5. Partnership working:

- a. The ability to use tact and diplomacy to work across the full range of Council services, partners and political groups, to the benefit of the community.
- b. The ability to build effective relationships with other parts of the political management and decision-making structure, such as full Council, Committees, and other political groups.
- c. The ability to address difficult issues across all groups in a politically sensitive manner.

Desirable Knowledge:

1. A detailed understanding of the strategic role of the Leader of the Council.
2. A detailed understanding of the legally defined role of the Chief Executive and other senior officers.
3. Detailed knowledge of the work of national, regional and sub-regional organisations and the role of the Leader and Council within them.
4. A detailed understanding of the national policy framework and its impact on local policy development.
5. Detailed knowledge of the role of local partners and the services they deliver.

Appendix A1

6. A detailed understanding of the Council's Constitution, Code of Conduct, budget and audit processes and key internal policies.
7. Understanding of the relationship between national politics and local political leadership.
8. An understanding of the wider, national issues facing Councillors and the practical implications for the Council's Councillors.
9. An understanding of project management principles.

POLITICAL GROUP LEADER

Accountable to:

- Full Council
- Electorate
- The Members of the Group

The Political Group Leaders' role is to:

- Provide the leadership of a political group
- Be the principal political spokesperson for the political group
- Nominate members of their Group to serve on Committees, Working Groups, outside bodies, etc.
- Be a representative voice in dealings with government agencies, local authority associations etc.
- Ensure the highest standards of conduct by members of the group
- Be responsible for the appointment of group spokespersons and allocation of other responsibilities to group members as appropriate
- Assist in ensuring appropriate levels of attendance are maintained by group members
- Encourage a culture of learning and development among members, including the active participation of group members in briefings, seminars and other learning and development processes
- Attend Group Leaders' briefings and maintain effective liaison with the other group leaders.

CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

Accountable to:

- Full Council
- Electorate

The Chairman's role is to:

- Act in a non-political capacity as a symbol and ambassador of the Council
- Uphold and promote the purposes of the Constitution and to interpret the Constitution when necessary.
- Preside over meetings of the Council with impartiality, so that its business can be carried out efficiently, in an orderly fashion and with regard to the rights of Councillors and the interests of the community, including:
 - a. Determining that a meeting is properly constituted and quorate
 - b. Approving draft minutes of proceedings presented with the consent of the meeting
 - c. Deciding whether proposed motions and amendments are in order
- Ensure that the Council meeting is a forum for the debate of matters of concern to the local community
- Promote public involvement in the Council's activities
- Be the conscience of the Council
- Attend such civic and ceremonial functions of the Council as he/she determines appropriate.
- Host civic events to promote the interests of the Council and the District
- Receive official visitors on behalf of Rochford District Council.

Desirable Skills:

1. Regulating and monitoring:
 - a. Working knowledge and experience of chairing meetings.
 - b. The ability to interpret the Constitution.
 - c. Impartiality, objectivity and the ability to manage conflict.
2. Partnership working:
 - a. The ability to develop relationships.
3. Communication skills:
 - a. Advanced listening and questioning skills.
 - b. Good public speaking skills.
 - c. The ability to work with the media.

Desirable Knowledge:

1. A detailed understanding of the Council's Constitution.
2. A detailed understanding of the processes and structure of the Council.
3. An understanding of the rights and duties of Councillors.
4. A strong understanding of which issues are of concern to the community.
5. An understanding of the Council's activities.
6. A good understanding of civic protocols.

VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

Accountable to:

- Full Council
- Electorate
- Chairman of the Council

The Vice-Chairman's role is to:

- Undertake the duties and responsibilities of the Chairman if they are absent or unable to act
- Support the Chairman in the practical management of Council meetings.

Desirable Skills:

1. Regulating and monitoring:
 - a. Working knowledge and experience of chairing meetings.
 - b. The ability to interpret the Constitution.
 - c. Impartiality, objectivity and the ability to manage conflict.
2. Partnership working:
 - a. The ability to develop relationships.
3. Communication skills:
 - a. Advanced listening and questioning skills.
 - b. Good public speaking skills.
 - c. The ability to work with the media.

Desirable Knowledge:

1. A detailed understanding of the Council's Constitution.
2. A detailed understanding of the processes and structure of the Council.
3. An understanding of the rights and duties of Councillors.
4. A strong understanding of which issues are of concern to the community.
5. An understanding of the Council's activities.
6. A good understanding of civic protocols.

CHAIRMAN OF A COMMITTEE

Accountable to:

- Full Council
- Electorate

The Chairman of a Committee's role is to:

- Preside over meetings of the committee with impartiality, and in accordance with Committee Procedure Rules, so that its business can be carried out efficiently, in an orderly fashion and with regard to the rights of Councillors and the interests of the community, including:
 - a. Determining that a meeting is properly constituted and quorate
 - b. Approving draft minutes of proceedings presented with the consent of the meeting
 - c. Deciding whether proposed motions and amendments are in order
- Oversee the committee's work programme
- Participate in committee briefings or other pre-meetings as necessary for the effective conduct of the committee's business
- Provide final sign-off for meeting agendas
- Have an advanced awareness and understanding of the areas that fall within the committee's remit
- Act as the spokesperson for media releases relating to the committee's work and decisions
- Act as the main point of contact for officers in respect of matters relating to the committee.

Desirable Skills:

1. Regulating and monitoring:
 - a. Advanced chairing skills, including the ability to manage conflict.
 - b. The ability to interpret the Constitution.
 - c. Impartiality and objectivity.
2. Partnership working:
 - a. A strong ability to develop relationships.
3. Communication skills:
 - a. Advanced listening and questioning skills.
 - b. Good public speaking skills.
 - c. The ability to work with the media.

Desirable Knowledge:

1. Detailed understanding of the Council's Constitution.
2. Detailed understanding of the processes and structure of the Council.
3. Understanding of the rights and duties of Councillors.
4. A strong understanding of which issues are of concern to the community.
5. Understanding of the committee's activities.

VICE-CHAIRMAN OF A COMMITTEE

Accountable to:

- Full Council
- Electorate

The Vice-Chairman of a Committee's role is to:

- Preside over meetings of the committee if the Chairman is absent
- Contribute to the committee's work programme
- Participate in committee briefings or other pre-meetings as necessary for the effective conduct of the committee's business
- Have an advanced awareness and understanding of the areas that fall within the committee's remit.

Desirable Skills:

1. Regulating and monitoring:
 - a. Advanced chairing skills, including the ability to manage conflict.
 - b. The ability to interpret the Constitution.
 - c. Impartiality and objectivity.
2. Partnership working:
 - a. A strong ability to develop relationships.
3. Communication skills:
 - a. Advanced listening and questioning skills.
 - b. Good public speaking skills.
 - c. The ability to work with the media.

Desirable Knowledge:

1. Detailed understanding of the Council's Constitution.
2. Detailed understanding of the processes and structure of the Council.
3. Understanding of the rights and duties of Councillors.
4. A strong understanding of which issues are of concern to the community.
5. Understanding of the committee's activities.