

Revision to Member Profiles and removal from the Council Constitution

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Purpose of the Report

1. That the Standards Committee recommend to Full Council approval of the revised member role profiles included in this report and remove them from the constitution making them a companion document.

Public Interest

2. The purpose of this report is to update Members on the findings and recommendations of the Transformation Members Working Group in relation to member roles. The group were tasked to consider how the role of the Councillor is changing and to identify what tools, learning and support is needed to enable the councillor to be effective and efficient in the transformed Council.

Recommendations

3. That full Council:
 - a) Adopt the Role Profiles and Framework set out in Appendices 1-3 to this report, including the addition of a desirable knowledge and skill set specification;
 - b) Agree that the existing member role profiles be removed from the Council's Constitution; and
 - c) Agree that future revisions to the member role profiles be agreed by a member working group, of political and Area balance, to provide member insight to the learning and development of councillors; such working group to be formed on an 'as needed' basis.

Background

4. The Member Leadership and Development for Transformation Project formed part of the People and Change Transformation Workstream. This project was led by the Communities Lead, Transformation and was supported by the Scrutiny Specialist who worked collaboratively with a cross party and all area representative elected member working group (the Transformation Member Working Group). The Group formed and commenced work in October 2017 and were tasked to aid the development and implementation of Transformation, with specific tasks that included:
 - Examining how the role of the councillor is changing.
 - How the member roles need to evolve to reflect the transformed Council building on the 'One Team' approach and ensuring the Council and councillors work both efficiently and effectively.
 - Highlighting the transferable skills and experience of the councillor role to attract a more diverse and representative elected Council.

Report

5. The Transformation Member Working Group met on several occasions to understand the future councillor role and to revise the Councillor Role Profiles to ensure they are fit for purpose. The Group considered:
 - Area+ and Locality working, including project work and assessing local needs
 - 21st Century Councillor¹
 - Staff Attitudes and Approaches Framework
 - Changing needs and expectations of customers
 - Other authorities role profiles
 - New technology that will be available to residents and businesses of South Somerset
 - New tools and technology that will be available to staff and councillors
 - Different elements of the District Councillor role
 - Draft councillor induction programme
 - The proposed approach to learning and development moving forward learning from experiences to date and recognising both collective and individual needs
 - The desirable skills and knowledge of the various role profiles/special responsibilities
 - The barriers to being an effective councillor and potential mitigation measures to attract and retain a more representational group of elected members for South Somerset
6. The Group concluded:
 - a) Councillors should have a clear role profile, which takes account of the digital world. This should be a companion document to the Constitution, which is being revised and simplified separately.
 - b) The Attitudes and Approaches Framework is applicable to councillors with modifications. The emphasis for councillors is to recognise the needs and particulars of the wider community, rather than the narrower customer focus adopted in the staff document. The practical application of this framework needs to be built into councillor training i.e.: *being an effective Councillor* and will help to ensure that staff and councillors respect each other's roles and work well together in their complementary roles.
 - c) Councillors should have a clear framework of expectations within which they operate that is easy to use, within which they feel supported in their role and which all political groups are signed up to and follow.
7. The Group created a revised Member Role Profile (Appendix 1) and accompanying Member Attitude and Approaches Framework (Appendix 2) which was circulated with an information pack for consultation to all elected members on 15 November 2018. Some members raised questions about both documents in response to the consultation, but no member made suggestions to alter the structure or content or stated that they did not support the revisions.

¹ <https://21stcenturypublicservant.files.wordpress.com/2016/07/21st-century-councillor.pdf>

8. Following the wider elected member support for the revised Profile, the Group reviewed all the role profiles and supported refinement to:
 - Build on the 'One Team' concept
 - Improve consistency of language and terminology
 - Include a form of specification providing desirable knowledge and skills for the Special Responsibility role profiles, to aid understanding of the demands and expectations of the role, and to help inform development plans and training programmes.
9. The revised Special Responsibility role profiles are attached at Appendix 3.
10. The Group suggested the Role Profiles, the Framework, and the Knowledge and Skill Set documents should be a companion to the Constitution and not be part of it, as they are not a statutory requirement and this will allow for a simpler and quicker process if alterations are required in the future.

