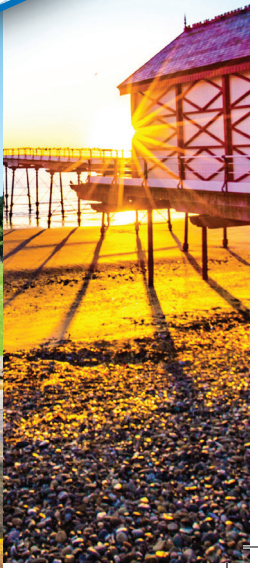




A councillor? *Who, me?*

What you need to know about
standing for election



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Why are councillors important?

The position of councillor is vital in the local community because:

- They are the voices of the community
- They are champions of the users of local services
- Local people know what is best for local communities
- They are critical to the effective functioning of democracy
- They play a very important role in helping to shape future services for the benefit of the local people

Why become a councillor?

There are many reasons why people decide to become a local councillor. Some individuals stand because:

- They are interested in their local area and have a desire to ensure that their local community is provided with the services needed
- They want to ensure that local community interests are taken into account in the Council's decision making and are committed to representing local people's views
- They want to be involved in shaping the future of the local community
- They want to make a difference and they are concerned about a particular issue in their community
- The role is an extension of what they are already doing as they are active in a political party or trade union and they see the next step as becoming a councillor
- They want to pursue their political beliefs
- They want to contribute their business or professional skills
- They have a desire to support underrepresented communities





Requirements

To stand for election, on the day of nomination, you must be:

- 18 or over
- UK, EU or Commonwealth citizen
- Registered to vote in or have either worked, lived or owned property in the area for one year

You cannot stand if:

- You are employed by Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council (including employment within some types of school)
- You hold a politically restricted post for another local authority
- You are bankrupt
- You have served a prison sentence (including suspended sentences) of three months or more within five years prior to the election
- You have been disqualified under any legislation relating to corrupt or illegal practices

How do I become a candidate?

When there is to be an election, a Notice of Election is published by the Council. This gives details of the electoral areas, date and time of election, the number of councillors to be elected, and the timetable for proposing a candidate (known as submitting “nomination papers”).

A copy of the election timetable and a nomination pack can be obtained from the Elections Team at the start of a formal election period. The pack will contain all the forms and information you will need to become a candidate. After the close of nominations, if there are more candidates than vacancies, then an election will be held.

How do I get nominated to stand?

Nomination packs are available from the Elections Team at the start of the formal election period. To be nominated you will need:

- A 'proposer' (someone who will put your name forward as a candidate)
- A 'seconder' – (someone who supports the proposal)

These people must be registered electors of the ward in which you wish to stand as a candidate and must agree to their details being made public. You must also consent to the nomination.

The Notice of Election will state the date by which the papers must be submitted to the Returning Officer. If you are a candidate for a registered political party, you must also have a certificate from that party authorising you to stand. You can either appoint an election agent to manage your election campaign or, alternatively, you can act as your own agent.

The election process, including what candidates may spend on their campaign, is set out in legislation and it is the responsibility of candidates to ensure that they comply with the law.

The nomination pack will contain guidance notes for candidates.

The legislation relating to elections is extensive. Candidates and election agents are advised to familiarise themselves with the provisions. The Returning Officer and his staff are available to give general advice to candidates and election agents. If you require advice please contact the Elections Team at the Civic Centre, Ridley Street, Redcar (Tel: 01642 444410). Please note however, that the team will only provide generic advice. For detailed advice on individual matters, candidates and election agents should use other sources. Details of these organisations are on page 21.

What qualifications do I need?

You do not need any formal qualifications to become a councillor. However, you do need to be willing to attend meetings at the Civic Centre and other meetings in your community. You will also be required to read reports, agendas and other materials, and attend all mandatory training.

As part of your role you will inevitably become involved in issues and concerns raised by local residents within your ward, which can sometimes be difficult or sensitive. Therefore, it is important that councillors are seen to be caring and to listen carefully to individuals with an open mind, as well as being willing to express their views to members of the public, and within the context of formal meetings.

Standards for councillors

Councillors are bound by a Code of Conduct and have a legal duty to promote equality. They must declare if they have an interest in an item that is being discussed by the Council and, in some circumstances, must remove themselves from the room.

They must not act in a way that could bring their office into disrepute. These standards are reviewed and updated from time to time. All Councillors are provided with training on Standards as part of the induction programme. Advice on standards will always be available from experienced staff.

