

## **PART 2 ARTICLE 2 – MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

### **1. Composition and Eligibility**

- 1.1 *Composition* – Central Bedfordshire Council comprises 59 members, called councillors. There are 31 wards. 3 members are elected for 9 of the wards, 2 members are elected for 10 of the wards and 1 member is elected for the other 12 wards.
- 1.2 *Eligibility* – Only registered voters of the Central Bedfordshire area or those living, working or occupying land as owner or tenant during the whole of the last 12 months will be eligible to hold the office of councillor. There are certain legal exclusions.

### **2. Election and term of office for Councillors**

- 2.1 Councillors will be elected to Central Bedfordshire Council in June 2009 for an initial two year term of office expiring in May 2011.
- 2.2 Thereafter, the regular election of councillors will normally be held on the first Thursday in May every four years beginning in May 2011. The terms of office of councillors will start on the fourth day after being elected and will finish on the fourth day after the date of the next regular election. In the event of a councillor not continuing in office, a by-election will be held at the earliest appropriate opportunity.

### **3. Roles and Functions of all Councillors**

- 3.1 Councillors have five main roles. They perform one or more of the following duties (subject to the proviso that there is no overlap between those members who perform executive and overview and scrutiny functions):-
- 3.1.1 Executive decision-making;
  - 3.1.2 Policy development and review;
  - 3.1.3 Overview and scrutiny;
  - 3.1.4 Quasi-judicial and regulatory; and
  - 3.1.5 Community leadership and representation.
- 3.2 Taken together these roles enable councillors to:-
- 3.2.1 Collectively, in meetings of the Council, be the ultimate policy makers and carry out a number of strategic and corporate management functions;

- 3.2.2 Represent the communities of their ward, bring their views into the Council's decision-making process and represent the Council to those communities – i.e. become an advocate of, and for, their communities;
- 3.2.3 Respond to constituents' enquiries and representations fairly and impartially, deal with individual casework and otherwise effectively represent the interests of their ward and of individual constituents;
- 3.2.4 Balance the different interests identified within the ward, represent the ward as a whole and act as a point of mediation between the Council and the communities of their ward;
- 3.2.5 Be involved in decision-making in any of the five roles set out at 3.1 above;
- 3.2.6 Represent the Council on other bodies; and
- 3.2.7 Adopt and maintain the highest standards of conduct.

#### **4. Rights and Duties**

- 4.1 Councillors will have such rights of access to such documents, information, land and buildings of the Council as are necessary for the proper discharge of their functions and in accordance with the law.
- 4.2 Councillors will not make public any information which is confidential or exempt without the consent of the Council or divulge information given in confidence to anyone other than a councillor or officer entitled to know it.
- 4.3 For these purposes, "confidential" and "exempt" information are defined in the Access to Information Procedure Rules in ~~Part G2~~ Part G2 of the constitution.

#### **5. Conduct**

- 5.1 Councillors will at all times observe the Council's Code of Conduct for Members set out in ~~Part F1~~ Part 5A of the Constitution and the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations set out in ~~Part F4~~ Part 5D of the Constitution.

#### **6. Allowances**

- 6.1 Councillors are entitled to receive allowances in accordance with the Members' Allowance Scheme set out in ~~Part K~~ Part 6A of the constitution.