

WHAT DO COUNCILLORS DO?

The role and responsibilities of councillors are rich and varied. In addition to representing the needs of their local ward (the area they are elected to), additional duties can include:

- Reviewing or devising council policy
- Ensuring the council meets its legal responsibilities
- Scrutinising decisions made
- Community engagement
- Responding to concerns in the community

WHERE DO I START?

If you want to represent a political party, it is worth talking to your local party group as soon as possible. If you want to stand independently, you will need to establish yourself locally on issues that matter to your local community, and build yourself a presence to inform residents' future voting.

Additionally, you will need to submit your official nomination at least 19 working days before the election, which will require 10 people to act as signatories. You must also provide consent in writing of your nomination.

USEFUL LINKS

www.beacouncillor.co.uk – an online resource providing impartial guidance

www.obv.org.uk – committed to inspiring BME communities to engage in politics

www.nalc.gov.uk – A national body representing 80,000 councillors

www.local.gov.uk/lga-independent - Representing independent councillors in England

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

Anyone can be a councillor as long as they are:

- British, from the Commonwealth or the EU
- At least 18 years old
- Registered to vote in the area or have lived/worked/owned property there for a year

You can't be a councillor:

- For a council you work for or if in a politically restricted post
- If convicted of a corrupt or illegal practice
- If sentenced to prison for three months or more during the five years before election

CONTACT US

The Democratic Services Team at Havant Borough Council is happy to provide informal and impartial advice on becoming a councillor.

Additionally, the team is happy to introduce you to a councillor who can provide you with their own unique perspective on the role.

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A COUNCILLOR CAN...

WHAT IS A COUNCILLOR?

Councillors are people elected to represent their local community. Every service provided by your local council is managed in their name.

Councillors are engaged in committees relating to the smooth running of council services. They highlight local needs and concerns and may also represent a political party. Councillors may also represent the council.

Each and every council works with councillors in their own unique way.

SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

You do not need qualifications to be a good councillor, just skills and experiences that best represent your local community. These could include – for example – skills gained through volunteering or working with community groups.

You need to be a well organised individual, and someone who can apply themselves to problems. You will also need to be able to communicate well with a wide range of public and professional bodies.

A GUIDE TO BECOMING A COUNCILLOR

www.havant.gov.uk/acouncillorcan

CAN I WORK FULL TIME?

You don't have to be retired to be a councillor – just able to represent the needs of your residents. A full-time job is no bar to achieving this.

A councillor will need to undertake duties during normal office hours as part of their role. However, by law, your employer must provide a reasonable amount of time off work for your duties. It is recommended you talk to your employer at the earliest opportunity to discuss the practicalities.



- Employment is not a bar to becoming a councillor
- Legally, you are allowed reasonable time off work to be a councillor
- Talk to your employer first

CAN I AFFORD THE ROLE?

- Allowances are in place to support councillors in their work
- Supplementary allowances are in place for approved duties, from mileage to care for dependants



Although councillors are not paid a wage, they receive allowances to support them in their work. The basic allowance is £5,891 per annum, with additional allowances for positions of responsibility.

Mileage for approved council duties can be claimed at 45p per mile, and rail travel can be pre-booked through the council.

For approved duties, an allowance of £14.20 per hour can also be claimed for dependent relative care.

IS IT A POLITICAL ROLE?

- You do not need to align yourself with any political party to be a councillor
- Political parties can provide support and guidance to prospective councillors



The vast majority of councillors are members of political parties, but there is no obligation – independent candidates are just as welcome.

Political parties can provide sound advice and support to prospective councillors, and assist in their campaigning efforts in a number of ways. Independent candidates will need to develop their own support network. Once elected, all members receive the same support and training from their council.

WILL MY DISABILITY STOP ME?

As long as the essential criteria for becoming a councillor is met, any person with a disability may apply.

Once elected, the council will work with you to overcome any issues or barriers arising from your disability. Being a councillor should not affect any benefits you receive – although it is always worth checking in advance.



- Disability is no bar to becoming a councillor
- The council will support councillors in addressing issues arising from their disability

HOW MUCH TIME WILL IT TAKE?

Each councillor has a responsibility to their ward and their residents, while a number also have varying responsibilities relating to a portfolio of services.

In addition, each councillor will be required to participate in regular meetings, including Full Council meetings about major budgetary and policy decisions.

The time you need to provide will vary upon the specific demands of your role, but just a few hours a week could make a difference.



- The demands of the role vary depending on your responsibilities
- All councillors have a nominal level of involvement that is expected of them

WHAT SUPPORT WOULD I GET?

- The Democratic Services Team is happy to help councillors
- Advice, training and material support is provided to all councillors



Councillors have access to dedicated support at the council – the Democratic Services Team.

The team can assist councillors with any issue – large or small – and provide a comprehensive training program to nurture and develop key skills of relevance to councillors.

A full IT package is also provided to ensure councillors can work effectively.