

Introduction

As elected representatives Councillors have two main, equally important roles to undertake.

The first of these roles is to act as a community leader, advocating, representing and supporting local people, assisting both individual constituents and local communities and ensuring their views and opinions are taken account of with regard to decisions which will impact on them both personally and as citizens of the city.

The second role is to act as a civic leader representing the interests of Belfast as a whole, taking decisions on policies and services provided by the Council, working in partnership with other organisations and agencies and the Northern Ireland Assembly to help ensure that the objectives and priorities set out in the Belfast Agenda are delivered on.

In addition, if elected as a member of an established political party, a Councillor will also have a responsibility to his or her political party.

A Councillor therefore has to balance the demands of being a community champion and a civic leader alongside the demands placed upon them as political party members.

All Councillors will therefore:

- determine the strategic direction of the Council and make decisions on Council policies and priorities.
- be involved in the Council's decision- making process, exercising objectivity, and at all times acting in accordance with the Council's constitution and standing orders.
- act as custodians of the Council's finances and ensure financial propriety and budgetary controls are maintained.
- represent the Council on outside bodies and work in collaboration with other organisations agencies for the benefit of the city.
- act as a community champion providing leadership, support and representation.
- be an advocate for individual constituents in resolving particular issues and concerns which are affecting them.
- adopt and maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics and abide at all times by the Code of Conduct for Councillors including, registering and declaring any personal pecuniary or significant non-pecuniary interests.

The primary purpose of the elected member role profiles is to assist members in understanding the role(s), duties and responsibilities which they will be expected to undertake as elected representatives, both as local representatives and as civic leaders. The role profiles, when considered in conjunction with the knowledge and skills framework, should also:

- assist and support members as they develop from first being elected through to undertaking key civic leadership roles, so they have a full understanding of what is expected from an effective elected member.
- underpin and enhance the personal development planning (PDP) process, so members are fully equipped to undertake the respective roles effectively and ensure learning and development activities which are available at a personal, party and council wide level are identified and addressed to assist them both as community advocates and as civic leaders working in a political environment; and

- ensure relevant capacity building activities and programmes are in place to support members.

Role Profile: Elected Member

Main purpose of role - To represent the views of his/her local community and the citizens of Belfast generally, both within and outside the Council.

Summary of responsibilities:

1. Decision-making and overseeing the performance of the Council:

- To participate fully in the council, committee and working group meetings, reaching and making informed and balanced decisions, and overseeing Council performance.
- To contribute to the democratic decision-making process and take ownership of decisions reached by Council.
- To oversee the implementation of the Belfast Agenda, Corporate Plan and the Belfast City Local Development Plan and monitor progress against targets.
- To promote and ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of Council services ensuring maximum benefit is achieved for ratepayers.
- To agree Council policies and oversee their effective implementation.
- To agree to the allocation of the Council's people and financial resources and ensure their efficient and effective uses for service delivery.

2. Representing and supporting communities:

- To represent and reflect clearly to the Council the views of local communities in respect of Council strategies, policies, services and procedures.
- To explain decisions of the Council to constituents and other interested parties including potential impact on them.
- To ensure planned and targeted interventions assist with achieving the objectives of the Belfast Agenda as well as constituents needs.
- To ensure that communities are aware of and are encouraged to contribute to the Statement of Community Involvement for the Belfast City Local Development Plan.
- To consult with and communicate the views of the public, partners and stakeholders to the Council.
- To represent individual constituents and local organisations by undertaking work on their behalf and serving all fairly and equally.
- To demonstrate and promote tolerance, cohesion and ensure equality and diversity are respected.

3. Representing the Council:

- To represent the views of the Council to partners and stakeholders to help achieve collaborative working.
- To represent the Council as appropriate on local and regional outside bodies.

- To act as an ambassador of the Council and ensure its reputation is upheld.
- To work in partnership with officers and other Councillors to promote Council objectives.
- To represent, support and be an advocate for the Council and its decisions at local, national and international levels.

4. Internal governance, ethics and relationships:

- To promote and support good governance of the Council and its affairs at all times.
- To comply with the Council's Constitution (including Standing Orders governing the conduct of Council business).
- To promote high standards of conduct and ethics in public life.
- To abide by the Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors to ensure the highest standards of behaviour and probity.
- To develop constructive and mutually respectful relationship with officers (in line with the Local Government Employee and Councillor Working Relationship Protocol).

Knowledge and Skills

The Knowledge and Skills Framework sets out the key knowledge, skills and qualities an effective elected member should demonstrate.

