

SUBJECT:	COUNCILLOR ROLE DESCRIPTIONS
REPORT BY:	DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To propose role descriptions relating to the overall role of a councillor in addition to more specific role descriptions for other roles to which councillors may be appointed.

2. Background to and Purpose of Role Descriptions

2.1 The Council currently does not have role descriptions in place for elected members, although some political parties do have similar documents provided for their group's members on a national basis.

2.2 A number of other local authorities have formally introduced role descriptions which are intended to guide councillors in terms of the expectations associated with their role, and also to inform the public and officers.

2.3 Having regard to the role descriptions in place at other local authorities, there are undoubtedly potential benefits to the Council in adopting similar role descriptions, dependent upon the suitability of the individual descriptions to the roles in question and the manner in which they could be implemented.

2.4 In particular, the role descriptions could potentially be of use to the following persons:

- Prospective councillors
- Newly-elected and existing councillors
- Members of the public
- Partner organisations
- Officers

3. Proposals for Lincoln

3.1 In view of the likely benefits of role descriptions in clarifying the responsibilities and expectations for elected members, a series of role descriptions have been developed for the following roles (attached as **Appendix A**):

- Ward councillors

- Leader (incorporating the current portfolio roles)
 - Deputy Leader (incorporating the current portfolio roles)
 - Individual portfolio holders
 - The Mayor/Deputy Mayor
 - Committee chairs
 - Regulatory committee chairs (Planning, Licensing et al)
 - Scrutiny committee chairs
- 3.2 The role descriptions have been adapted from those already developed in other local authorities, in order to be specific to the City of Lincoln Council's requirements and priorities.
- 3.3 It should be noted that the role descriptions have not been drafted to be an exhaustive list of every specific duty which a councillor may fulfil. An emphasis has instead been placed upon the broader areas in which elected members may reasonably expect to become involved, either as a ward councillor or within one of the more specific roles also covered by the draft documents.
- 3.4 It is also to be acknowledged that the role descriptions will be subject to continued change as roles develop in different circumstances. Indeed, given the varied strengths which individual members can bring to particular roles, it is inevitable that the role descriptions cannot be regarded as set in stone. As such, members may be minded to schedule a review of this topic after a suitable period of time has elapsed.
- 3.5 If agreed, the role descriptions will need to be suitably promoted in order to ensure they are available to people who could benefit from them. Particular areas which could be considered include the councillors sections of the website and the staff intranet, and distribution to prospective candidates for election to the Council.
- 3.6 The proposed role descriptions relate specifically to elected members. Other roles, including those of co-opted members and the independent person, will not be covered by these role descriptions. These roles are effectively covered within the terms of the advertisements for the role or are more tightly defined within existing legislation (**Appendix B** shows the advertisement and role profile for the role of the Independent Person by way of example; this post is also specifically defined within the Localism Act 2011 and associated secondary legislation).

4. Strategic Priorities

- 4.1 The introduction of clearly-defined roles for councillors would contribute towards the development of a fit for purpose council, as detailed within the Council's Strategic Plan.

5. Finance Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 The councillor role descriptions are not intended to bind members or prescriptively

define the behaviour associated with each role. The role descriptions are not proposed to form part of the Member Code of Conduct, and the Code will remain key in assessing a member's behaviour in the event of a complaint.

7. Recommendations

7.1 That the Ethics and Engagement Committee:

1. Consider the proposed councillor role descriptions, including their wording, suitability, and likely use.
2. Recommend that the Executive approve the adoption of the proposed councillor role descriptions.