

PART 19

COUNCILLORS' DUTIES

WORCESTER CITY COUNCIL

ROLE AND DUTIES OF COUNCILLORS

1. GENERAL

- 1.1 To represent community and individual needs and thereby be the channel through which these needs are articulated to and addressed by the Council.
- 1.2 To contribute to the process of developing and setting Council policy.
- 1.3 To scrutinise, keep under review, monitor and hold to account the performance of the Policy Committees and Officers in the light of agreed policies, targets and standards.

2. CORPORATE/DECISION-MAKING ROLE

Each Councillor will:-

- 2.1 Be a full voting Member of the Council, which will:
 - Be the principal forum for debate for matters of community and public interest;
 - Determine the overall policies and finances which will guide and direct the delivery of services;
 - Appoint and hold to account the Policy Committees, Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council and Managing Director for the effective and efficient delivery of services in accordance with the agreed policies.
- 2.2 Serve on at least one of the Policy Committees which within the area of its responsibility, will:-
 - Consider and investigate broad policy issues;
 - Consider the budget plans as part of the budget setting cycle and proposed policy framework.
- 2.3 Serve on such Regulatory Committees and other Committees and Panels as are set up from time to time, which will decide matters such as:
 - Planning applications;
 - Licensing applications;
 - Audit and Governance items;
 - Standards items.

3. LOCAL REPRESENTATIONAL ROLE

- 3.1 In addition to their membership of and input into the above bodies, Councillors will develop their own methods and arrangements to keep in touch with their local communities and neighbourhoods so that local views come to have a bearing

on policy development and formulation and the decision-taking process. These may include:

- Conducting regular ward surgeries;
- Attending community/Parish Council meetings (where appropriate);
- Direct canvassing of ward residents.

3.2 Through these methods Councillors will play a significant part in the consultations on:

- The development of local performance plans;
- Local initiatives, for example on community safety;
- The community planning process, generally.

3.3 Councillors will respond to constituents' enquiries and representations, fairly and impartially and effectively represent the interests of their wards and of individual constituents.

4. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Councillors should aim to take part in a skills audit and shall participate in the following training:

- Induction training (Including the Role of a Councillor, Code of Conduct, Safeguarding, Health and Safety and Equal Opportunities);
- Planning training;
- Licensing training;
- Chair and Vice Chair training;
- Other specific training as identified in the skills audit, training as required from time to time by changes in legislation and other "familiarisation" events.

5. GENERAL EXPECTATIONS OF COUNCILLORS

5.1 Councillors should aim to:

- Attend at least 75% of meetings of the full Council unless there are exceptional circumstances;
- Undertake such reading and research as may be necessary to prepare for such meetings;
- Attend any meetings with Council Officers as agreed.

6. ADDITIONAL ROLES OF CERTAIN COUNCILLORS

6.1 In addition to the roles set out above, certain Councillors are appointed to specific roles by the Council for which they receive a special responsibility allowance. The additional duties and responsibilities of these roles are set out in the following sections:

- The Mayor;
- Leader of the Council;
- Deputy Leader of the Council;
- Chairs and Vice Chairs (Generic and Specific).

7. THE MAYOR

GENERAL

- 7.1 The Mayor is elected to be the First Citizen of the City, its Civic Head, and will represent the Council at Ceremonial, Civic and other functions inside and outside the City; will receive civic guests, delegations and visitors; host civic occasions and provide civic hospitality.
- 7.2 The Mayor will preside over meetings of the full Council, to preserve order in meetings and to take care to ensure that the proceedings are conducted impartially and in a proper manner and with regard to the rights of Councillors and the interests of the community.
- 7.3 Under the Constitution the Mayor has responsibility for upholding and promoting the purposes of the Constitution and interpreting it when necessary, for ensuring that the Council meeting is a forum for debate of matters of concern to the local community.
- 7.4 The Mayor has no executive powers and cannot act alone nor have the power of decision except with other Members when serving on a properly appointed Committee or Sub-Committee.
- 7.5 The Mayor cannot be the Chair or Vice Chair of any Committee.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 7.6 If present, the Mayor must preside at meetings of the full Council and, specifically, it is the Mayor's responsibility:
- To determine that the meeting is properly constituted and that a quorum is present;
 - To be informed as to the business and objects of the meeting;
 - To preserve order in the conduct of those present;
 - To confine discussion within the scope of the meeting and within time limits provided in the Council Procedure Rules;
 - To decide whether proposed motions and amendments are in order;
 - To decide points of order and other incidental questions which require decision at the time;
 - To ascertain the sense of the meeting by:
 - (i) Putting relevant questions to the meeting and taking a vote thereon;
 - (ii) Causing a named vote or ballot to be taken if duly demanded;
 - (iii) If necessary and if so minded giving a second or casting vote;

