

ITEM 13 Councillor Role Definition: All Members

Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Portfolio: Corporate)

Recommended:

- 1. That the “Councillor Role Definition: All Members”, as shown in the Annex to this report be approved.**
- 2. That all Councillors be sent a copy of the “Councillor Role Definition: All Members”, and that they be requested to read and sign the document.**
- 3. That the Councillor Role Descriptions for all other member roles be reviewed and if necessary, updated.**

Recommended to Council

SUMMARY:

- Over the past five or so years, the Council has introduced a range of initiatives and tools to better support Councillors in working with their communities to help them plan and prioritise for the future.
- In order to more accurately reflect the diverse role of elected representatives in Test Valley, the Councillor role definition for all Members, has been updated with particular reference to the work being undertaken by Councillors as community leaders/ facilitators.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Test Valley Borough Council first introduced role definitions for Members in 2001 with the aim of providing an overview for elected representatives of what is expected of them in their role.
- 1.2 A number of role definitions were developed to cover the various roles undertaken by Councillors as part of their duties. These range from a generic role description covering the broader role of the elected representative to more specific descriptions for cabinet members and chairmen.
- 1.3 Following the work of the OSCOM Constitution Review Panel in 2011, the Councillor role definition for all Members was updated. Since that time, the Council has undertaken a number of projects and initiatives as part of its corporate priorities to help develop the role of the Councillor. In particular, this has included the work of Members as community leaders/ facilitators and working with local communities to help them prioritise, plan and action what is most important to them. This strand of work commenced in 2011 when the Council worked with the Local Government Association on the “Keep it Real” programme.

1.4 Key support put in place to give Councillors more impact in their communities has included:

- the creation of a Community Team to provide dedicated support for councillors and communities,
- introduction of the Councillor Grant Scheme and the Community Asset Fund to support community groups in accessing funding to help get things done,
- creation of area profiles to help Councillors and communities better understand their local area,
- development of a range of support packages including recently a new toolkit to support councillors in helping their communities to undertake community planning activity and,
- a new approach to the Councillor Induction Programme providing key information and support for Councillors in an accessible way. This has since been developed into an ongoing Councillor Development Programme.

1.5 A number of councillors recently gave evidence to the national Councillor Commission organised by De Montfort University and the Municipal Journal. The editor of the Municipal Journal, who chaired the session, was very complimentary about the Council's work in this area.

1.6 It was therefore felt that the Councillor role definition for all Members should be updated to more accurately reflect this diverse role with particular reference to the work being undertaken by Councillors with their communities.

2 Background

2.1 As part of the development of the Council's Corporate Plan in 2011, the theme of 'Empowering Communities' emerged as key priority. The Council has focused on supporting Councillors to help communities across Test Valley to identify and prioritise their own needs and enable residents to get things done that matter to them. This theme continues in the Council's current corporate plan as a dedicated section entitled 'Contribute to, and be part of a strong community.'

2.2 Across this programme of work key initiatives and tools have been developed to help support councillors in their work with communities. Examples of this include the bringing together of a dedicated communities team, development of ward profiles and the introduction of councillor ward budgets.

3 Corporate Objectives and Priorities

3.1 The work of elected representatives underpins everything that the Council does and therefore supports all of the Council's Corporate Priorities.

- 3.2 This work has been undertaken as part of the Council's Corporate Priority of 'Contribute, and be part of a strong community' which has been a particular driving force for the revision of the Councillor Role Description: All Members.

4 Consultations/Communications

- 4.1 The revised definition has been developed with the Member and Community Development Group (MCDG). This Group is a Member steering group that was originally established in 2011 to help develop the work of the corporate plan looking at Empowering Communities which since the development of the new corporate plan has become Contribute to and be part of a strong community.
- 4.2 The MCDG is a cross-party advisory group which comprises Councillors Carr (chairman), Adams-King, North, Tilling and Ward.
- 4.3 This Group has considered the revised role definition on a number of occasions in light of the projects and initiatives that have been undertaken over the past five years or so.
- 4.4 At its meeting on 13 July 2016 the MCDG endorsed the draft revised Councillor Role Definition for All Members and suggested it be presented to OSCOM for consideration before going on to Council for approval.
- 4.5 At OSCOM held on Wednesday 12 October 2016 the role description was endorsed with minor amendments, which the MCDG have now accepted ready for consideration by Cabinet and Council.

5 Options

- 5.1 To approve the revised Councillor Role Definition: All Members, and recommend to Council that it be adopted by the Council.
- 5.2 To make amendments to the revised Councillor Role Definition, and recommend to Council that it be adopted by the Council.
- 5.3 To not approve the revised Councillor Role Definition: All Members and to continue to use the existing Role Definition that has been in place since 2011.

6 Option Appraisal

- 6.1 It is recommended that the revised Councillor Role Description be approved. It has been developed with Members to better reflect the role being undertaken by elected representatives, in particular highlighting the increased role the Councillor play as leaders in their communities.

7 Resource Implications

- 7.1 There are no significant resource implications arising from the introduction of a revised Councillor Role Definition: All Members, as the document would be a replacement for the current role description.

7.2 Commitment from all Councillors would be required in relation to the reading, signing and returning the revised definition which will be kept on file by Democratic Services.

8 Legal Implications

8.1 There are no legal implications.

9 Equality Issues

9.1 No equality issues have been identified.

10 Other Issues

10.1 Community Safety - none

10.2 Environmental Health Issues – none

10.3 Sustainability and Addressing a Changing Climate - none

10.4 Property Issues -none

10.5 Wards/Communities Affected – all

11 Conclusion

11.1 As a result of the programme of work being undertaken on developing and supporting the role of the Councillor as a community leader in Test valley it is recommended that the revised Councillor role definition for all Members, be approved to better reflect the broad range of work being undertaken by elected representatives in the Borough.

<u>Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)</u>			
None			
<u>Confidentiality</u>			
It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.			
No of Annexes:	1		
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