

## Member Job Description

As a democratically elected local representative, members of the County Council hold a unique position and the potential to make a real difference to people's lives.

As one of the 70 members of the County Council, councillors are not only responsible for representing around 9,000 residents in your division, but also the 800,000+ people who live in West Sussex, local businesses and those who work in or visit the county who also use some of the County Councils' services. Members are expected to carry out their duties in the public interest, equally and without discrimination.

To fulfil their **strategic role** members are expected to:

1. Participate in the effective and responsible management of the County Council by contributing or scrutinising its budget, strategies and policies, its commissioning activity and the services it delivers.
2. Act as the County Council's representative on such outside bodies or organisations which they are appointed by the County Council.
3. Dedicate adequate time to fulfil their role as a member and attend all meetings they are a member of or have been appointed to whenever possible.
4. Lead by example in setting high standards of conduct in public life as defined by the [Nolan Principles](#).
5. Participate in induction training and ongoing training and development to maintain skills and knowledge.
6. Develop and maintain a working knowledge of the Council's services, management arrangements, functions/duties and constraints and to develop good working relationships with relevant officers of the authority.
7. To act as a Corporate Parent for children in the care of the County Council.

A councillor's primary role is to represent the residents within their electoral division. Members provide a bridge between the community and the County Council by being an advocate for their local residents and signposting them to the right people at the council. Therefore, members need to keep themselves informed about the issues that affect their community.

In their **local role**, members are expected to:

### 1. Community Leadership

- Be accessible locally, offer clear ways for the community to get in touch, have good personal networks and are visible to interact with the local voluntary and community sector
- Communicate with residents utilising local opportunities for surgeries, attending community events/meetings, social media and newsletters

- Keep up to date about local and County matters that may affect their residents
- Work with local community groups who are interested in supporting/developing improved local services
- Understand how the Council operates and are able to explain this to their residents including the strategic role of the County Council
- Explain how Council policy may affect a community and how a community can influence future policy

## **2. Making Things Happen**

- Attend meetings of the County Local Committee(s)/Area Committee(s) for the area that they represent
- Are knowledgeable about the Council and its services and who does what or are willing to find out
- Manage expectations, offer alternatives and explain what cannot be done
- Help, where possible, to solve problems for local residents
- Work collaboratively within the Council and the community
- Campaign if appropriate

## **3. Community Involvement**

- Maintain partnership links with members from the other tiers of local government to promote efficiencies and a 'One Council' approach to local service delivery
- Help, where possible, to solve local issues in liaison with staff, partners and other local organisations
- Visit local community organisations, understand the role they play in the community, help with local issues and support their sustainability
- Represent local community life, the local needs of the most vulnerable and the need to work in partnership and foster strong relationships with local community leaders.
- Work with Officers to ensure appropriate local solutions are supported to improve the resilience of communities
- Sit on other local bodies as required/appropriate

## **4. Listening to Residents**

- Are aware of local issues and concerns
- Listen well and act decisively when all the evidence is available
- Are friendly and approachable
- Hold surgeries or have other mechanisms for being available to people

## **5. Representing Communities**

- Represent ALL residents and members of the community ensuring that their needs as customers are met wherever possible
- Are aware of the performance of the County Council generally and in their division and act to address low or poor performance
- Make the views of the community known

## **6. Behaving Ethically**

County Councillors:

- Observe the County Council's adopted Code of Conduct
- Register interests as appropriate
- Are aware of the County Council's Constitution
- Respect everyone in the community and treat people as individual

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