(iv) Declaring the result;

- With the consent of Council, to adjourn the meeting when circumstances justify or require that course;
- To declare the meeting closed when its business has been completed.

7.7 The Mayor has authority to agree the inclusion of late items of business on an agenda for full Council but only for reasons of urgency, which must be stipulated in the Minutes.

7.8 Under the Budget and Policy Procedure Rules and the Access to Information Procedure Rules the Mayor is authorised to consent to an urgent decision being taken by a Policy Committee in the absence of the Chairman (and Vice-Chairman) of the relevant Committee.

7.9 The Mayor will be prepared to take the lead in all matters that concern the civic life of the City.

7.10 The Mayor will at all times exercise the responsibilities of the Office of Mayor in an impartial manner.

7.11 The Mayor will be available to represent the City, at all times within reason, at events and functions both inside and outside the City.

7.12 The Mayor will host civic events within the City and make arrangements, which may include, for an Annual Civic Service, an Inaugural Banquet and a Charity Banquet.

7.13 The Mayor will act in a proper and dignified manner at all times as befits the Office of Mayor.

8. THE LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

GENERAL

8.1 The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council represent the whole Council, outside of its civic and ceremonial roles and functions, in its relations and dealings with the community and business sectors and local, regional and central government.

8.2 The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council has responsibility for leading and guiding the Authority according to its approved vision and values and towards its main objectives and priorities. The Leader and Deputy Leader will be accountable to Council for ensuring their delivery.

8.3 The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council will be the primary link between the Managing Director and Heads of Service and elected Members of the Council in the formulation and development of new policies and objectives and will report regularly to Council and Committees in order to engender corporate ownership and awareness.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 8.4 The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council will lead in the performance appraisal procedures for the Managing Director and will agree the method of appraisal and frequency.
- 8.5 The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council in consultation with the Managing Director will meet with the Council's External Auditor to discuss the annual Audit Management Letter and will report, as necessary, to the Audit and Governance Committee.
- 8.6 The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council will meet regularly with the Managing Director to monitor and review the progress of the Council towards its achieving its approved objectives and priorities.
- 8.7 The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council will have responsibility for:-
- The political leadership of the Council;
 - Developing and implementing the policy framework of the Council (subject to the approval of the Council);
 - Determining revenue and capital budget strategies and priorities (subject to the approval of the Council);
 - Ensuring probity and financial monitoring;
 - Acting as a Spokesperson for the Council;
 - Representing the views of the Council on matters of corporate or strategic policy to Government and other bodies relevant to the Council's work;
 - Ensuring the production of a City Plan with other key organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors (subject to the approval of the Council) and acting as spokesperson on behalf of the community as a whole;
 - Promoting the work of the Council;
 - Liaising with the relevant Members of the Council, local MP and relevant external bodies, so to enhance the image and reputation of the City of Worcester and, where appropriate, advocate for and obtain resources/inward investment for the benefit of the citizens of Worcester;
 - Referring as necessary to the Managing Director or Corporate Directors any tasks, roles or responsibilities that may be appropriate, necessary or desirable to delegate to such person(s);
 - Establishing and maintaining effective and efficient working relations with the Leaders of the Opposition Groups, the Chairmen of Committees and other Members;
 - Working in partnership the Managing Director and Corporate Directors so as to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of the Council's City Plan and, in particular, the continuous improvement of all services of the Council.
- 8.8 The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council will ensure that questions that are asked to the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council at Council Meetings are properly answered.