Members should refer to the Knowledge and Skills Framework to identify the key areas which they may potentially need to develop, enhance and maintain in order to effectively undertake their role as an elected representative. The knowledge and skills required come under the following headings:-

A. Members' Knowledge

1. Understanding our City, Council & Customers
2. Strategic Leadership
3. Community Leadership
4. Working with Others
5. Good Governance & Due Diligence
6. Personal Impact

B. Members' Skills

1. Regulating & monitoring
2. Local Leadership
3. Scrutiny & Challenge
4. Communication Skills
5. Partnership Working
6. Political Understanding
7. Effective Use of Digital Technology
8. Resilience & Wellbeing

Party Leaders

9. Excellence in Leadership

Role Profiles: Civic Dignitaries

This role profile is in addition to the Member role profile and outlines the specialised civic leadership roles of Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor and High Sheriff.

Lord Mayor

Main Purpose of role: To perform the duties and roles expected to be undertaken by the first citizen of the city.

Summary of Responsibilities:

- To preside over meetings of the Full Council fairly and impartially ensuring that business is carried out efficiently and in line with the Standing orders of the Council.
- To promote and support good governance of the Council and its affairs.
- To provide community leadership and promote active citizenship.
- To promote and support open and transparent government.
- To support, and adhere to respectful, appropriate and effective relationships with officers of the Council.
- To promote and raise awareness of the Council's main objectives and priority issues.
- To encourage and support all aspects of life in Belfast by attending civic and public events.
- To receive distinguished visitors to the city
- To act as host on behalf of the council and the citizens of Belfast at civic functions
- To act as a spokesperson to the local, national and international media
- To provide an appropriate response on behalf of Belfast at times of local, national and international catastrophe
- To support and encourage charitable and other appeals as appropriate.
- To promote Belfast's business, commercial, cultural and social life
- To promote Belfast as a place of excellence in which to do business and as a tourist destination.

Deputy Lord Mayor

Summary of Responsibilities:

- In the Lord Mayor's absence to preside over meetings of the Full Council fairly and impartially ensuring that business is carried out efficiently and in line with the Standing orders of the Council.
- To support the Lord Mayor in carrying out his/her civic responsibilities.
- To carry out engagements on behalf of the Lord Mayor, as required.
- To undertake specific roles and responsibilities as requested by the Lord Mayor.
- To support and share in general the full range of duties of the Lord Mayor.

High Sheriff

Summary of Responsibilities:

- Attend civic functions hosted by the Lord Mayor.
- Undertake specific functions on behalf of the Council.

- Attend functions in place of the Lord Mayor and/or Deputy Lord Mayor
- Provide general support to the Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor.

Working together:

The three civic dignitaries, Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor and High Sheriff, will work closely together on projects and initiatives that enhance the profile of the city.

Knowledge and Skills

The Knowledge and Skills framework sets out the key knowledge, skills and qualities an effective elected member should demonstrate.

Members should refer to the Knowledge and Skills Framework to identify the key areas which they may potentially need to develop, enhance and maintain in order to effectively undertake the role of a civic dignitary.

The Knowledge and skills required are listed on page 3 above.

Role Profile: Party Leader

(This role profile is in addition to the Member role profile and outlines the specialised civic leadership role of Party Leader).

Main purpose of role - To lead the party, build consensus, and ensure the party acts in a cohesive and unified fashion.

1. Ensure all party members are consulted and communicated with equally.
2. Chair party meetings to ensure Council and committee business is discussed and consensual party positions are adopted which will help further the Council's strategic priorities, aid informed decision- making and collaborative working.
3. Engage with other party leaders on the Council and work collaboratively to ensure decisions are taken which will benefit all citizens of the city.

Summary of responsibilities:

- Act as conduit at party, council and Executive level.
- Be accountable for decisions and recommendations made by the party.
- Participate in the Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum and act as a conduit for communication with party members on issues discussed at the Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum.
- Take responsibility for appointing party members to committees and outside bodies in line with the party allocation under D'hondt.
- Provide support and guidance for party members and take responsibility for the arrangements for mentoring of new members.
- Appoint the Deputy Party Leader and other party office bearers as appropriate.
- Maintain an overview of party members' constituency roles and activities as well as emerging community issues which may influence Council decisions.
- Be the principal spokesperson for the party with regard to Council business.
- Ensure effective corporate governance is practised including working with other parties on the Council to achieve potential cross-party co-operation.
- Encourage party members to participate in any relevant learning and development opportunities.

The Deputy Party Leader will:

Assist the party Leader in specific duties as required.

