

SKILLS FOR COUNCILLORS

● **Before the skills, some prerequisites!**

- You are willing to put yourself forward as a councilor
- If opposed, the electorate chooses you.
- If elected, you are prepared to make time and the effort to be an effective Councilor

● **What will you do as a local representative?**

- Engage with the local community and keep up-to-date with issues of local concern
- Provide a voice for all sections of the community
- Mediate between individuals and organisation
- Campaign on behalf of the Council or individuals
- Make informed decisions
- Manage public funds and seek best value

● **Communications**

- Seek out and listen to others' views
- Listen actively, ask questions, check understanding
- Be objective and rigorous in analysing and evaluating complex information
- Present information clearly, concisely and accurately and avoid 'jargon'
- Keep people informed through regular feedback
- Know who to speak to or write to
- Develop IT skills – e-government

● **Leadership**

- Represent the Council and the community
- Have a clear vision and communicate this to others
- Be results oriented, lead by example
- Take responsibility
- Champion initiatives and implement change
- Foster a culture of trust, empowerment and participation
- Develop public speaking skills

● **Personal Effectiveness**

- Demonstrate integrity, be reliable, consistent and open
- Remain calm and objective in difficult situations
- Be creative, developing new ideas and identifying alternative approaches

- Strive for improvement
- Manage available time well by prioritising
- Use interpersonal and negotiating skills

- **Knowledge**

- Understand the law relating to Parish Council meetings
- Understand the Code of conduct
- Understand planning law and local policy
- Understand the roles of different tiers of local government
- Know your local County Councilor/District Councilor and key officers
- Know about local voluntary sector organisations external funding opportunities

- **How do Councillors develop useful skills and knowledge?**

- Even new councilors probably have many of them
- Principal councils have induction programmes do/should parishes?
- Use the Council's resources – your Clerk and serving Councillors
- Your Local Council's Association – courses/articles
- Your County/District/Unitary councilor
- Look out for good practice anywhere – and copy it!

- **Training needs analysis and development plan**

- Draw up your own list of skills/knowledge you might find important
- Identify the things you think you are good at – and carry on with them
- Identify any weaknesses decide which are most important and decide how to achieve improvements
- Not everyone can be best at everything – the council can be a team – working to individuals' strengths
- Be realistic – but strive for continuous improvement