



Part B – The Council

Section B3:- The Roles, Responsibilities and Attributes of Councillors

In Part B:-

Section B1 of the Constitution explains the process of electing Councillors (or “Members”) to the Council and then goes on to explain about meetings of the Council. It then sets out the roles, responsibilities and functions of the Council.

Section B2 sets out the details of each of the authority’s committees. There is an overview of what the committee does and a detailed terms of reference section which sets out the extent of the committee’s powers. Membership details of committees are available from the Council’s website.

This Section (B3) sets out the roles and attributes of all Councillors, and then explains about the additional requirements of Councillors who undertake certain roles. The additional requirements in respect of Cabinet roles are set out in Section C2.

Section B4 sets out the rules that govern Council meetings.

Section B5 sets out the rules that govern Committee meetings.

NEWCASTLE
UNDER LYME
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Part B – The Council

Section B3:- The Role, Responsibilities and Attributes of Councillors

In this Section:-

- 1. All Members**
- 2. Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the Council**
- 3. Regulatory Committee Members**
- 4. Regulatory Committee Chairs**



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1. The Role and Responsibilities of all Members

Introduction

- 1.1 Collectively, elected Members make the policies and take decisions that shape the future of the Borough and determine its priorities. Members have a special duty to represent the constituents of their Ward, including those who did not vote for them, but their overriding duty is to act in the interests of the Borough as a whole.
- 1.2 Elected Members are accountable to full Council, and ultimately to the communities that they are elected to represent.

Representing and Supporting Communities

- 1.3 Operating in this capacity, it is the role of all Members to:-
- (a) provide community leadership and promote active citizenship by promoting equality, tolerance and democracy in their communities and helping their communities to understand and participate in the Council's decision making processes
 - (b) be a visible, recognisable and accessible presence in the community by taking measures such as holding ward surgeries, engaging with and supporting local partnership organisations
 - (c) recognise and balance the different interests within their wards and represent the ward as a whole fairly and constructively whilst providing a voice for all sectors of their communities
 - (d) represent the views of their communities wherever possible in the Council's decision-making processes by liaising with other Members, Officers and partner organisations to ensure that the needs of the local communities are identified, understood and supported
 - (e) represent individual constituents and local organisations, undertaking casework on their behalf as necessary and serving all fairly and equally

Representing the Council

- 1.4 Operating in this capacity, it is the role of all Members to:-



- (a) be an advocate for the Council in the communities they serve and act as a channel of communication to the community on council strategies, objectives, policies, services and procedures
- (b) engage fully in Council business and meetings including meetings of any committee, board, task group or external organisation that they may be appointed to serve on from time to time. This includes a requirement to fully engage in any preparatory or follow up work or tasks such as undertaking training and site visits or participating in any study, research, review or scrutiny exercises.
- (c) To observe and apply the authority's core objectives and principles of decision making set out in section A2 and any other codes, procedures, or rules that might also apply from time to time to ensure that all decisions reached are informed and balanced.
- (d) To monitor, promote and ensure the efficient, effective, and transparent governance of the Council and delivery of all of the services delivered by the Council and its partners by engaging in the processes that exist to challenge and improve the work of the Council, Cabinet and its partners.

Relationships, Communication and Personal Development

1.5 It is the responsibility of all Members to:-

- (a) foster and maintain effective working relationships with Officers based on mutual support, trust and respect
- (b) promote and maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics in public life by observing the requirements of the Member Code of Conduct and the Protocol for Member and Officer Relations in Part F
- (c) proactively and continually identify, seek out and participate in opportunities for personal development in their roles as elected Members
- (d) make effective use of modern electronic communication including email, the internet and intranet, to aid efficient communication with officers, other members and the community
- (e) provide support and encouragement to new Members



Values, Skills and Attributes of all Elected Members

1.6 To be effective in their role as an elected Member, all Councillors must possess the following attributes and be committed to promoting the following values in public office:-

- (a) Openness and transparency
- (b) Honesty and integrity
- (c) Tolerance and respect
- (d) Equality and fairness
- (e) Appreciation of cultural differences
- (f) Sustainability

Attributes required of all Elected Members

- 1.7 Knowledge or and commitment to the Council's values, objectives and aspirations
- 1.8 A sound understanding of the requirements of community leadership, empowerment, and working in partnership
- 1.9 Respect for, and desire to work with, different groups, individuals, partners, agencies, organisations and points of view.
- 1.10 The ability to approach debates and decision making with an open mind, impartiality and integrity and to leave aside personally held views where necessary; and the ability to encourage others to do the same.
- 1.11 The ability to constructively challenge ideas and contribute positively to policy development and improved ways of working
- 1.12 The ability to identify, understanding and apply all relevant laws, rules, protocols, procedures and conventions and particularly the rules relating to predetermination and bias and declarations of personal and prejudicial interests in the decision-making process, which are most important when sitting on regulatory committees
- 1.13 A sound understanding and appreciation of the importance of strategy and policy considerations in decision taking.
- 1.14 The ability to recognise the need for, seek out and take on board any necessary advice or assistance