Fulfil the duties of the party leader in their absence.

Knowledge and Skills

The Knowledge and Skills framework sets out the key knowledge, skills and qualities an effective elected member should demonstrate.

Members should refer to the Knowledge and Skills Framework to identify the key areas which they may potentially need to develop, enhance and maintain in order to effectively undertake the role of Party Leader. See page 3 above.

Role Profile: Committee Chairperson

This role profile is in addition to the Member role profile and outlines the specialised civic leadership role of Committee Chairperson.

Main purpose of role - To chair and manage the business of the committee effectively and efficiently and in accordance with its terms of reference and the standing orders of the Council.

Summary of responsibilities:

Lead the committee in the area of responsibility of that committee, and champion on behalf of the Council by:

- Chairing meetings and ensuring procedures, rules and protocols are followed.
- Working with relevant officers to:
 - Ensure appropriate planning of committee activities.
 - Receive all appropriate advice to inform effective committee decisions.
 - Liaising with officers on the content of the agenda.
 - Establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with other members, including the chairs of other committees of the Council and working groups established under the authority of the committee.
 - Ensuring all contributions from members, officers and where appropriate, members of the public, are made in accordance with the agreed procedure.
 - Guiding the committee to reach decisions, based on the information presented to it.
 - Presenting the minutes of the committee to Council for ratification.
 - Demonstrating fair and open decision-making by, or on behalf of, the committee.
 - Encouraging open and informed debate ensuring respectful and appropriate behaviour is demonstrated by members at all times.
 - Developing a constructive and mutually respectful relationship with officers.
 - Representing the Council in dealing with the public, media and other bodies in respect of the business of the committee.
 - Encouraging the highest standards of behaviour and probity.
 - Encouraging committee members to participate in any relevant learning and development opportunities.

The Deputy Chairperson will:

Assist and work with the chairperson in delivering his/her responsibilities to the Council.

Deputise for the chairperson in his/her absence from committee meetings undertaking all of the duties and responsibilities of the chairperson.

Knowledge and Skills

The Knowledge and Skills Framework sets out the key knowledge, skills and qualities an effective elected member should demonstrate. See page 3 above.

Role Profile: Planning Committee Chairperson

(This role profile is in addition to the Member role and outlines the specialised civic leadership role of Planning Committee Chairperson).

Main purpose of role - to chair and manage the business of the committee effectively and efficiently and in accordance with its terms of reference.

Summary of responsibilities:

- To liaise with officers on the content of the agenda and also on the content of presentations at committee to ensure that members are presented with details enabling a full and accurate understanding of any item under discussion.
- To chair meetings of the committee impartially and in such a way as to facilitate open discussion and obtain valid decisions from all members.
- To build effective working relationships with senior officers involved in the Planning function.
- To receive and respond to professional advice and recommendations in the planning decision-making process.
- To assist members and liaise with officers in respect of site meetings to view planning applications prior to or following committee meetings.
- To manage site meetings alongside senior officers to ensure that all relevant facets of the application are considered and understood by members and that further requested information or clarification is provided in a timely manner.
- To manage deputations to the committee to ensure that contributions by the public and other interested parties are facilitated and controlled in accordance with the agreed protocol.
- To assist members and liaise with officers in the consideration of any new planning applications received by the Council to ensure that members understand the process and implications of any proposed action.
- To act as a spokesperson for the committee and liaise with community groups, partners, outside bodies and the public on matters that fall within the remit of the committee.
- To liaise with officers to co-ordinate committee responses to consultations on local planning policies, planning strategies, the Statement of Community involvement and any other development plan documents in adjoining authorities.
- To liaise with officers and members with regard to formulating responses to consultations in relation to regionally significant or major applications to be determined by the Department for Infrastructure.
- To liaise with officers regarding any planning legislative changes and ensure that members are advised immediately of such changes and are aware of the implications to current and future planning applications.
- To encourage the highest standards of behaviour and probity and reinforce to members their obligations as contained in the Councillors' Code of Conduct with Regard to Planning Matters.
- To encourage committee members to participate in any relevant learning and development opportunities particularly, training focussing on procedures and legislation relevant to the work of the committee.

The Deputy Chairperson will:

Assist and work with the chairperson in delivering his/her responsibilities to the Council.

Deputise for the chairperson in his/ her absence from committee meetings undertaking all of the duties and responsibilities of the chairman.

Knowledge and Skills

The Knowledge and Skills Framework sets out the key knowledge, skills and qualities an effective elected member should demonstrate.

