

# Lead Member Protocol



## Introduction

Lead Members are elected members who act as an advocate or spokesperson for a Key Theme of the Council's business. The main responsibility of each Lead Member is to encourage communication and positive action over the area they represent.

## Appointment of Lead Members

Lead Members will be agreed annually at the Annual General Meeting

There will be 10 Lead Members and the following Lead Member roles have been identified:

- Economy
- Community, Culture & Leisure
- Climate Change
- Environment, Health & Wellbeing/Community Safety
- Planning & Development
- Customer Services & Internal Resources
- Finance & Audit
- Legal & Democratic Support
- Homelessness and Housing Need
- Waste & Recycling

Normally, Lead Members will be appointed following the whole local government elections that take place every four years and will normally be expected to serve for the period of his/her term of office to ensure some stability in the role. However, an appointment may be made during the four-year period to any new position that is established or to a position where there is a vacancy.

Lead Member vacancies will be advertised to all councillors by the Leader asking for expressions of interest. The expressions of interest must include a proposer and seconder and a statement of why the councillor should be considered for the role. The Leader will discuss the applicants with Group Leaders before recommending an appointment to Full Council.

A Lead Member may be replaced from office at any time by Full Council following a recommendation by the Leader (in consultation with the group leaders) who will give written notice to the Chief Executive.

Any Lead Member may resign from office by giving written notice to the Leader and Chief Executive.

## **Role of Lead Members**

A Role Description for Lead Members is provided at 'Annexe A'. This document has been produced to assist Lead Members in their role. Lead Members are asked to refer to this document when performing their duties as a Lead Member.

## **The Parameters of Lead Members**

All Lead Members must act reasonably in their role and recognise and work effectively within the political management and working arrangements adopted by the Council.

A Lead Member cannot make decisions and must not commit the Council in any way or in a manner that could be interpreted as being contrary to established policy and practice. They may, however, confirm a position as stated in a published policy.

A Lead Member may be a recognised media contact with the prior approval of the Leader. Where such approval has not been obtained, the Lead Member must make it clear when communicating with the media that he/she is speaking on behalf of a political group (if affiliated to a group) or in a personal capacity and not as the Council's Lead Member.

Lead Members will sit on the Council's Leadership Team.

Lead Members may appoint other Members as Project Champions to assist them on specific projects within their areas of their Key Theme as they deem necessary.

Councillors on outside bodies will relate directly to an appropriate Lead Member.

Each Service of the Council will have a direct link to an appropriate Lead Member or Committee Chair (as shown in Annexe B – Lead Member Structure)

## **Officer Support to Lead Members**

Lead Members play an important role in promoting their Key Theme on behalf of the Council. In recognition of the importance of the respective roles of Lead Members, officer support will be provided at a senior level.

Lead Members will liaise with the officers from within their Key Theme as shown in Annexe B – Lead Member Structure. The officers will meet with the relevant Lead Member on a regular basis to discuss action plans, current activities, national developments or any other matters relating to the interest being championed.

The officers concerned will give reasonable support to the Lead Member, including the provision of Council information, government communications and national publications within their remit.

In the event that a dispute arises in relation to the operation of this protocol and it cannot be settled informally, then the Chief Executive, having met the person(s) concerned, will arrange and attend a meeting with the Leader and appropriate group leader(s) to resolve the situation.