



Role

1. Role of a Councillor

Your role as an elected Councillor means that you will have the opportunity to make a real difference to local people in your area and the Borough in general.

Councillors undertake varied activities and responsibilities during their time as an elected Member.

Practical roles:

An elected Member has the opportunity to be involved in many aspects of community activities as well as other organisations.

As an elected Councillor you will also be able to be involved in the decision-making process on matters that are important to you and your local community.

You will not have to work in isolation as you will find support and guidance from similar-minded colleagues.

With any formal role comes responsibilities and there is the need to comply with statutory obligations and the Council's Constitution. However, you will find help and support in understanding what these are by attending your new Member Induction upon your election to office and by attending on-going Member training sessions.

Your role will also mean contributing actively to the formation and scrutiny of Council policies, budget, strategies and services provided for the Borough as well as participation in meetings of the Council, Cabinet or Committee, or any other organisation to which you are appointed.

As an advocate of your local community, you will represent your residents, although there may also be occasions when you will have to make decisions based on balancing the needs of the local community with those of the whole of Elmbridge.

By representing Elmbridge Borough Council to the community, and the community to the Council, you will help make a difference not only to the Borough but also to the wellbeing of your residents.

By putting yourself forward for election, you will have a commitment to your local community and will therefore need to be available (either by telephone, e-mail, address or in person via a Member surgery) so that constituents can contact you as their local Councillor. You will find that assisting people that you represent through casework or Member surgery activities is a really rewarding and satisfying part of your role.

Summary of Role:

- As a representative and advocate of your community you will be able to respond to issues raised by residents.

- Contributing actively to the formation and scrutiny of Council policies and services provided by the Council that are important to the community and to you.
- Promoting and contributing to the improvement of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the Borough.
- Contributing to the effective running of the Borough.
- Acting at all times within the Code of Conduct.



Role

2. Role of a Chairman

This is a general explanation of the role of a Chairman. References to 'Committee' should also be taken to include Sub-Committees and Working Groups.

(The Vice-Chairman is responsible for supporting the Chairman in his or her role, and can take over the Chairman's role when he or she is unable to do so.)

A Chairman is responsible for chairing meetings in an impartial manner, so that contributions from fellow Councillors are encouraged and the aims of the meeting are achieved and clear decisions made.

The Chairman of a particular Committee will develop and maintain knowledge of the Committee's Terms of Reference, and will work with Council employees to ensure that the Committee acts within its remit.

The role of a Chairman will sometimes be challenging, particularly when there are passionate views being expressed from all sides of the meeting, and the Chairman's skill in facilitating discussion is important. By encouraging decision-making based objectively on evidence and policy, sound and robust decisions will be achieved.

The Chairman also is responsible to check the draft minutes of meetings, and on occasion, the role may offer recommendations of the Committee, to the Cabinet, Council or another Committee as appropriate.

It may be necessary to challenge fellow Members on their contributions at meetings, but by operating fairly and openly, the Chairman ensures integrity of the decision-making process by the Committee and therefore the Council.

As many of the Committees cover detail and areas regulated by legislation, for example planning, the Chairman attend and encourage other Members to attend, appropriate Member training.

Summary of Role:

- Ensuring the Committee works within its remit.
- Ensuring that the Committee deals with its functions in a fair and proper manner, having regard to the Council's policies and statutory requirements.



Role

3. Role of a Portfolio Holder

In addition to the Councillor Roles, Portfolio Holders (Cabinet Members) are also responsible for working together through the Cabinet to make major decisions and policy that affect the local area.

Portfolio Holders are appointed to cover different areas of Council responsibility, such as Housing or Highways and Transport. As Portfolio Holder, a Member will gain an understanding of the relevant service area and will work with relevant Council employees around developments or policies in respect of those services, including relevant regional and national policies.

Portfolio Holders consider key budget issues affecting the Council, and the relevant area, and they are involved with the preparation and monitoring of the budget and submission of budget proposals.

The Cabinet and Portfolio Holders set the overall vision and priorities year on year for the Council.

Much of the role also includes communication, through regular contact with other Group Leaders, Committee Chairmen and other Members. Furthermore, by listening to others, Portfolio Holders ensure that decisions taken are well informed and that Council policies are widely understood and positively promoted.

There is the opportunity to work with the full Council, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the community on matters within the Portfolio area, and also the ability to act as spokesperson for the Council for matters within this remit.

Arrangements in Elmbridge mean that individual Portfolio Holders are able to take decisions under any delegated authority as set out within the Council's Constitution, as well as acting as a consultee for Council employees making decisions under delegated powers when required.

Summary of Role:

- The Portfolio Holder will be responsible for the service, and functions of the Council relating to those matters in the Portfolio.
- Taking an active stance via the Portfolio as a Member of the Cabinet to create the Council's policies, which include the budget and development of services.
- The Leader and Cabinet work together for the executive functions of the Council.



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Borough Council
... bridging the communities ...

Role

4. Role of the Leader of the Council

The Leader of the Council is also responsible for providing visible political leadership and accountability. He or she is elected by the Members of the Council.

In addition to the duties, responsibilities and purposes contained in the Councillor and Portfolio Holder roles, the Leader is normally appointed by the Council for up to four years, represents the Council in the community and in discussions with local, regional and national groups and organisations.

The Leader works with his/her appointed Cabinet Portfolio colleagues in undertaking executive responsibility for developing and proposing overall strategy, budget and policy arrangements across the Council whilst seeking the views of other Councillors.

The role also involves regular contact with the Chief Executive of the Council, the Strategic Directors and senior Council employees. They work together in agreeing policies and budget arrangements.

The Leader is also involved in regular reporting to other Members on the work of the Cabinet and Council.