Members should refer to the Knowledge and Skills Framework to identify the key areas which they may potentially need to develop, enhance and maintain in order to effectively undertake their role as the chairperson/ deputy chairperson of a regulatory committee.

In addition to those skills the chairperson/ deputy chairperson of the Planning Committee will be required to have knowledge of the legislation regulating the work of the Committee.

Role Profile: Licensing Committee Chairperson

This role profile is in addition to the Member role profile and outlines the specialised role of Licensing Committee Chairperson

Main Purpose of Role - To chair and manage the business of the committee effectively and efficiently and in accordance with its terms of reference.

Summary of responsibilities:

- To liaise with officers on the content of the agenda and forward work plan.
- To chair meetings of the committee impartially and in such a way as to facilitate open discussion and obtain valid decisions from all members.
- To build effective working relationships with senior officers involved in the Licensing function.
- To liaise with officers responsible for monitoring licensing legislative changes and ensure that members are advised immediately of such changes and aware of the implications to current and future licensing applications.
- To liaise with the PSNI, statutory consultees, and other notice parties in order that the committee can have positive dialogue and make informed decisions on licensing matters.
- To manage deputations to the committee to ensure that contributions by the public and other interested parties are facilitated and controlled in accordance with the agreed protocol.
- To ensure that the committee has access to professional legal advice as and when appropriate.
- To demonstrate fair and open decision- making by, or on behalf of, the committee.
- To encourage committee members to participate in any relevant learning and development opportunities particularly, training focussing on procedures and legislation relevant to the work of the committee.

The Deputy Chairperson will:

- Assist and work with the chairperson in delivering his/her responsibilities to the Council.
- Deputise for the chairperson in his/ her absence from committee meetings undertaking all of the duties and responsibilities of the chairperson.

Knowledge and Skills

The Knowledge and Skills Framework sets out the key knowledge, skills and qualities an effective elected member should demonstrate.

Members should refer to the Knowledge and Skills Framework to identify the key areas which they may potentially need to develop, enhance and maintain in order to effectively undertake their role as the chairperson/ deputy chairperson of a regulatory committee.

In addition to those skills the chairperson/ deputy chairperson of the Licensing Committee will be required to have knowledge of the legislation regulating the work of the Committee.

Role Profile: Audit and Risk Panel Chairperson

This role profile is in addition to the Member role profile and outlines the specialised civic leadership role of Audit and Risk Panel Chairperson.

Main purpose of role - To chair and manage the business of the panel effectively and efficiently and in accordance with its terms of reference.

Summary of responsibilities:

- To liaise with officers on the content of the agenda and forward work plan.
- To chair meetings of the panel impartially and in such a way as to facilitate open discussion and obtain valid decisions from all members.
- To build effective working relationships with senior officers responsible for corporate finance, audit, governance and risk services, including provision for private meetings with Panel Members and the Head of Audit, Governance & Risk Services on at least an annual basis.
- To liaise with external auditors and officials from the NIAO as required, including provision for private meetings with Panel Members and the NIAO on at least an annual basis.
- To review and assess the risk management, internal control and corporate governance arrangements of the Council.
- To review the draft financial statements prepared by the Council.
- To monitor the effectiveness of the Council's Assurance Framework.
- To review and monitor employee costs and absence rates.
- To oversee corporate health and safety performance.
- To consider actions arising from the NIAO Annual Audit Letter and ensure the actions are implemented.
- To take part in the recruitment and selection process for the external independent member of the panel and the Head of Audit, Governance & Risk Services
- To demonstrate fair and open decision- making by or on behalf of the panel.
- To encourage panel members to participate in any relevant learning and development opportunities particularly, training focussing on audit, governance and risk issues.

- To provide an annual report to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee setting out how the Panel has fulfilled its role, providing an annual assurance on the adequacy of the Council's risk management and internal control environment.
- To review, on an annual basis, the effectiveness of the Audit & Risk Panel and the internal audit service

Knowledge and Skills

The Knowledge and Skills Framework sets out the key knowledge, skills and qualities an effective elected member should demonstrate.

Members should refer to the Knowledge and Skills Framework to identify the key areas which they may potentially need to develop, enhance and maintain in order to effectively undertake their role as an elected representative.

In addition to those skills the Chairperson/ Deputy Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Panel will be required to have knowledge of finance and audit regulations and the principles of fraud awareness.

Role Profile: Member of Area Working Group

This role profile is in addition to the Member' role profile and outlines the specialised civic leadership role of Member of Area Working Group.

