

Guidance on Appointments to Outside Bodies

This guidance draws attention to the main issues which you, as a Councillor, should consider when appointed to serve on an outside body. In the context of this guidance an outside body is a non-statutory organisation which may be a charity, an incorporated company (either limited by shares or guarantee), a friendly society or an unincorporated association.

Service on outside bodies has always been an established part of a Councillor's role. An appointed member on an external body will be able to use their knowledge and skills as a Council Member to assist the organisation to which they are appointed.

Councils are increasingly working in partnership with external organisations and greater clarity is needed about the role of Councillors appointed to these bodies. Questions of accountability and governance are likely to arise as funding streams that are of benefit to outside bodies may be channelled through the Council as the accountable body.

Being a member of an outside body is not the same as being a Member of the Council. You will have different duties, obligations and personal liabilities, depending on the type of organisation involved.

Matters to consider before Appointment

Before taking up active membership it would be prudent to establish the capacity in which you are appointed. This may be either:

- As a member of the management committee, board of directors or committee of trustees of the outside body. Here, you will not only be representing the interests of the Council but you will also have duties for the outside body, such as a role in its governance.
- As a member of an outside body where you represent the Council's position but take no part in its management or governance, other than attend and vote at annual or general meetings. Here, you will be mainly concerned with representing the Council.

Conflicts of Interest and Bias

Councillors appointed to an outside body will have a personal interest in that body and will need to consider their position when they sit on any Council committee which is considering a matter relating to the outside body.

A personal interest will always need to be declared and the Councillor will need to consider whether or not they also have a prejudicial interest arising from that membership.

Prejudicial interest rules apply, regardless of whether or not you have been appointed onto the outside body by the Council.

Involvement and Reporting

Councillors appointed to an outside body should attend meetings regularly and become familiar with issues relating to that body.

A Councillor appointed as the Council's representative is required to make reports to the appropriate Standing Committee on the progress being made by that body and on any issues which the Council should consider.

Further Advice

Relationships between the Council, outside bodies and the Council's representative can be complex. In any case of dispute or difficulty, advice should be sought from the Town Clerk who, if necessary, can take advice.