

Kettering

Borough Council

THE ROLE OF A COUNCILLOR

Local Authority Councillors report to the Electorate and are responsible for representing the electorate as a member of the local Council.

Key Objectives

The key objectives of the role are:-

- To oversee and ensure high quality services are provided to local people
- To decide service priorities in line with Council decisions
- To represent and advocate on behalf of the people who live within their ward
- To promote the values and policies of their party if appropriate

Accountability

Councillors are accountable at all times for their actions as elected representatives and must sign up to a Code of Conduct.

Tasks

Typical tasks undertaken by a Local Councillor are:-

- To attend full Council and other formal Council Committee meetings as agreed, and contributing to effective decision-making
- To assist in the formulation of Council strategies and policies
- To participate in agreeing and setting a budget, including deciding on service priorities
- To monitor performance against targets in all areas of the Council's activities
- Where delegated by the Council to take appropriate decisions to improve performance, reporting such decisions in full
- To promote and represent the Council in the local communities and elsewhere
- To attend local community events on a regular basis
- To conduct regular surgeries to enable members of the public to bring issues of importance or of personal concern to the direct attention of an elected Councillor
- To take effective action on issues of importance or personal concern on behalf of those who attend surgeries or otherwise communicate with you

- To regularly attend party branch meetings, if appropriate, and reporting in full on all activity undertaken
- To ensure that at all times all duties are performed in compliance with equal opportunities
- To ensure that at all times all duties are performed in compliance with the highest standards of probity

The Local Authority Councillor Personal Profile

Eligibility to Stand for Election

You cannot stand for election as a local Councillor if:-

- You are employed by the Borough Council
- Are bankrupt
- You have been given a prison sentence of 3 months or more (even if the sentence was suspended) in the last five years
- You have been disqualified from standing by a court or tribunal

To stand for election as a local Councillor you must:-

- Be at least 18 years old
- Be a British, Commonwealth or Irish citizen or citizen of another member state of the European Union
- Be on the electoral roll for the Borough; or
For all of the last year you must have lived in the Borough or worked in the Borough in that time; or
Have occupied land or other premises in the Borough

As a local Councillor you should have a reasonable level of literacy, numeracy and able to attend evening meetings. It will be useful if you have the following knowledge, experience, skills and abilities. However, there is training available for local Councillors if required.

- Experience of dealing with a wide range of people
- Experience of being part of a group
- Experience of negotiating and compromising
- Experience of being a member of a committee
- Communication skills
- Listening skills
- Influencing and networking skills
- Negotiating skills
- Problem-solving skills
- Ability to speak in public
- Understanding of accountability and controls
- General political awareness
- Knowledge of local government issues, structures and legal framework
- Commitment to meeting the needs of the local community
- Commitment to customer care and quality in service provision
- Commitment to equal opportunities

The Local Authority Councillor
Role Specification

The Councillor has a policy for the training and development of its elected members covering all aspects of a councillor's work. This will enable the councillor to develop the following knowledge and skills:-

Role	Some of the knowledge and skills needed
Policy Maker	Policy analysis, knowledge of legislation and parameters for action.
Committee Member	Meeting, chairing/intervention skills. Knowledge of the Council's Constitution.
Case worker for individuals and families	Listening/counselling skills. Knowledge of Council policies and procedures. Knowledge of how to access Council and other agencies. Knowledge of legislation and rights.
Pressure group representative	Knowledge of local groups and agencies. Campaigning skills. Knowledge of public speaking. Knowledge of local media. Advocacy skills.
Council representative on other bodies	Knowledge of Council's own policies and understanding of parameters for action. Influencing skills. Communication and networking skills.
Formal leadership role	Strategic management skills. Ability to synthesise information to set a programme of action. Chairing skills. Ability to influence and win support of the Group/Council.
Back-bench role	Knowledge of local groups and agencies. Ability to monitor and evaluate service performance. Ability to challenge and question. Advocacy skills. Speed reading.
Other roles	Knowledge of local agencies. Knowledge of Council policies. Advocacy skills. Knowledge of legislation.

For further information on the role of a councillor please contact Anne Ireson (Democratic Services Manager) on 01536 534398 or email anneireson@kettering.gov.uk.