Financial Implications

11. There are no financial implications of this report.

Council Plan Implications

12. Council Theme: Protecting Core Services: Develop a more cohesive and ambitious, economically efficient organisation.

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

13. None from this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

14. The Equality Act aims to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
 - Advance equality of opportunity
 - Foster good relations
15. The revised Member Profiles are intended to enable councillors to understand the demands and expectations of the role, and to help inform their development plans and training programmes which can be customised to their individual needs and support requirements.

Background Papers

16. Report and minutes of Standards Committee – 25 February 2019
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Councillor Role Profile

Decision Maker & Council Representative

- Prepare for, attend and participate effectively in meetings of the Council and your Area Committee, taking well informed decisions for the benefit of the District as a whole
- Participate constructively in the good governance of the District and effective running of the Council
- Play an active part in the development and scrutiny of Council policies, budget strategies and service improvement
- Play an active part in the development of corporate strategies and Area plans, taking account of engagement and consultation with local people
- Participate in other member committees and groups as required
- Represent the Council on outside bodies as appointed and report back to the relevant member level body as appropriate
- Represent the Council as a whole, to partners, other agencies and in the wider community

Community Leader and Ward Representative

- Champion your ward, advocate local views within the Council and to other agencies
- Deal with ward casework and meet individual residents and community groups, as appropriate, to discuss and help to resolve problems
- Balance different views within your ward, mediating different interests and representing your ward as a whole
- Attend town and parish meetings to discuss their issues and to explain Council activities and how they affect the ward
- Keep in touch with residents and engage with all groups

Day to Day Councillor

- Interact with officers, partners, communities and fellow councillors, adhering to the SSDC Code of Conduct and the Councillor Attitudes and Approaches Framework
- Take personal responsibility for your own development, participating fully in the training and development programme in order to build understanding, knowledge and skills that you need to undertake your role effectively
- Communicate by using all relevant communication methods whilst adhering to corporate guidance on media, social media and internet use
- Operate effectively, fully utilising the Council provided digital technology

Key skills

The desirable key skills of a Councillor include:

- Good communication and listening skills
- Public Speaking
- Advocacy
- Negotiation
- Basic IT

Knowledge

The desirable knowledge of a Councillor include:

- An understanding of the legislation relating to the duties, obligations and rights of councillors
- An understanding of how the Council works
- An understanding of the Councillor's Code of Conduct, including ethics and standards
- A basic understanding of local government finance and audit processes, and the ability to interpret Council budgets and accounts
- Knowledge of issues affecting local government
- Knowledge of the Council's priorities and key projects
- Detailed knowledge of local issues and needs

Councillor Attitudes and Approaches Framework

All councillors will adhere to this Framework:

1. Open and Challenging

- a) You champion continuous improvement and gain confidence to voice your ideas and opinions when you see a better way of doing things
- b) You are respectful of other's views and seek/are receptive to constructive feedback
- c) You understand that it is not a weakness to ask for help and willingly draw on the strengths of others to achieve the most ambitious outcomes for customers

2. Positive and Flexible

- a) You work with commitment and embrace a can-do attitude to ensure that you are an effective Councillor
- b) You are ambitious for the Council, able to respond to change with flexibility and enthusiasm

3. Trust and Support

- a) You value each other (councillors and officers) and listen actively to understand the views of others
- b) You promote the values of diversity, fairness and mutual respect for all
- c) You ensure that you deliver on promises by effectively keeping commitments and communicate when things go wrong
- d) You support and encourage each other and create an environment where effective working relationships are maintained

4. Taking Responsibility

- a) You take ownership of your role and are proactive in using your initiative to ensure that problems are identified and solutions found
- b) You focus on continuous improvement, striving to be the best for yourself, the Council and ultimately our communities in South Somerset
- c) You participate in training and through continual learning and development improve your skills and knowledge

5. Team Working

- a) You collaborate with others and share responsibility to reach a common goal
- b) You are mindful of people's personalities and you promote knowledge, resource and skill sharing throughout the Council by building networks internally and externally

There are 3 additional leadership competencies:

1. Setting Direction

- a) You set the Vision and strategic direction for the Council
- b) You demonstrate ambition for the Council and make decisions

2. Leading and Developing People

- a) You prioritise, developing and enabling the people around you, inspiring, coaching and mentoring others to continually improve

3. Delivering Results

- a) You deliver results, ensuring that things within your remit are performance and outcome focused
- b) You take initiative to lead change activities and you seek excellent results

Leader of the Council Role Profile

These responsibilities are in addition to the Councillor and Executive Member role profiles.

