

Article 2 – Members of the Council

(Section revised May 2003)

References:

Part I, Part VA and Section 79, Local Government Act 1972

Chapter 2, DETR Guidance

Section 18, Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and regulations thereunder

Section 7, Superannuation Act 1972 and regulations thereunder

2.01 Composition and eligibility

- (a) **Composition.** The Council will comprise 63 members, otherwise called councillors. These councillors will be elected by the voters of each ward in accordance with a scheme drawn up by the Local Government Commission and approved by the Secretary of State.
- (b) **Eligibility.** Only registered voters of the borough or those living or working there will be eligible to hold the office of councillor.

2.02 Election and terms of councillors

Election and terms. The regular election of councillors will be held on the first Thursday in May every four years beginning in 2002. 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.

2.03 Roles and functions of all councillors

- (a) **Key roles.** Each councillor will:
 - participate constructively in the good government of the area;
 - contribute actively to the formation or scrutiny of the authority's policies, budget, strategies and service delivery;
 - represent effectively the interests of the Ward for which he/she was elected, and deal with constituents' enquiries and representations;
 - champion the causes which best relate to the interests and sustainability of the community and campaign for the improvement of the quality of life of the community in terms of equity, economy and environment.
- (b) **Key tasks.** Each councillor will:
 - fulfil the statutory and locally determined requirements of an elected member of Barnet, including compliance with all relevant codes of conduct, and participation in those decisions and activities reserved to the full council (eg setting budget, overall priorities, strategy);
 - participate in the scrutiny or performance review of Barnet's services including, where Barnet so decides, the scrutiny of policies and budget, and their effectiveness in achieving the strategic objectives of the authority;
 - participate, as appointed, in the area and service-based consultative processes with the community and with other organisations;

- represent the authority to the community, and the community to the authority, through the various fora available;
- develop and maintain a working knowledge of Barnet's services, management arrangements, powers/duties, and constraints, and develop good working relationships with relevant officers;
- develop and maintain a working knowledge of Barnet's services, activities and other factors which impact upon the community's wellbeing and identity;
- contribute constructively to open government and democratic renewal through active encouragement to the community to participate generally in the government of the area;
- participate in the activities of any political group of which he/she is a member;

(c) **Rights and duties**

- 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;
- councillors will not make public 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;
- for these purposes, "confidential" and "exempt" information are defined in the Access to Information Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution.

(d) **Special Responsibilities**

Some councillors have special responsibilities, additional to those of other councillors, from being:

- A member of the Executive;
- The Leader of a political group;
- The chairman of an overview and scrutiny committee;
- The chairman of some other council body.

2.04 Conduct

Councillors will at all times observe the Members' Code of Conduct and the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations set out in Part 5 of this Constitution.

2.05 Allowances

Councillors will be entitled to receive allowances in accordance with the Members' Allowances Scheme set out in Part 6 of this Constitution.