



Tavistock Town Council Generic Councillor Role Profile

1. INTRODUCTION

This document seeks to provide a description of those roles and activities which all Councillors serving on Tavistock Town Council will be expected to perform.

2. PURPOSE

The intention behind developing a description of Councillors' general role is twofold:

- a) To provide those considering standing for public office with sufficient information to make an informed choice;
- b) To reflect:
 - i) the commitment of the Council to conduct its business in such a way as to ensure that as many people as possible can participate in local representative democracy¹; whilst
 - ii) recognising that public office carries with it particular responsibilities and obligations.

3. THE ROLES COUNCILLORS UNDERTAKE

Councillors undertake a wide range of roles which include²:

- a) Representative
 - i) to effectively represent constituents by actively seeking their views, taking these into account when considering policy and taking decisions and feeding back to constituents Council decisions that impact on them
 - ii) to create opportunities for communication with different sectors including vulnerable and hard to reach groups
 - iii) to represent the Council to the public, partners and stakeholders and represent them to the Council
 - iv) to represent the Council by serving on/appointment to outside bodies including those in the public and voluntary sectors
 - v) to champion the causes which best relate to the interests and sustainability of the community

¹ See also NALC Publication 'It Takes All Sorts'.
<http://www.nalc.gov.uk/library/publications/804-it-takes-all-sorts/file>

² See also NALC Publication 'What are Local Councils?'
<http://www.nalc.gov.uk/library/publications/power-to-the-people/809-section-1/file>

- b) Leadership
 - i) To provide the communities they represent with clear and accountable leadership and to help shape the local environment
 - ii) To contribute to
 - i. the formation of Council policy
 - ii. the work of the Council including its policies, probity and budget strategy by attendance at Council meetings and willingness to serve on other committees/fora as appropriate;
 - iii) To maintain and promote high standards of conduct and ethics and act as an ambassador for the Council

- c) Participation and Engagement
 - i) To participate in and promote the good governance of the Council and undertake relevant training and development activities
 - ii) To actively contribute to activities relating to the Town and Ward the Councillor represents including community planning and, undertaking case work and helping constituents resolve enquiries and concerns about Town Council services
 - iii) To be accessible and responsive to constituents and stakeholders and to keep up to date with issues affecting them, the Ward, the Council and its services.
 - d) To work constructively and in partnership with Council Officers and other Councillors to promote the Council's objectives
 - vi) To work with and have personal involvement when practicable with other tiers of local government, the public and voluntary sector, stakeholders and partners on behalf of constituents and the Council

4. THE SUPPORT COUNCILLORS WILL RECEIVE

The Council will provide a range of support to Councillors in both their representative and their corporate roles which will include, in particular:

- i) Access to Local Authority Managers in Tavistock Town Council
- ii) Opportunities for training and professional development
- iii) A basic allowance of £ 722 per annum (please note not available to co-opted Councillors) plus travelling and subsistence allowance for duly approved duties
- iv) ICT support payment (up to £320+ VAT) to enable Councillors to purchase their own IT equipment to a standard specification from an approved supplier (note

this must be compatible with Council operating systems and may only be used for council business).

5. COUNCILLORS WILL BE EXPECTED TO COMMIT TO:

- i) The time necessary to undertake the role. There is no one figure which can indicate the requirements of the role which can be affected by a range of factors such as:
 - a) the individual's level of knowledge/experience, preferred style and the expectations of their community
 - b) the time and location of meetings on which they serve:
 - a. Formal meetings will generally be held on a 6 weekly cycle (except Plans which are 3 weekly) in the evening to maximise the opportunity for attendance
 - b. In general, strategic/governance meetings will be held in Tavistock and those which relate to specific parts of the Town (such as area planning site meetings if required) in the three Wards to which they relate.
 - c) additional responsibilities such as serving as a Chairman or representing the Council on outside bodies.
- ii) Keep up to date with the corporate priorities/strategic framework of the Council, its operation and to abide by its policies and procedures
- iii) Adhere to and actively promote high standards of behaviour, conduct and ethics
- iv) Be accessible to constituents and accountable for their own actions
- v) Participate in specific and ongoing training and development initiatives relevant to their responsibilities
- vi) Promote equality, diversity and fairness
- vii) Be aware of and work toward the goals of the Charter for Member Development.

6. BREADTH OF THE ROLE

- a) Services - the role of Councillor requires an awareness of the range of services for which the Council is responsible which include but are not limited to:

Planning Consultations	Neighbourhood & Community Planning	Property Management	Market management
Council parks & open spaces	Council Car Park	Events & Activities (inc Goose Fair)	Partnership Working
Cemeteries	Allotments	Grants	Representation on outside bodies

- b) Corporate – the active promotion of and participation in good governance, performance management and the strategic direction of the Council
- c) Local – involvement with constituents, community organisations and other local fora, delivering key local projects and local decision making.

7. THE CORE SKILLS FOR COUNCILLORS

To undertake their role all Councillors will be expected to demonstrate, as a minimum certain core skills³

Core Skills	Characteristics
a) Local leadership	Engages enthusiastically and empathetically with the community in order to learn, understand and act upon issues of local concern. Mediates fairly and constructively, encouraging trust by representing all sections of the community
b) Partnership working	Builds positive relationships by making others feel valued, trusted and included, and by working collaboratively to achieve goals. Maintains calm and focus, recognises when to delegate or provide support, and is able to take a long term view in developing partnerships
c) Communication skills	Listens sensitively, uses appropriate language and checks for understanding. Communicates regularly with individuals and groups in the community, speaks clearly and confidently in public and makes sure that people are informed.
d) Political understanding	Acts ethically, consistently and with integrity when communicating values or representing group views in decision making or actions. Works across group boundaries without compromising values or ethics.
e) Performance Management, scrutiny and challenge	Acts as a critical friend by seeking opportunities for scrutiny and providing constructive feedback. Analyses information quickly and presents arguments in concise, meaningful and easily accessible way.
f) Regulating and monitoring	Understands and executes quasi-judicial role by following protocol, adhering to the code of conduct, evaluating arguments and making decisions that balance public needs and local policy. Ensures progress by monitoring and intervening where necessary.

³ as identified by the IDeA – although developed with principal councils in mind this applies equally to the local council sector.

Further information can be found at:

- a) The National association of Local Councils website
<http://www.nalc.gov.uk/>
- b) The Report of the Councillors Commission (December 2007)
- c) Front line Councillors and decision making (Joseph Rowntree Foundation)
- d) The Role of Councillors – Report of an Inquiry (All Party Parliamentary Local Government Group)
- e) Ward Councillors and Community Leadership: a future perspective (Joseph Rowntree Foundation)
- f) The IDeA Political Skills Framework