Responsibilities:

To provide political leadership to the Executive and the Council.

Work with officers to set the Council's Strategic direction, budget and associated policies and frameworks.

- Lead the development of the Council's strategic direction, budget, strategies and policy framework with officer support.
- Lead the work of the District Executive, chairing all meetings, and ensuring all members of the Executive are fully briefed; to attend pre-agenda meetings for the Executive and other briefings with officers where necessary.
- Allocate portfolios to the members appointed to the District Executive and support the portfolio holders, meeting with them regularly to discuss the implementation of the Council's plan to achieve its ambition, plans and priorities.
- Represent the Council on all relevant matters, in consultation with the portfolio holder as appropriate; to develop and promote the reputation and interests of the Council locally, regionally and nationally.
- Liaise regularly with the media to ensure the Council's policies and activities are publicised, respond to questions and comments from the media, and be the principal spokesperson for the Council.
- Liaise regularly with the Chief Executive and provide political leadership to the Chief Executive and Directors on the overall Council plan and priorities of the Council.
- Represent the Council in the community and work with community representatives and stakeholders to develop effective policies, strategies and policies.
- Organise representation on outside bodies, events and training seminars, as required (subject to consultation with the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for member development); to sift and disseminate information to other members as appropriate.
- Work with officers and members to ensure that Executive members develop the necessary skills to contribute effectively.
- Attend official openings, familiarisation and fact-finding visits as required, including consulting with the business community and other interested parties in the district.
- Hold a portfolio as allocated and carry out the responsibilities set out for appointed portfolio holders
- Take decisions in line with Part 3 of the Council's Constitution

Key skills

The desirable key skills of the Leader include:

- Advanced leadership skills
- Ability to lead and manage complex change
- Ambassadorial and negotiation skills to represent the Council at a sub-regional, regional, and national level
- Excellent communication skills
- The ability to work constructively as part of a team with officers, councillors, partners, the media, members of the public and other organisations
- Advanced chairing skills
- Ability to work under pressure, managing conflicting priorities

Knowledge

The desirable knowledge of the Leader includes:

- A thorough understanding of the challenges and issues facing local government and the practical implications
- Detailed understanding of the national policy framework and its impact on local policy development
- Understanding the relationship between national politics and local political leadership
- Understanding the role of each of the Special Responsibilities and the committees
- Knowledge of the work of national, regional and sub-regional bodies and understanding the role of the Leader and Council within them

Deputy Leader Role Profile

These responsibilities are in addition to the Councillor and Portfolio Holder role profiles.

Responsibilities:

Deputise for the Leader of the Council as required.

Key skills

The desirable key skills of the Deputy Leader include:

- Leadership skills
- Ambassadorial and negotiation skills to represent the Council at a sub-regional, regional, and national level
- Excellent communication skills
- The ability to work constructively with officers, councillors, partners, the media, members of the public and other organisations
- Advanced chairing skills
- Competent working under pressure, managing conflicting priorities

Knowledge

The desirable knowledge of the Deputy Leader includes:

- A thorough understanding of the challenges and issues facing local government and the practical implications
- Detailed understanding of the national policy framework and its impact on local policy development
- Understanding the relationship between national politics and local political leadership
- Understanding the role of each of the Special Responsibilities and the committees
- Knowledge of the work of national, regional and sub-regional bodies and understanding the role of the Leader and Council within them

District Executive Member Role Profile

These responsibilities are in addition to the Councillor and Portfolio Holder role profiles.

