

Role and Responsibilities

There is no statutory description for the role of a councillor. A councillor's main role is to influence and contribute to the formal decisions of their council, known also as resolutions. A local council may make decisions about all sorts of matters. The obvious examples are prioritising areas of spend, deciding the precept, setting and working within budgets, provision of its services and facilities, partnership working, and management of staff.

A councillor's main responsibilities are to:

- raise matters that, for example, affect local residents, that the local council can consider and formally decide to act on meetings;
- attend local council meetings;
- make informed contributions which influence the debate on the business that needs to be decided at those meetings;
- participate in their local council's decision-making process, which is subject to strict rules; and
- represent their local council externally

Councillors are not expected to possess the knowledge, skills or experience that are required for all aspects of their local council's work. At a formal meeting of the local council, committee (including joint committee) or sub-committee (including joint sub-committee) councillors are expected to make informed decisions based on the consideration of relevant information. If councillors find themselves unable to make informed decisions because they lack information or understanding, or because they consider their local council would benefit from the input of experts or professional advice, they should defer making decisions until this is made available to them.

A councillor's main role is to act as a representative of their local council.

A councillor may, however, lawfully undertake activities as a councillor that are independent of their local council. For example, a councillor representing a ward may deal with residents' interests specific to their ward. A councillor's campaign for re-election to the local council, or campaigning at other times on behalf of their political party (if relevant), is a matter which is independent of their role as a local councillor.

When a councillor acts independently of their local council, they should make their constituents aware of that fact and also remember that they will be acting as a data controller in their own right under the requirements of the Local councillors Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR.