

## Article 2 - Members of the Council

### 2.01 Composition and eligibility

(a) **Composition.** The Council comprises 50 members, otherwise called councillors. Councillors will be elected by the voters of each electoral division in accordance with a scheme drawn up by the Local Government Commission and approved by the Secretary of State.

(b) **Eligibility.** Only registered voters of the county or those living or working there will be eligible to hold the office of councillor.

### 2.02 Election and terms of councillors

**Election and terms.** The regular election of councillors will be held usually on the first Thursday in May every four years beginning in 2001. The terms of office of councillors will start on the fourth day after being elected and will finish on the fourth day after the date of the next regular election.

### 2.03 Roles and functions of all councillors

(a) Key Roles

#### *Representing the Local Community*

- (i) To be familiar with the needs, priorities and aspirations of their local communities. In order to do this they should make themselves known within their electoral divisions, be accessible and liaise/consult extensively with their local communities, organisations (including, where appropriate, town and parish councils) and businesses through, for example, meetings, neighbourhood forums, surgeries and other means.
- (ii) To represent the views of their constituents and local organisations (including, where appropriate, those of town and parish councils) on matters within the responsibility of the County Council. This can include:
  - acting as an adviser or advocate for groups with a special interest
  - weighing up different, often conflicting, interests expressed within the local community and attempting to represent the community as a whole
  - providing advice on matters within their local area and the implications of particular courses of action.
- (iii) To promote the County Council and what it is about and contribute to a fuller understanding within local communities of the role and functions of the County Council, explaining the

reasons for decisions and the background to them, listening to views expressed and feeding them into the County Council, thereby improving choices and decisions.

- (iv) To familiarise themselves with the Council's policies, plans and priorities.
- (v) To assist the Council in being both a listening and an accessible organisation.
- (vi) To take up matters raised with them by their constituents and to respond to their constituents or ensure that a response is provided and, where appropriate, to act as their advocate.

#### *Policy Formulation and Review*

- (vii) To participate in the formulation and review of Council policy and decisions about the role of the Council and what kind of authority it should be, at meetings of the County Council, committees, sub-committees and panels of which they are members. In doing so, councillors are expected to be constructive but challenging in considering whether services should be provided by the Council and, if so, how (including whether they should be provided by the Council alone or in partnership with others) and to what standard. An innovative and questioning approach is required.
- (viii) To participate in consultation exercises undertaken by the County Council.
- (ix) To participate in consideration of the County Council's budget and in the decision making on the final budget.
- (x) To participate in keeping under review the County Council's employment policies and practice to ensure that the County Council maintains its standing as a good and supportive employer.
- (xi) To participate in the scrutiny and monitoring of County Council policies and decisions and their implementation to see that services are being provided:
  - in the most cost effective way
  - in a way which is meeting the needs of service users
  - to the quality required by service users

and ensuring that arrangements are in place to secure continuous improvement in the way in which County Council services are provided, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness and the principles of Best Value.

*County Council Working with Others*

- (xii) To encourage and participate in local partnership working (whether the County Council is involved or not) for the benefit of local communities by helping to provide the best quality service in the most cost effective way and providing easy access to information about services by those who may have a need of them.
- (xiii) To work with partners and other organisations to which the County Council appoints representatives as a member of those bodies to which the councillor is appointed and, in those cases, to explain the County Council's position, to listen to the views of others and to report back to the County Council.

*Representing the County*

- (xiv) Community leadership is at the heart of local government. The County Council as the strategic tier of local government is the only body which will represent the interests of the people of East Sussex as a whole and endeavour to ensure that the County receives fair treatment. The Council promise states that we will, in partnership, make the best use of resources to:
  - help make East Sussex prosperous and safe
  - support the most vulnerable people
  - improve and develop roads and infrastructure
  - encourage personal and community responsibility
  - deliver the lowest possible council tax
  - be a voice for East Sussex, listening and answering to local people.

County councillors will be required to play a full part in the delivery of the promise, both locally and, more strategically, countywide.

- (xv) Where appointed to serve on the Local Government Association General Assembly (or one of its executives or forums) or any other national or regional bodies, to contribute to and influence the work of the Association or other body, to explain the County Council's position and to report back to the County Council.

*Regulatory Function*

- (xvi) To participate with other members, as appropriate, in performing the regulatory functions of the County Council eg determining

planning applications, providing advice to borough/district councils on applications where they are required to consult the County Council, hearing and determining appeals against decisions of the Council not to approve applications for registration of premises or persons under various legislation, hearing appeals under the Council's personnel policies and practices.

(b) Rights and duties

- (i) Councillors will have such rights of access to such documents, information, land and buildings of the Council as are necessary for the proper discharge of their functions and in accordance with the law.
- (ii) Councillors will not make public information which is confidential or exempt without the consent of the Council or divulge information given in confidence to anyone other than a councillor or officer entitled to know it.
- (iii) For these purposes, "confidential" and "exempt" information are defined in the Access to Information Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution.

**2.04 Conduct**

In carrying out their duties, councillors will observe the Members' Code of Conduct and the General Principles governing the Code of Conduct. They are expected to behave at all times in accordance with the highest standards of personal conduct and in such a way as to maintain public confidence in the County Council.

**2.05 Allowances**

Councillors will be entitled to receive allowances in accordance with the Members' Allowances Scheme set out in Part 6 of this Constitution.