Responsibilities:

To work with the Leader and other members of the Executive to ensure coherent direction and action by the Council through the following:

- Playing a leading role in the management of the Council and in decisions about the service it provides and how it provides them
- Agreeing Council priorities and objectives for consideration by the Council
Monitoring performance and reviewing the priorities and objectives annually
- Making recommendations to the Council on overall budget priorities and an annual budget
- Attending relevant official openings, familiarisation and fact-finding visits as required, including consulting with the business community and other interested parties in the district

Key skills

The desirable key skills of Executive Members includes:

- Leadership skills for areas of individual responsibility
- Ability to work as part of an executive team to drive forward the continuous improvement of the Council
- Good communication skills
- Ability to challenge the status quo and deal with complex strategic challenges
- Competent working under pressure
- Ability to represent the Council in the community and at external events and meetings
- Ability to work constructively with officers, councillors, partners, the media, members of the public and other organisations

Knowledge

The desirable knowledge of an Executive Member includes:

- Detailed understanding of local government finance and audit processes and the ability to interpret Council budgets and accounts
- A good understanding of the strategic planning cycle

Portfolio Holder Role Profile

These responsibilities are in addition to the Councillor role profiles.

Responsibilities:

- To hold a portfolio for part of the Council's activities, such as one or more services or cross-cutting issues, and to steer the preparation, development and implementation of policies and plans relevant to the portfolio
- To develop with officers an annual programme of work to deliver the relevant Council priority (to be reported to Council as part of the Annual Portfolio Holder Statements), and to liaise with relevant officers to bring forward items and monitor progress
- To attend meetings of the Scrutiny Committee and its Scrutiny Commissions (Task and Finish) activities as requested
- To represent the Council as required on issues relating to the portfolio, including briefing the media as appropriate, and to be the spokesperson for the portfolio in consultation with the Leader
- To develop and maintain effective consultation with all members of the Council, partner bodies and outside organisations, and take account of their views when making decisions
- To organise representation on relevant outside bodies as required.
- To meet regularly with the Leader and ensure the Leader is fully briefed on key issues relating to the portfolio
- To attend briefings with officers and other relevant meetings related to the portfolio, as required
- To take decisions in line with Part 3 of the Council's Constitution

Key skills

The desirable key skills of a Portfolio Holder include:

- Leadership skills for areas of individual responsibility
- Ability to work as part of an executive team to drive forward the continuous improvement of the Council
- Good communication skills
- Ability to challenge the status quo and deal with complex strategic challenges
- Competent working under pressure
- Ability to represent the Council in the community and at external events and meetings
- Ability to work constructively with officers, councillors, partners, the media, members of the public and other organisations

Knowledge

The desirable knowledge of a Portfolio Holder includes:

- Detailed understanding and in-depth knowledge of the respective portfolio, the scope and range of the relevant services for which they are responsible, and an awareness of current agreed priorities and policies in respect of those services

- A thorough understanding of the national policy framework and its impact on local policy development for areas of individual responsibility
- Detailed understanding of local government finance and audit processes and the ability to interpret Council budgets and accounts
- A good understanding of the strategic planning cycle

Area Chair Role Profile

These responsibilities are in addition to the Councillor and Portfolio Holder role profiles (the Area Chair is also the Area Portfolio Holder).

Responsibilities:

- Represent the Council as required on issues relating to the Area, including briefing the media as appropriate, and to be the spokesperson for the Area in consultation with the Leader
- Chair Area Committee meetings
- Prepare for and attend other meetings and briefings related to the committee's work
- Attend planning briefings with officers, having prepared in advance and taking all relevant paperwork to any formal meeting
- Take a collaborative approach, ensuring the advice of specialist officers is given appropriate weight and is referred to at the meeting, so as to present an effective open and transparent decision making platform
- Make sure that contributions by the public are facilitated and controlled in accordance with the agreed procedure
- Ensure all members of the Area Committee are kept informed about local matters
- Sit on the District Executive and ensure the Executive is fully briefed on Area matters
- Organise representation on relevant outside bodies
- Liaise regularly with the Director with responsibility for the Area and the relevant officers over issues within the Area
- Develop and maintain effective consultation with parish councils, partners and other outside organisations in the Area
- Meet regularly with the Leader and ensure the Leader is fully briefed on key issues relating to the Area
- Organise annual meetings of parish councils in the Area
- Act as the formal consultee with officers in delegated decisions as delegated by the committee or as set out in the terms of approved procedure(s)
- Encourage the highest standards of behaviour and probity
- Work with officers and members to ensure that committee members develop the necessary skills to contribute effectively to the work of the committee

