

Article 2 – Councillors

This article explains who *Councillors* are, what they must do and how long they serve as *Councillors*. You can find out who your *Councillor* is here and also find out information on how to stand for election as a *Councillor*.

2.1 Number of Councillors and areas they represent

The Council will have 53 members called *Councillors*. The voters of each *Ward* may elect one or more *Councillors* to represent them.

2.2 Who can be a Councillor?

Anybody aged 18 years or over who:-

- (a) is a citizen of the European Union, and
- (b) is registered to vote in local government elections in the District, or who has lived or worked there in the last 12 months, and
- (c) is not stopped by law from holding office as a *Councillor*

may stand for election as a *Councillor*.

2.2 When elections happen and how long Councillors are elected for

Elections for all *Wards* will take place on the first Thursday in May every four years. People elected as *Councillors* start being *Councillors* on the fourth day after being elected and finish on the fourth day after the next regular election.

2.3 Roles and functions of all Councillors

All *Councillors* should;

- (a) together be the makers of overall policy
- (b) represent, and speak up for their communities
- (c) deal with individual casework and speak up for members of the public
- (d) balance different interests within their *Ward* and represent it as a whole
- (e) be involved in Council decision making
- (f) be available to represent the Council on other bodies
- (g) maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics, and
- (h) consider the views and work on behalf of all the residents in the ward, not just those who voted for them

2.4 Rights

Councillors will have rights of access to Council documents, information, land, buildings and information technology necessary to allow them to carry out their functions.

2.5 Responsibilities

Councillors must follow the *Councillor Code of Conduct and Protocols* and register their interests.

Councillors must undertake all mandatory training as specified within the Member Development Strategy.

2.6 Allowances

Councillors will be entitled to receive allowances in accordance with the *Members Allowance Scheme*.

2.7 Stopping being a Councillor

A *Councillor* will stop being a *Councillor* if:-

- (a) they resign by giving written notice, or
- (b) they fail to attend meetings of the Council for a period of six months without having been granted a dispensation for their absence by the *Council Meeting*, or
- (c) they are stopped by law from holding office, or
- (d) the period for which they were elected has come to an end, as set out in Article 2.2 and they have not been re-elected.

Article 6 – Scrutiny

This article sets out that there will be four themed scrutiny committees to co-ordinate their work. It gives links to the functions each committee carries out and what rules they operate under.

Scrutiny committees are similar to select committees in Parliament. They can look at areas of policy or performance and make recommendations to the *Cabinet* or the *Council Meeting*. They can also look at proposed decisions and examine a decision of the *Cabinet* which has been taken but called in for review before it is carried out.

The public can also get involved with the scrutiny process and help shape and inform decision making and policy.

The *Audit and Corporate Governance Scrutiny Committee* has a special role in these arrangements because it also works alongside the *Standards Committee* to oversee the Council's governance.

6.1 Scrutiny Committees

(a) Composition

The *Council Meeting* will set up the following *Scrutiny Committees*:-

- (i) Growth Scrutiny Committee
- (ii) Communities Scrutiny Committee
- (iii) Organisation Scrutiny Committee
- (iv) Audit and Corporate Governance Scrutiny Committee

With nine Councillors on each Committee.

(b) Training

All members are required to undertake training.

6.2 Audit and Corporate Governance Scrutiny Committee

Article 7 refers to co-operation between the *Audit and Corporate Governance Scrutiny Committee* and the *Standards Committee* and reporting arrangements.

6.3 Functions

The *Scrutiny Committees* will have the functions set out in the *Functions Scheme*.

6.4 Rules

The *Scrutiny Committees* will follow the *Scrutiny Rules*.

Article 7 – The Standards Committee and the Audit and Corporate Governance Scrutiny Committee

This article sets out that there will be a *Standards Committee* and an *Audit and Corporate Governance Scrutiny Committee*.

The *Standards Committee* is a committee of *Councillors* and parish representatives. The Committee assists *Councillors* in achieving high standards of ethical conduct and following a *Code of Conduct*. It also deals with complaints about *Councillors* who may have broken the *Code of Conduct*.

The *Audit and Corporate Governance Scrutiny Committee* is responsible for overseeing the work of the Council's internal and external auditors, making sure the Council is well run and has good arrangements for managing money and risks.

7.1 Standards Committee

(a) Composition

There will be a *Standards Committee* of 11 members comprising:-

- (i) Nine *Councillors*
- (ii) Two non-voting *Parish Members* elected by the District's parish and town councils

(b) Independent Persons

The Council will appoint two Independent Persons who will be consulted by the authority before it makes a finding as to whether a member or co-opted member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct or decides on action to be taken in respect of that member.

They may also be consulted by the Authority in respect of a standards complaint at any other stage and by a member or co-opted member of the District Council or of a parish or town council against whom a complaint has been made.

(c) Role

The *Standards Committee* will have the roles and functions set out in the *Functions Scheme*.

(d) Training

All members are required to undertake training.

7.2 Audit and Corporate Governance Scrutiny Committee

(a) Composition

There will be an *Audit and Corporate Governance Scrutiny Committee* of nine members.

(b) Role

The *Audit and Corporate Governance Scrutiny Committee* will have the roles and functions set out in the *Functions Scheme*.

(c) Training

All members are required to undertake training.

7.3 Joint working of committees

The *Standards Committee* and the *Audit and Corporate Governance Scrutiny Committee* will co-operate on governance matters and will have the right to report directly to the *Council Meeting* on those matters.

Article 8 – Planning and Licensing Committees

This article sets out that the Council will have a Planning Committee and a Licensing Committee. The article provides links to what these committees do.

The Planning Committee decides whether to grant planning permission in more complex or controversial cases. More straightforward cases are decided within the Planning Services area under delegated arrangements.

The Licensing Committee decides whether to give licences for things like operating a taxi firm or driving a taxicab, and running a club or pub serving alcohol or with slot machines.

8.1 Planning Committee

(a) Composition

There will be a *Planning Committee* of 18 Councillors.

All other members of the Council may act as substitutes on the Committee.

Any substitutions must be notified to the Governance Team by 12 noon on the day of the Committee.

(b) Role

The *Planning Committee* will have the roles and functions set out in the *Functions Scheme*.

(c) Training

All members and substitutes are required to undertake training.

8.2 Licensing Committee

(a) Composition

There will be a *Licensing Committee* of 15 Councillors.

(b) Role

The *Licensing Committee* will have the roles and functions set out in the *Functions Scheme* and must meet at least once a year by law.

(c) Training

All members are required to undertake training.