Candidates for County Council Elections

Introduction
This summary information is for people standing as candidates in county council elections and gives an insight to the work of a councillor and commitments if successful at election.

1. What does a councillor do?
The Council has developed a councillor profile which indicates the sort of things a councillor may do. You will not necessarily do everything in the councillor profile, but it does reflect the sorts of work which people could expect to be doing over their term as a councillor.

You will need to attend council and other meetings which may be held during the day or in the evening. Many councillors represent the Council on one or more outside bodies. For most of the meetings you attend there will be papers which you will need to read beforehand.

The people you represent will look to you for help in dealing with their problems, even if these do not involve the work of the council. You are likely to receive a lot of post, emails and many telephone calls.

If you are thinking of becoming a councillor and would like to know what committee and council meetings are like, you are welcome to come and see. Look at the following section of the Council’s website for more information on these:  [https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/the-council-and-its-committees/committees/](https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/the-council-and-its-committees/committees/)

2. How much of my time will it all take up being a councillor?
According to the commitments you take on, this can vary from a few hours each week to several hours each day.

3. What training will be available for me?
There will be a programme of induction and training sessions for new councillors after the elections. Councillors also receive an IT induction course and ongoing support. As well as the induction training, there is on-going development training to support councillors to be effective in their roles.

There is a small group of councillors who oversee the training and development programme of councillors.
4. **What resources does the council provide?**

The Council encourages councillors to use information technology. Councillors who already have their own IT equipment can be supported to use it for council business. For those who do not have their own IT equipment, the Council may provide some standard IT equipment to enable them to receive and send e-mails, phone calls and text messages. Appropriate training will be given for any equipment the Council provides.

The councillors’ area at Endeavour House, the Council’s headquarters in Ipswich, has phones, computers and printers for councillors to use during extended office hours (8.00 am to 7.00 pm Monday to Friday)

All ICT provided by the Council should only be used for Council business.

5. **What other support does the council provide?**

Democratic Services Team provides general advice and support to all councillors for a wide range of services including booking training and development, and formal committee meeting management. We also have a councillor’s helpdesk which operates from 9am – 5pm Phone 01473 265119 or e-mail councillor.services@suffolk.gov.uk

As a councillor you are provided with a county council e-mail address and your mailing details and phone number are published on the council’s website so people can contact you directly.

We will also supply you with stationery, printer paper and ink cartridges for your printer to use for council business.

The Council also provides support for councillors as part of its Localism and Our Place priority. Each county council division has allocated a place officer, someone within the council who can help councillors and communities resolve local issues and realise ambitions. Place officers all have core roles but provide a small amount of flexible capacity to support councillors in their local leadership role.

The Council has also allocated locality lead roles to the majority of its Assistant Directors. Locality leads provide senior officer support to councillors and place officers and will also develop strategic relationship roles with partners such as the borough and districts councils.
Councillors who have specialist roles may have additional officer support.

Political groups of 8 or more councillors may also employ a Political Research Assistant.

6. What expenses can I claim?
As a councillor you will incur a range of expenses in the course of carrying out council business. You will be paid a Basic Allowance as a contribution towards those expenses for which claims cannot be made within the Members’ Allowances Scheme. The basic allowance is paid in equal monthly instalments and will be subject to tax and national insurance deductions.

The Basic Allowance is not intended to remunerate councillors for all the time they spend on business arising from their role as a councillor. There is a voluntary, public service element to the councillor’s role and the Council’s Members Allowances Scheme assumes that 50% of a councillor’s work will be undertaken on a voluntary basis.

You could also get a Special Responsibility Allowance if you are given one of the designated roles referred to in the Members Allowance Scheme.

All councillors are entitled to Travel and Subsistence Allowance and Carer’s Allowance if they meet the criteria in the scheme. See the scheme in Part 7 of the Constitution by using the link on the following page:


7. What can councillors spend?
Councillors cannot directly spend the Council’s money, but they are able to propose how money is spent in their Division.

From May 2013 each of Suffolk's 75 county councillors will be able to recommend the Council provides grants to a total of £12,000 each financial year for local projects in their area. Last year groups and projects that benefited included village halls, sports and social clubs, and toddler groups.

There is also a smaller sum of money which a councillor can recommend is used for local highways work.

8. What else do I need to know?
All county councillors are required to provide a record of their interests in a public register. By law, councillors must providing details of their interests that
might give rise to a conflict of interest, including gifts and hospitality. The register is available for inspection by members of the public on the County Council’s website and at the following location:
Reception, Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich, IP1 2BX
9.00am - 5.00pm, weekdays only (excluding bank holidays).

Contact
If you have any further questions please contact councillor services on 01473 265119 or e-mail councillor.services@suffolk.gov.uk

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