Key skills

The desirable key skills of an Area Chair include:

- Leadership for the Area
- Advanced chairing skills
- Ability to work as an Area ambassador to drive forward the continuous improvement of the Council
- Good communication skills
- Ability to challenge the status quo and deal with complex strategic challenges
- Competent working under pressure

- Ability to represent the Council in the community and at external events and meetings
- The ability to work constructively with officers, councillors, partners, the media, members of the public and other organisations

Knowledge

The desirable knowledge of an Area Chair includes:

- Detailed understanding and in-depth knowledge of the respective Area and an awareness of current agreed priorities and policies in respect of those services
- In-depth knowledge of legislation regulating the work of the committee
- A thorough understanding of the national policy framework and its impact on local policy development for areas of individual responsibility
- Detailed understanding of local government finance and audit processes and the ability to interpret Council budgets and accounts
- A good understanding of the strategic planning cycle

Chairman of Scrutiny Committee Role Profile

These responsibilities are in addition to the Councillor role profile.

Responsibilities:

To lead the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and champion the overview and scrutiny function by:

- Chairing Scrutiny Committee meetings
- Ensuring the Executive, officers and the Council's statutory partners are properly held to account, in accordance with legislation
- Providing leadership and direction to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to make a positive contribution to the development of policy and the continuous improvement of the Council
- Promoting the role and work of overview and scrutiny, and encouraging all members to participate or contribute to Task and Finish work
- Working with officers and members to ensure that committee members develop the necessary skills to contribute effectively to the work of the committee
- Having oversight of Task and Finish reviews
- Agreeing executive decisions in cases of special urgency may be taken in cases where they are not on the Executive Forward Plan and have not been publicly available for 5 clear days
- Ensuring that the Committee acts in accordance with the Council's Constitution
- Engaging with any consultation from the Leader of the Council on forthcoming matters and the Executive Forward Plan
- Representing Scrutiny Committee at District Executive and boards as appropriate.

Key skills

The desirable key skills of the Chairman of Scrutiny committee include:

- Good leadership skills
- Advanced chairing skills
- Ambassadorial skills representing and championing the overview and scrutiny function inside and outside the Council
- Ability to work constructively with officers, councillors, partners, the media, members of the public and other organisations
- Good communication skills
- Advanced listening skills and questioning skills
- Ability to obtain and weigh up evidence and make recommendations based on that evidence

Knowledge

The desirable knowledge of the Chairman of Scrutiny committee includes:

- Detailed understanding of the legal and constitutional arrangements relating to the overview and scrutiny function
- Detailed understanding of the Council's approach to overview and scrutiny and its relationship with the other parts of the Council's decision-making structures
- A thorough understanding of the challenges facing overview and scrutiny
- A good understanding of the strategic and budget planning cycles
- A good overview of the Councils strategies, plan, priorities and projects

Chairman of Audit Committee Role Profile

These responsibilities are in addition to the Councillor role profile.

Responsibilities:

To lead the Audit Committee and champion the Audit function by:

- Ensuring the Audit Committee acts in accordance with the Council's Constitution, and supports good governance principles and their practical application towards achieving the Council's objectives
- Having an interest in and knowledge of financial and risk management, audit, accounting concepts and standards, and the regulatory regime
- Attending briefings with officers as required in advance of the committee meetings
- Working with officers and members to ensure that committee members develop the necessary skills to contribute effectively to the work of the committee
- Ensuring the Audit Committee membership displays unbiased attitudes and treating auditors, the Executive and management fairly
- Challenging the Executive and senior management when required

Key skills

The desirable key skills of the Chairman of Audit committee include:

- Ability to plan the work of the committee over the year and beyond
- Good leadership skills
- Advanced chairing skills including:
 - Promoting objective, apolitical, open discussion
 - Managing meetings to cover all business and encouraging a candid approach from all participants
- Ambassadorial skills representing and championing the Audit function
- Ability to work constructively with officers, councillors, partners, the media, members of the public and other organisations
- Good communication skills
- Advanced listening skills and questioning skills
- Ability to obtain and weigh up evidence and make recommendations based on that evidence
- A focus on improvement and securing agreement on actions