Main purpose of role

To represent the views of his/her local community to identify local priorities and support all aspects of Council led interventions which contribute to effective 'place shaping' and locality planning, resulting in making recommendations to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on investment decisions for local areas.

Summary of responsibilities -

- Decision-making and overseeing the performance of the Council:
- To consider area-based issues as referred by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.
- To consider the potential for area planning in respect of community planning.
- To offer advice and guidance to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and officers in the development and implementation of local projects.
- To interact with all standing committees of the council.
- To oversee the implementation of area-based interventions and monitor progress against targets and timescales.
- To produce an annual report on performance
- To give due consideration to council's local service delivery issues.
- To promote efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of services ensuring maximum benefit is achieved for ratepayers.
- To make investment decisions for local areas ensuring the efficient and effective use of funding allocation for agreed projects.

Representing and supporting communities:

- To represent and reflect clearly to the Area Working Group, the views of local communities in respect of area-based initiatives.

- To explain decisions of the Council to local communities as they relate to 'place shaping' including benefits to be gained and potential impact on them.
- To ensure planned and targeted interventions assist with achieving the objectives of the Belfast Agenda and Local Development Plan as well as community needs.
- To participate in and facilitate community engagement and communications activities with a wide range of groups in investment in local areas.
- To use Area Working Groups as a consultation forum with local community groups.
- To consider the local dimension of key strategic projects such as leisure transformation.
- To consider and explore other initiatives happening in local areas such as Urban Villages, Building Successful Communities, Social Investment Fund etc to maximise benefits for local communities.

Internal governance, ethics and relationships:

- To exercise due diligence and ensure financial propriety is maintained in respect of all decisions which are taken by the Area Working Group.
- To take ownership of decisions reached by the Area Working Group.
- To use Area Working Group workshop sessions as 'creative spaces and opportunities for capacity building, designing interventions and problem solving.
- To maintain a focus on member and officer development with a view to achieving the objectives of the Area Working Group.
- To explore the organisational consequences of area working and building capacity.
- To demonstrate and promote tolerance, cohesion and ensure equality and diversity are respected through balanced investment decision-making.

Knowledge and Skills

The Knowledge and Skills Framework sets out the key knowledge, skills and qualities an effective elected member should demonstrate.

Members should refer to the Knowledge and Skills Framework to identify the key areas which they may potentially need to develop, enhance and maintain in order to effectively undertake their role as a member of an Area Working Group.

Role Profile: Member Champion

This role profile is in addition to the Member role profile and outlines the specialised civic leadership role of Member Champion.

What are Member Champions?

Member Champions provide a voice for traditionally underrepresented groups, or issues which need to be kept at the forefront of council business although they may not be the responsibility of any individual committee.

Member Champions are elected members who in addition to their other council responsibilities make sure that the issue or group that they are championing are taken into account when council policy is being developed and decisions are made. Members can act as champions in areas such as equality and diversity, older people, young people, member development, and anti-poverty.

It is important that members and officers work together to agree roles and actions for the area being championed and that there are mechanisms for members to report on their activities.

The Role Profile

It is difficult to create a role description that fits with the different roles expected of champions. The following is a generic profile that can be adapted depending on the issue/group being championed.

Main purpose of role

To provide political legitimacy to advocate and lobby for policies and, where appropriate, resources and funding to support, advance and promote the issue or group that is being championed.

Summary of responsibilities:

- To maximise the impact and influence the Council can have in working with stakeholders, outside bodies and statutory organisations to address the specific issues of the group/actively promote the issue.
- To ensure that the group/issue is taken account of when developing Council policy and procedures.
- To promote the group/issue being championed within the Council's corporate and service priorities.
- To maintain an awareness of all matters connected with the group/issue being championed.
- To contribute to the continuous improvement of services and functions related to the group/issue and share identified best practice as appropriate.
- To engage on a cross-party basis with members in matters related to the group/issue.
- To liaise with external bodies/agencies which have responsibility for the group/issue.
- To work with officers to promote awareness of and assist in developing relevant members and officers in relation to the group/issue.
- To raise the profile of the group/issue in the community.
- To engage with citizens and community groups in matters related to the group/issue.
- To lead and support local initiatives related to the group/issue.

Knowledge and Skills

The Knowledge and Skills Framework sets out the key knowledge, skills and qualities an effective elected member should demonstrate.

Members should refer to the Knowledge and Skills Framework to identify the key areas which they may potentially need to develop, enhance and maintain in order to effectively undertake their role as a Member Champion.

In addition to those skills, a Member Champion will be required to have an in-depth knowledge of the issue or group being championed.