

# Article 2

## Members and the Council

### Introduction

**This Article sets out the composition of the Council, eligibility to stand for election and the form of election to be used.**

**It also includes a statement on the roles and functions of Members of the Council and sets out the rights and duties of Councillors.**

### 2.01 Composition and eligibility

#### (a) Composition

The Council will comprise 63 Members (otherwise called Councillors). Three members will be elected by the voters of each of the 21 wards in the Borough 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 London Borough of Harrow or those living, working or occupying property within the Borough for 12 months before the election will be eligible to hold the office of Councillor. There are legal rules preventing certain people from becoming Councillors.

### 2.02 Election and terms of Councillors

The regular election of Councillors will be held on the first Thursday in May every four years beginning in May 2002. The terms of office of Councillors will start on the fourth day after being elected and except for the Leader will finish on the fourth day after the date of the next regular election unless they are re-elected.

### 2.03 Roles and Functions of Councillors

#### (a) Key Roles

All Councillors will:

- (i) collectively be the ultimate policy and decision makers;

- (ii) contribute to the good governance of the Council;
- (iii) represent their communities interests (both individuals and local groups) and bring their views into the Council's decision-making process;
- (iv) actively encourage community participation and citizen involvement in decision making;
- (v) deal with individual casework and act as an advocate for constituents in resolving particular concerns or grievances;
- (vi) balance and effectively represent the interests of their ward and of individual constituents;
- (vii) (for Councillors who are not part of the Executive) scrutinise proposals and decisions and monitor how Council policy is being implemented;
- (viii) be available to represent the Council on other bodies;
- (ix) promote equality and diversity in the Council's policies and practices;
- (x) maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics.

**(b) Rights and duties**

- (i) Councillors will have 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.
- (ii) Councillors will not make public information, which is confidential or exempt, without the consent of the Council.
- (iii) Councillors will not divulge information given in confidence, to anyone other than a Councillor or officer entitled to know it.
- (iv) For these purposes, "confidential " and "exempt" information is defined in the Access to Information Procedure Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution.
- (v) Councillors will be given reasonable professional advice and support from officers of the Council in their work as Councillors.
- (vi) When the Council considers it to be in its interests to appoint Councillors to outside bodies, the Council will consider giving an indemnity to the Councillors in so far as legally permissible

against costs incurred while acting in good faith. Councillors will be given reasonable advice, guidance and support from officers of the Council on the responsibilities they take on as a result of representing the Council on outside bodies.

- (vii) Training will be given to Councillors to support them in their duties as Councillors.

#### **2.04 Conduct**

Councillors will, at all times, observe the Members' Code of Conduct and the Protocols set out in Part 5 of this Constitution.

#### **2.06 Allowances**

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

#### **2.07 Membership**

The names and addresses of Councillors by Ward, for the current Municipal Year, are available from Democratic Services and/or the Council website.