

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

ROLE DESCRIPTIONS FOR DISTRICT COUNCILLORS (APPROVED BY COUNCIL ON 22ND APRIL 2009)

All Councillors, during the course of their term of office, will aim to acquire the following knowledge and skills which they will develop as their experience grows:

Knowledge – General

Huntingdonshire District Council

- An introduction to the Council, its democratic and Directorate structures and relevant strategies and plans.

Code of Conduct

- The current Members' Code of Conduct and the role of the Standards Committee in ensuring that the Code is adhered to.

The Constitution

- The Council's rule book of protocols and procedures.

Scrutiny

- The scrutiny procedure and the role of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

Partnerships

Partnership working through the Local Strategic Partnership and Neighbourhood Forums.

Notice of Executive Decisions

- The Cabinet's agenda for the ensuing four months.

Equalities, Customer Care and Risk Management

- Policies implemented by the Council.

Knowledge – Specific

Budgets and Finances

- Members should have a working knowledge of the Council's finances as they collectively have responsibility for approving the budget.

Planning

- Members should have a working knowledge of planning legislation, policies and procedures with Development Management Panel Members having a more extensive and detailed knowledge. Specialised training is mandatory for Members who wish to serve on the Development Management Panel.

Licensing

- Members should have a working knowledge of licensing legislation, policies and procedures and knowledge of the various licensing functions that the Council is responsible for. Specialised training is mandatory for Members who wish to serve on the Licensing Committee and Licensing and Protection Panel.

SKILLS*ICT – Word, Excel, Powerpoint, Email and Internet*

- All Members should be able to make full use of technology, not only as a tool for preparing reports, researching topics of interest or making presentations but also for contacting their constituents, colleagues and officers. Members should be encouraged to develop their own web pages through Modern.Gov.

Communication – Presentational Skills, Questioning Skills and Listening Skills

- Communication is used in every aspect of Members' roles and they should have the skills necessary to put across their point of view, the wishes of their constituents and information generally in a clear, concise and well planned manner that will make it easy to understand.

Written – Report Writing

- All Members should be able to prepare reports in a clear, concise and well planned format.

Media

- The ability to make use of the various forms of media, how to react to approaches from the media and when to encourage or discourage media interest.

Officers within the Democratic Services Section will assist Members to develop their abilities to meet the demands of their individual roles.

Desirable Skills and Abilities

Members should have the necessary attributes and skills -

- to represent the District Council and explain the policies and decisions affecting the individuals and communities in their Ward,
- to represent their Ward and the District Council on a range of external bodies,
- to communicate effectively with the local community, other Councillors and Council Officers,
- to be aware of the nature, scale and scope of the District Council and to develop and maintain a knowledge of its services, management arrangements, powers, duties and constraints,

- to develop good working relationships with other Councillors and relevant Officers of the Council,
- to participate in meetings of the Council and Committees/Panels as required, so ensuring the effective and efficient operation of the Council,
- to act as Ward representative and advocate for people resident in the Ward and to undertake a Councillor's Call for Action to bring forward issues on behalf of their constituents,
- to undertake casework for Ward residents,
- to contribute to policy and strategy review and development,
- to act as a community leader,
- to support local partnerships and organisations,
- to campaign on local issues,
- to work in collaboration with Officers to achieve solutions to local issues, and
- to use ICT effectively to communicate with Officers and others.

Profile

A Member should:

- ensure that constituents have access to him/her by way of surgeries, use of modern technology, letter and telephone,
- develop and maintain links as required with the local MP, MEPs, County Councillors and the Towns or Parishes situated in his/her electoral Ward,
- participate in any political group to which he/she belongs, and
- devote as much time as is necessary and reasonable to fulfil the requirements of the role effectively.

A Member should have:

- an ability to manage and prioritise workloads effectively,
- an ability to work to deadlines,
- effective communication skills including written, spoken and ICT, and
- an ability to network and develop relationships within the Council, Ward and wider community.