

Becoming a Town Councillor

Being a councillor is a rewarding form of public service that puts people in a position where they can make a difference to the quality of someone's daily life. Town councils are the part of local government closest to the people. They serve the smallest areas and are responsible for the most local of matters. Very importantly, these councils can "precept" - raise a sum collected with the council tax each year to improve facilities and services for local people.

Firstly, you need to decide if being a local councillor is for you. The primary role of a councillor is to represent their ward and the citizens who live in it. Councillors have three main areas of work:

1. **Decision-making:** through attending meetings and committees with other elected councillors, councillors decide which activities to support, where money should be spent, what services and events should be delivered and what policies should be adopted;
2. **Monitoring:** councillors make sure that their decisions lead to efficient and effective services by keeping an eye on how well things are working;
3. **Getting involved locally:** as local representatives, councillors have responsibilities towards their parishioners and local organisations. This often depends on what the councillor wants to achieve and how much time is available.

Being a councillor can also be hard work. Every day, councillors must balance the needs and interests of their residents, voters, political parties and the council.

All these groups will make legitimate demands on the councillor's time on top of their personal responsibilities to family, workplace and friends. It is therefore important that councillors understand their role so that they can perform responsibly and effectively for the council and maintain the quality of their personal lives. Quite often councillors say that their duties occupy them for about three hours a week. Obviously, there are some councillors who spend more time than this - and some less, but in the main, being a town councillor is an enjoyable way of contributing to your community and helping to make it a better place to live and work.

You can find out more about becoming a local councillor here: [Becoming a councillor | Local Government Association](#)