9. CHAIRS OF COMMITTEES (POLICY AND REGULATORY) – GENERIC ROLE

GENERAL

9.1 The Chairs of Policy and Regulatory Committees will be the functional lead for the Committee's area of work and will oversee the effective management and running of the Committee's business.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

9.2 The Chairs of Policy and Regulatory Committees will have responsibility for:-

- Being accountable to the Council and the Committee for the delivery of the objectives and priorities of their Committee;
- Identifying areas for inclusion in the Committee's work programme and ensuring that the Committee Members are both involved in setting the work programme and take part at all stages in deliberations;
- Working with officers and having responsibility for agenda preparation for each meeting of the Committee;
- Maintaining high standards of probity and adherence to standards of conduct and protocols throughout the debate;
- Promoting effective relationships and open communication, and creating an environment that allows constructive debates and challenges between Committee Members;
- Exercising a second or casting vote in the determination of an item debated by their Committee;
- Monitoring progress in respect of the Committee's work programme through liaison with officers;
- Presenting to Council reports of the Committee when required;
- Ensuring that questions that are asked at Council Meetings in relation to the Chair's respective Committee are properly answered;
- Determining appropriate means of inviting and involving public comment and representations on matters under consideration by the Committee;
- Summing up the discussion and resolution following the debate of each item to ensure everyone has the same understanding;
- Ensuring appropriate expert and specialist advice is made available to the Committee when appropriate;
- Keeping the Leader and Deputy Leader informed as necessary in respect of matters relating to the business of the Committee;
- Ensuring through liaison with officers that Committee Members benefit from appropriate training and development to deal effectively with the Committee's business;
- Attending chairmanship skills training.

10. CHAIR OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – SPECIFIC ROLE

10.1 The Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee shall work closely with the Worcestershire Internal Audit Shared Services Manager and the Council's external auditors to ensure that the Committee fulfils its functions.

11. CHAIRS OF PLANNING AND LICENSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH COMMITTEES – SPECIFIC ROLE

11.1 The Chairs of these Committees will:-

- Ensure the effective and efficient discharge of the Planning and Licensing regulatory functions of the Council and by assisting the relevant Policy Committee with the development of any policies and procedures or overseeing the same;
- Consult and keep informed, as necessary, relevant Members with regard to any Planning and Licensing regulatory arrangements;
- Establish and maintain effective and efficient working relations with the spokespersons of the Opposition Groups, the Chairs of Committees and other Members;
- Liaise with the Leader of the Council, Managing Director and Corporate Directors, as required, on any Planning or Licensing regulatory matters and contribute, as necessary, to the delivery of the corporate aims and strategic objectives of the Council within existing budgets;
- Undertake Planning and Licensing regulatory functions in a positive, constructive and non-partisan manner which enhances the image and reputation of the City Council;
- Work within existing budgets and promote the work and quasi-independence of the regulatory processes.

12. VICE CHAIRS OF COMMITTEES (POLICY AND REGULATORY) – GENERIC ROLE

GENERAL

12.1 The Vice Chairs of Policy and Regulatory Committees will carry out an active role in promoting cross-party engagement and supporting and challenging the Chair to ensure the effective management and running of the Committee's business.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

12.2 The Vice Chairs of Policy and Regulatory Committees will have responsibility for:-

- Carrying out the full range of responsibilities of the role of Chair for the Committee in the event of the Chair being unable to fulfil his/her duties;
- Working with the Chair and officers in agenda preparation for each meeting of the Committee;
- Recognising his/her responsibility to set the example for other Committee Members by promoting effective relationships and open communication

that allows constructive debates and challenges between Committee Members;

- Taking the lead in specific areas of work of the Committee and responsibilities of the Chair as agreed with the Chair;
- Representing the Committee at stakeholder forums/meetings and promoting the externally facing role that the Committee has;
- Representing the Council as an official appointee to Outside Bodies;
- Assisting the Chair by taking on responsibility as necessary for communication with the Leader and Deputy Leader;
- Attending chairmanship skills training.