- 1.15 Good advocacy skills – the ability to present relevant and well- reasoned written and oral arguments
- 1.16 Good communication skills – the ability to impart and absorb information in both written and oral form including the ability to articulate sound reasons for decisions, deliver effective presentations and public addresses
- 1.17 Good interpersonal skills – the ability to interact effectively with a variety of different people
- 1.18 Understanding of and respect for the different roles of Officers and Members
- 1.19 An ability and desire to recognise, seek out and participate in opportunities for personal development

2. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the Council

Introduction

- 2.1 The Mayor of the Council is the Council's ceremonial figurehead.
- 2.2 The Deputy Mayor of the Council is responsible for assisting and supporting the Mayor and discharging the duties of the Mayor in his or her absence.
- 2.3 Those acting in the capacity of Mayor or Deputy Mayor must remain apolitical and act as an ambassador for the Council and for the area of Newcastle-under-Lyme.
- 2.4 The Mayor and Deputy Mayor are accountable to full Council, and ultimately to the communities that they are elected to represent.

Roles and Responsibilities

- 2.5 In addition to the roles and responsibilities that apply to all Elected Members, the following roles and responsibilities shall be discharged by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor:-
 - (a) to represent the Council at civic and ceremonial functions
 - (b) to promote public involvement in the Council's activities
 - (c) to preside over Council meetings and ensure that business is carried out efficiently, in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules and in the interests of the Borough
 - (d) to ensure that the Council meeting is a forum for the debate of matters of concern to the local community



Values, Skills and Attributes of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the Council

- 2.6 In addition to the values, skills and attributes required by all Elected Members to be effective in their role, the following skills and attributes are particularly important for an effective Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the Council.
- (a) An in-depth understanding of role of the ambassadorial role of Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the Council, to lead by example, and to remain apolitical in carrying out that role
 - (b) An in-depth understanding of the Council's values, objectives and aspirations
 - (c) The ability to win the confidence of the Council
 - (d) Excellent public speaking skills
 - (e) The ability to network effectively with a wide variety of people and organisations at different types of functions and events
 - (f) A sound understanding of the Council Procedure Rules and the constitution and the ability to preside over Council meetings to ensure business is carried out effectively

3. Members of Regulatory Committees

Introduction

- 3.1 The following committees are regulatory committees:-
- (a) Planning Committee
 - (b) Licensing and Public Protection Committee
 - (c) Standards Hearing Panels of Audit and Standards Committee
- 3.2 Because of the specialist and often sensitive nature of the business considered by these committees, and the impacts that decisions of these committees can have on individuals and their rights and wellbeing, special considerations apply to committee members.
- 3.3 Committee Members are accountable to their Chair, Council and ultimately to the communities that they are elected to represent.



Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.4 In addition to the roles and responsibilities that apply to all Elected Members, the following responsibilities apply to all members of regulatory committee:
- (a) To be aware of the quasi-judicial nature of regulatory committee decision making and the potential impacts and consequences of decisions taken for those affected by decisions and the Council.
 - (b) To have a sound understanding of the technical, legal and procedural issues that relate to any given matter and any professional advice given and to have the commitment and ability to absorb and apply the same in order to participate thoroughly, effectively and appropriately in the work of the committee.
 - (c) To ensure that the rules of natural justice are applied with particular regard to the requirement to be prepared to take account of all aspects of the issue in question, to approach decisions with an open mind in order to make informed decisions properly balancing local considerations with legal, constitutional and policy requirements.
 - (d) To have a thorough understanding of and scrupulous regard at all times to the requirements in the Member Code of Conduct and Planning Protocols in relation to interests, bias, pre-determination and when it is and is not appropriate to take part in the work of the committee
 - (e) Not to take part in any political whip process when discharging the responsibilities of the committee
- 3.5 In order to effectively discharge the responsibilities set out in paragraph 3.4 (a) to (e), all committee members (and Substitute Members) are required to undertake any relevant training arranged by officers, and to be personally and collectively responsible for identifying and seeking out from officers any additional training that they may require from time to time.

4. Chairs and Vice Chairs of Regulatory Committees

Introduction

- 4.1 Chairs and Vice Chairs must provide leadership and direction in the work of their committees and act as ambassadors for the work of their committee both within and beyond the Council to develop its standing and the integrity of its decision making.



- 4.2 They must have a sound understanding of the relevant subject matter, laws, procedures codes of conduct and protocols and the ability to champion them with committee members and inspire and enthuse committee members for the work of the committee.
- 4.3 Chairs and Vice Chairs are accountable to their committee members, Council and ultimately to the communities that they are elected to represent.

Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.4 In addition to the roles and responsibilities that apply to all Members and all Members of Regulatory Committees, the following responsibilities apply to all Chairs and Vice Chairs of regulatory committees:
- (a) To be a focal point of knowledge, leadership and advice for members of their committee on all of the matters set out under paragraphs 3.4(a) to (e) and 3.5 above.
 - (b) To provide confident and effective management of meetings to facilitate inclusivity, participation and clear decision making
 - (c) To ensure that applicants and other interested parties are as satisfied as they reasonably can be with the transparency and quality of the regulatory decision making process.