

Article 2 - Members of the Council

2.01 Composition and eligibility

- (a) **Composition.** The Council comprises 31 Councillors, otherwise called Members. One or more Councillors will be elected by the voters of each Ward in accordance with a scheme drawn up by the Local Government Commission for England and approved by the Secretary of State.
- (b) **Eligibility.** Only registered voters of the Borough or those living or working here will be eligible to hold the office of Councillor.

2.02 Election and term of Councillors

Election: The regular election of Councillors will be held on the first Thursday in May every four years.

Term: 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. All Councillors will:**

- (i) collectively be the ultimate budget and policy-makers and carry out the principal strategic and corporate management functions, taking a Boroughwide view;
- (ii) engage with and represent their communities whose views they will bring into the Council's decision-making process;
- (iii) balance different interests identified within the Ward and represent the Ward as a whole;
- (iv) make residents aware of the reasons for Council decisions, and make the Council aware of the particular concerns and grievances of residents and actively encourage community participation and citizen involvement in decision making;
- (v) be involved in decision-making;
- (vi) be available to represent the Council on other bodies; and

- (vii) maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics, and show respect for fellow Members, staff and the community.

(b) Rights and duties

- (i) Councillors 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.

For these purposes, “confidential” and “exempt” information are defined in the Access to Information Procedure Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution.

- (iii) For the purposes of their role as community representatives, councillors will be registered as data controllers under the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 and will conform to its requirements in respect of the handling of personal data.
- (iv) Councillors will develop and maintain a working knowledge of the authority’s services and policies and take advantage of appropriate training and personal development opportunities to enable them to fulfil their role.

2.04 Conduct

Councillors will at all times observe the Members’ Code of Conduct and the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations set out in Part 5 of this Constitution.

Councillors will register, and keep up to date, their disclosable pecuniary and personal interests in the Register of Interests kept by the Monitoring Officer in accordance with the Code of Conduct set out in Part 5 of this Constitution

The Register is available for public inspection at the Council’s offices and on the Council’s website.

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.

2.06 Meeting Attendance Statistics

- (a) The Council will publish Members' meeting attendance statistics on the Council's website on a quarterly and annual basis;
- (b) Attendance at the following meetings will be included in the published statistics: Council, Hub Committee, Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Development Management & Licensing Committee, Audit Committee, Invest to Earn Committee and Standards Committee (to include any subcommittees of those bodies)
- (c) The attendance threshold is 75% of those meetings to which a Member has been appointed;
- d) The following process for sanctions will apply for the 2019/20 Municipal Year (and be reviewed twelve months thereafter):

'If a Member fails to comply with the performance target whereby they should attend at least 75% of all public meetings of the Council and its Committees to which they have been appointed, then the matter will be considered by the Monitoring Officer, who will consult with the Chairman of the Standards Committee. Where there are no justified reasons for the performance target being missed, the Monitoring Officer will then write to the Member and request that they return a clearly defined proportion of their Basic Allowance.'

2.07 Chairmen

Chairmen of Committees will be required to have relevant experience (as determined by the Head of Paid Service) or undergo relevant Chairmanship training.

2.08 Use of email

Where a notice is to be given or a communication made in writing to Councillors, it shall be made by email whenever possible.