

WARD COUNCILLOR

Role and Responsibilities

Leadership within the Community

- To undertake case work for constituents and act as an advocate in resolving concerns or grievances;
- To communicate with local people and answer enquiries:
 - about decisions that affect them,
 - about opportunities in the community,
 - regarding the rights of constituents within Colchester,
 - as to why decisions are made;
- To lead and champion the interests of the local community and effectively represent the interests of the Ward and its constituents;
- To meet and liaise regularly with local interested parties and involve and consult them on key Council decisions;
- To support and promote citizenship locally and encourage the community to participate in the governance of the area;

Representation

- To inform the debate at Full Council meetings and contribute to the effectiveness of the Council meeting;
- To contribute to the formation and scrutiny of the Authority's policies, budget, strategies and service delivery;
- To contribute to the scrutiny of decision making and review of the policies and services of the council;
- To represent the authority to the community and the community to the council;
- To develop and maintain a knowledge of the Council and develop working relationships with its officers;
- To participate in the activities of any political group of which the councillor is a member;
- To represent the council on outside bodies and to participate effectively in the appointed role and, where appropriate, to represent those bodies within Colchester and elsewhere.

Other

- To fulfil the legal and local requirements placed on an elected member, in accordance with the Council Code of Conduct for Councillors;
- To be responsible for personal development and undergo appropriate development and continuous improvement for any role undertaken.

Skills

Leadership

- Ability to lead and champion the interests of the local community.

Chairing

- Ability to chair meetings and facilitate discussions.

Organisational Skills

- Manage casework;
- Basic administration skills.

Other skills

- Ability to use information technology to communicate through Council systems e.g. e-mails, accessing agenda, minutes, reports, intranet, internet etc.;
- Community engagement skills;
- Influencing and persuading;
- Managing conflict and mediation skills

Team Working and Relationship Building

- Ability to develop relationships with key officers and partner agencies;
- Ability to build effective relationships with all sections of the community so as to be able to represent their needs to the Council.

Communication

- Ability to deal with the media, whilst being able to identify when additional support from the Communications Team is required, to ensure the Council is positively represented;
- Ability to communicate with a range of audiences;
- Active listening and questioning skills;
- Presentation skills;
- Public speaking.

Knowledge

- Understanding of how the Council works;
- Knowledge of the Council structure, key contact officers and services procedures;
- Knowledge of the political decision making structures;
- Understanding of the Code of Conduct for Councillors, ethics and standards and the role of the Standards Committee;
- Understanding of national policies and their impact on the Council;
- Knowledge of the strategic objectives and key policies of the Council;
- Understanding of legislation and Council policies to which Members must adhere (e.g. Freedom of Information, Data Protection, Equality and Diversity);
- Basic understanding of local government finances and audit processes;
- Knowledge of the Councils complaints procedure;
- For Members who sit on quasi-judicial panels, knowledge of legislation and policy relating to planning, licensing, and appeals is required and an understanding of the principles and importance of making rational decisions