

## **LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL**

### **LEADER of the COUNCIL OVERVIEW**

#### **Leader of the Council**

- 1 The Annual Council Meeting shall elect a Councillor as Leader of the Council in accordance with Standing Orders. Council may, at the same time, elect a Deputy Leader.
- 2 The Leader of the Council may be replaced at any meeting of Full Council. Motion to replace the Leader must be notified in the Agenda.
- 3 The Leader of the Council will usually be the Leader of the largest group of Councillors.
- 4 The Leader is the most senior Councillor of the Council politically. S/he will lead the decision making process at Councillor level and liaise with the Town Clerk on those issues, forward plans and matters of policy or strategic direction. The Leader has no legal status or civic and ceremonial responsibilities.
- 5 The Town Clerk may use the Leader as a “sounding board” in advance of formal consideration of any matter to assist in gauging likely Councillor reaction to a proposal.

#### **LEADER PROTOCOL**

##### **Introduction**

This protocol aims to ensure that the Leader and the Town Clerk are guided by a set of ground-rules designed to maintain high standards of public accountability, mutual respect and an understanding of the Council's decision-making structures. If a Deputy Leader has been elected, this protocol shall also apply when the Deputy is acting in place of the Leader.

##### **1. General Principles**

- 1.1 In accordance with the statutory Code of Conduct, the Leader must not use Council resources for party political purposes. The Leader must uphold the political impartiality of the Town Clerk, and not ask the Town Clerk to act in any way which would conflict with the Council's Officer Code of Conduct, local Protocol on Member/Officer relationships, or national Conditions of Service.

- 1.2 The Leader does not have line management responsibilities for the Town Clerk, and should not issue management instructions to the Town Clerk.
- 1.3 Where a decision is required following discussion between the Leader and the Town Clerk, the matter will be submitted to Council or a Committee for consideration, unless the matter is already delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Leader.
- 1.4 Matters wholly within the responsibility of the Town Clerk, or which have been delegated to the Town Clerk without consultation requirements, may still be discussed between the Leader and the Town Clerk.
- 1.5 In undertaking their roles, the Leader and Town Clerk should respect the following principles :

**Principle 1** As a 'visible' and accountable elected representative, with defined responsibilities, the Leader will need to be properly briefed on all significant aspects of the work of the Council. The Town Clerk should ensure a proper information flow so as to ensure that the Leader can effectively "lead".

**Principle 2** Good communications can best be achieved through planned and programmed meetings and briefing arrangements. On the basis that the Town Clerk should be ensuring that the information needs of the Leader are met. The Leader should, in turn, seek to avoid making requests for unanticipated briefings.

**Principle 3** The Leader (and all Councillors) should channel significant requests for information, advice, and other support via the Town Clerk (or in his/her absence, the Deputy Town Clerk - in which case the Town Clerk will be copied into any requests). Other arrangements may apply as agreed and established between the Leader and the Town Clerk. The Leader should not approach other staff directly with requests for information (except in cases of urgency or unavailability of the Town Clerk and his/her Deputy) or seek to commission work from individual staff, as this may confuse day-to-day line management accountabilities.

**Principle 4** The Leader may work with the Town Clerk and the other senior managers in the development of policies and programmes.

**Principle 5** All Councillors have collective responsibility to the Council for the conduct of employment policy, and the Council acts as the employing body for all Council staff. Employment policies, having been set by the Council, are implemented via the Town Clerk.

**Principle 6** The Leader may pass on to the Town Clerk any views of councillors considered appropriate to be taken into account during the

annual staff appraisal process. Comments may be passed on to the manager responsible for the appraisal in question. Appraisal content is confidential but where appropriate, information or actions arising from appraisals may be reported to the Personnel Sub-Committee.

**Principle 7** In relation to the Town Clerk, the Leader should provide regular advice and guidance as to the Town Clerk's performance against any objectives and outcomes for the Post Holder, as determined by Council. If there are any performance, capability or disciplinary issues concerning the Town Clerk, the Leader may submit a report to Council in line with Principle 9 below.

**Principle 8** When a report to Committee or Council is being prepared, the Leader is entitled to discuss issues with the Town Clerk and with other officers concerning the content of such reports and the framing of recommendations. Whilst the Leader may wish to make suggestions on content and drafting, to achieve clarity of presentation, simplify jargon, or better explain issues, the Leader should not attempt to edit out or override any content of reports which the Town Clerk or other officer feels it is important to put before the Council.

**Principle 9** When the Leader (and all Councillors) wish to put forward proposals of their own, it is the responsibility of the Councillor (via the Town Clerk) to produce a report to the relevant Committee for consideration. The Town Clerk may wish, and has a right, to add comments to such reports.

**Principle 10** The Town Clerk, managers and other officers exercise statutory functions and have individual responsibilities. The Leader should understand and respect these roles.

## **2 The Leader and Fellow Councillors <sup>1</sup>**

- 2.1 The distinctive roles of the Leader, Mayor, Committee Chairs and Councillors are already well-established at Leighton-Linslade Town Council.
- 2.2 The Leader should ensure s/he consults as necessary with colleagues in the early stages of formulating proposals. Committee Chairs, in particular, should be consulted on issues relevant to their Committee and the Mayor should be involved in any civic related matters or issues which may affect the conduct of Council meetings.

**Adopted by Council 25 April 2022**

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<sup>1</sup> The majority of this Protocol will apply to Committee Chairs and all Councillors.