

Deputy Leader of the County Council (12-month review)

Primary Departmental Links: Links and engagement across all departments of the County Council as required. Additionally, links to partner organisations, business groups and public authorities in Hampshire and the wider South-East area, and at Westminster.

Statutory framework:

By virtue of the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, the Leader of the Council must appoint one Member of the Executive as Deputy Leader. If for any reason the Leader is unable to act, or the office of Leader is vacant, the Deputy Leader must act in his / her place. This means that in such an event all the Statutory and Constitutional powers of the Leader are vested in the Deputy Leader, including all action to decide, discharge, or implement any Executive Functions of the Leader, plus the power to depute another Executive Member to discharge such responsibilities. In addition, where the Leader is unable to act owing to a conflict of interest, the Deputy Leader is authorised to act, or depute another Executive Member to act. The role, functions and requirements of Deputy Leader are in addition to the individual Executive Member responsibilities held by the Deputy Leader as a Member of Cabinet.

Key outcomes:

The essence of the role is to help and support the Leader, working closely with the Leader to lead and co-ordinate political engagement and to provide political advice and support to the County Council in fulfilment of its extensive statutory responsibilities.

The need for robust, resilient and effective political capacity is critical as the County Council seeks to manage ongoing demand and cost pressures and play its part in the wider South-East and national political arena, and private business sector.

The Deputy Leader role has been operating for the last 12-months and during that time, a new organisational structure has been implemented with effect from 1 January 2023, the 'One Organisation' model. The value of having a Deputy Leader role is evidenced by the joined-up approach that operates between the Leader and Deputy Leader to deal with the challenges the County Council faces in fulfilling its statutory responsibilities as the third largest Shire Council in the country serving 1.4 million residents.

Key Functional Areas:

- To directly support, and where appropriate, act on behalf of the Leader on all aspects of the County Council's work, and wider political, community and business network and economy.

The Deputy Leader has been providing direct support to the Leader in a wide variety of ways such as:

- * *working with Business South on skills and training*
- * *working with an All Party Parliamentary Group on skills and training*
- * *working with the Solent and EM3 Local Enterprise Partnerships*
- * *engaging with other businesses where appropriate including Hampshire Fayre and numerous charitable organisations*

- To support the development of and maintain political links with key partner organisations such as district and borough councils within Hampshire and neighbouring councils and unitary authorities, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority ('HIOWFRA'), the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Hampshire Constabulary.

The Deputy Leader has been involved with discussions on regeneration and growth in Hampshire with district and borough council partners; has worked with the Chairman of HIOWFRA; liaised with the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and the Deputy PCC regarding joint campaigns and attended meetings and briefings with Hampshire MPs, including visits to Westminster.

The Deputy Leader has provided political engagement with a range of stakeholders to promote and support the delivery of the Hampshire 2050 vision and the Hampshire Economic strategy. This involves forming key relationships with businesses, skills and training providers and Universities.

- To attend with the Leader, deputising for the Leader as required at meetings with other Hampshire district/borough council and unitary authority leaders on the proposed formation of a 'County Deal' for the wider Hampshire area. In addition, promoting the County Deal project with Central Government.

The Deputy Leader has attended all meetings, and will continue to do so, to support the Leader with the Pan Hampshire County Deal.

- To attend meetings of other strategic organisations/forums the County Council is represented on with, or on behalf of the Leader, deputising for the Leader as required:
 - County Councils Network (CCN)
 - Enterprise M3 LEP Board and Solent LEP
 - Hampshire & Isle of Wight Local Government Association~
 - Local Government Association (LGA) General Assembly
 - South-East 7 Board
 - South-East Councils

- South-East Strategic Leaders
- Southampton Port Consultative Committee

The Deputy Leader has attended or deputised for the Leader on the above forums as required. When attending in a deputy capacity, the Deputy Leader has attended associated briefings and provided feedback to the Leader. This will be an on-going activity.

- To attend internal Cabinet and Council briefing meetings, to provide support to the Leader aiding the resilience of the County Council.

The Deputy Leader has attended all Cabinet and Council briefing meetings and emergency planning briefings in regard to the resilience of the County Council. This will be an on-going activity.

- To lead on political projects as directed by the Leader.

The Deputy Leader has led on the 'Stronger Roads Today' and Hampshire Business Awards' projects.

The Deputy Leader will continue to lead on projects as directed by the Leader as they come forward.

- Assist the Leader and wider Cabinet colleagues in making representations as appropriate on areas of regional and national policy development.

Over the last 12 months, the Deputy Leader has supported the Leader with meetings with Ministers and liaising closely with Hampshire MP's. This will be an on-going activity.

- Promoting the County Council's objectives policies and priorities, and associated partnerships as a key contribution to ensuring the welfare and improvement of outcomes residents and communities in Hampshire.

The Deputy Leader has led on the creation and implementation of the Leader's Newsletter that is circulated to key stakeholders. This will be an on-going activity.

Communications (new)

The Deputy Leader has an active role supporting the Leader (and working with the Executive Member for Performance, HR, Communications and Inclusion & Diversity) to inform, challenge, and contribute towards the development of the County Council's Communications Strategy, approach, and channels of communication with residents and stakeholders, and ensuring campaigns align to the priorities set out within the Serving Hampshire Strategic Plan (agreed by Cabinet in July 2021), and other key priorities for the Executive.

This responsibility also includes providing portfolio holder oversight and input (and representation on behalf of Cabinet colleagues) into the development of three key (strategic) cross organisation communications and campaign plans:

- *Serving Hampshire Strategic Plan – main strategic communications campaign.*
- *Hampshire 2050 - communications sub-campaign.*
- *Making the most of your money – communications sub-campaign.*

Member Development Group (new)

Elected members have a critical role in the scrutiny and oversight of the County Council and it is essential that, to fulfil their responsibilities to the residents who elected them, appropriate development is available to them.

The Member Development Group (MDG) is a working group looking at Member Development and training as a whole. The Group has recently been re-formed comprising a representative from all political groups on the County Council and will be meeting up to four times a year. The Group will oversee the delivery of a Member Development Plan and Conference Attendance Plan.

The Deputy Leader has taken on the Chairmanship of the MDG as an additional area of work, providing leadership to ensure Members can have the most effective opportunities to support their learning and development.

Scale of financial gearing/impact of work undertaken:

The role encompasses a broad range of statutory services requiring engagement across a range of stakeholders.

The County Council has a gross revenue budget of some £2.4bn in 2022/23, which continues to come under increasing demand and cost pressures. The County Council has further savings targets of £80m by April 2023, which must be met on top of the £540m of savings already achieved since 2010. This role of Deputy Leader plays an important part in supporting the County Council's interface with its stakeholders and the public to ensure that decisions on what the County Council can and cannot provide in the future are informed by the views of residents and service users. This applies equally to engagement on new ways of working, as the County Council seeks to maximise the positive innovations arising from the pandemic.