Knowledge

The desirable knowledge of the Chairman of Audit committee includes:

- A detailed understanding of the legal and constitutional arrangements relating to the Audit function
- A clear understanding of the Audit Committee's role and place within the Council's governance structures and framework

- A sound understanding of the seven principles of the CIPFA/Solace Framework for good governance and the requirements of the Annual Governance Statement
- A sound understanding of the Local Code of Governance
- A thorough understanding of the Council's financial procedure rules, risk management approach, counter fraud arrangements and related policies and procedures
- A sound understanding of the strategic and budget planning cycles
- A sound understanding of the Council's objectives and major functions
- A clear understanding of the arrangements for delivery of the internal audit service, and a sound understanding of the principles and standards applying to internal audit
- A sound understanding of the treasury management strategy, risks, policies and procedures
- A good understanding of the Seven Principles of Public Life and the Council's arrangements to uphold ethical standards
- Awareness of the whistleblowing arrangements in the Council

Chairman of Licensing Committee Role Profile

These responsibilities are in addition to the Councillor role profile.

Responsibilities:

To lead the Licensing Committee and champion the Licensing function by:

- Ensuring the Licensing Committee acts in accordance with the Council's Constitution
- Attending briefings with officers as required in advance of committee meetings
- Work with officers and members to ensure that committee members develop the necessary skills to contribute effectively to the work of the committee

Key skills

The desirable key skills of the Chairman of Licensing committee include:

- Good leadership skills
- Advanced chairing skills
- Ambassadorial skills representing and championing the Licensing function
- The ability to work constructively with officers, councillors, partners, the media, members of the public and other organisations
- Good communication skills
- Advanced listening skills and questioning skills
- The ability to obtain and weigh up evidence and make recommendations based on that evidence

Knowledge

The desirable knowledge of the Chairman of Licensing committee includes:

- A detailed understanding of the legal and constitutional arrangements relating to the Licensing function
- A thorough understanding of the functions under the Licensing Act 2003 and related licensing matters.

Council Chairman Role Profile

These responsibilities are in addition to the Councillor role profile.

Responsibilities:

The Chairman of Council will:

- Represent the Council in a civic and ceremonial capacity at Council, stakeholder and public events
- Chair meetings of the Council and attend briefings and other meetings with officers as required
- Make presentations of grant cheques and other awards to community organisations and to present long-service and retirement awards to employees
- Remain above party politics and be available to be approached by any councillor, member of staff or member of the public who wishes to speak in confidence on a matter that affects them

Key Skills

The desirable key skills of the Chairman of Council include:

- Advanced chairing skills
- Ambassadorial skills in representing the Council
- Public speaking
- Excellent communication skills

Knowledge

The desirable knowledge of the Chairman of Council includes:

- A detailed understanding of the Council's Constitution
- A good overview of the Council Plan, priorities and projects

Council Vice-Chairman Role Profile

These responsibilities are in addition to the Councillor role profile.

Responsibilities:

To deputise for the Chairman of the Council.

Key Skills

The desirable key skills of the Chairman of Council include:

- Advanced chairing skills
- Ambassadorial skills in representing the Council
- Public speaking
- Excellent communication skills

Knowledge

The desirable knowledge of the Chairman of Council includes:

- A detailed understanding of the Council's Constitution
- A good overview of the Council plan, priorities and projects

Regulation Committee Member Role Profile

These responsibilities are in addition to the Councillor role profile.

Responsibilities:

To determine planning applications referred to the Committee by Area Committees, and to:

- Ensure that the Committee acts in accordance with the Council's Constitution
- Engage with any consultation regarding the signing of second resolutions for deemed planning permission in respect of applications not regarded as significant
- Attend briefings with officers as required in advance of the Committee meetings

Key skills

The desirable key skills of Regulation Committee members include:

- Good communication skills
- Advanced listening and questioning skills
- The ability to obtain and weigh up evidence and make recommendations based on that evidence

Knowledge

The desirable knowledge of Regulation Committee members includes:

- A thorough understanding of planning regulation and processes
- A detailed understanding of the legal and constitutional arrangements relating to the Regulation function