Advice on standards can also be sought from the Council's Monitoring Officer or the Governance Manager. The standards for councillors can be found in the Redcar and Cleveland Constitution, please visit www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/about-the-council/council-documents.



What does the Council do?

Redcar & Cleveland Council provides, commissions or supports a full range of services to local people, including:

- Education
- Transport
- Strategic planning
- Social care
- Libraries
- Community development
- Trading standards
- Recycling and waste management
- Council Tax and Business Rates collections
- Housing
- Planning applications
- Elections

It sets an annual budget to facilitate this, with income being drawn from Council Tax receipts, business rates receipts, fees and charges, and (to a diminishing extent) grant from central Government. The council sets policy and strategy in order to address local challenges, and these provide a steer for the officers of the Council to carry out their work on the Council's behalf.





What do councillors do?

Councillors are elected by local people to plan, run, monitor and develop Council business.

Councillors work to improve the quality of life for people within the Borough and make decisions about local issues. Councillors are essential in deciding what is in the public interest amidst a range of conflicting issues and views.

Councillors usually represent a political party or they can be independent. All councillors represent all the residents.

The role of a councillor can be very varied and it is up to each individual councillor how they work. However, the three main areas of responsibility are:

- 1** Representing the people in their ward and becoming a representative of the Borough
- 2** Community leadership
- 3** Helping to formulate Council policy



A councillor's role: ...as a representative

Many councillors see their first and foremost role as representing their ward and the people who live there. To do this they can:

- Hold 'drop-in surgeries', usually in community buildings such as a local community centre
- Deal with residents' enquiries about aspects of Council business
- Undertake case work such as making representations on behalf of an individual or a family
- Define Council policy and ensure that the policy is carried out fairly
- Support local community partnerships and organisations
- Campaign on local issues, championing the causes, which further the interests, quality of life and development of the community
- Help to bid for resources for their ward
- Encourage community participation and citizen involvement in decision making
- Listen to the needs of local people and take their views into account when considering policy proposals and in decision making

They also need to ensure local people are informed about services in the area, decisions that affect them and the reasons why decisions are taken by the Council.



A councillor's role: ...as a community leader

Community leadership is vital and involves partnership with other organisations.

Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council works in partnership with many local bodies and councillors serve on these local forums on behalf of the Council. Councillors exercise community leadership by:

- Representing the Council and constituents on local management boards
- Participating in the activities of any outside body to which they are appointed and reporting back to the Council
- Developing a working knowledge of the organisations, services, activities and other factors important to the community's wellbeing and identity

A councillor's role: ...as a policy maker

All councillors are involved in decision making, which includes having to make difficult decisions surrounding budgets and services provided by the Council. Councillors, as Members of Borough Council, meet with their peers, to debate and approve Council business in a formal setting.

Most meetings are open to the press and public. There are written rules that govern behaviour and procedures at these meetings, which are included in the Council's Constitution. The purpose of these rules is to ensure fair but effectively managed debate.

Councillors can influence local policies through:

- Their role on Borough Council
- For some, membership of the Cabinet
- Their role on committees which both scrutinise the work of the Cabinet and recommend policy developments
- Membership of management boards of voluntary bodies



How long would I be in office?

Councillors for Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council are elected to serve a 4-year term of office.

The next election for all 59 councillors is on 4th May 2023.

If you are elected at a by-election, you serve until the next scheduled election (anything up to four years).

How much time would I have to commit?

It is for you to decide the level of commitment you are able to give to being a councillor and it also depends on your role within the Council and the number of commitments you take on. Most councillors work between 10 and 30 hours per week, which includes attending Council meetings.

Some of the issues you will need to devote time to are:

- The people you represent will look to you for help in dealing with their problems. You are likely to receive a lot of emails and telephone calls, as well as post
- Residents casework, either taken at the surgeries or received via email, telephone or post. You may also spend some of your time visiting residents at their homes or at the Council offices
- Borough Council meetings, of which there are usually seven each year, in addition to the Annual General Meeting which you will be expected to attend. These are formal meetings with the other councillor colleagues from all political parties
- Committee Meetings, which will take place on a six-week cycle with recess taking place in the month of August
- Preparation for meetings, which includes reading the agenda and reports sent prior to the meeting. This information can be quite detailed and take time to read and understand
- Attending meetings of outside bodies, at which you have been asked to represent the Council



When do Council meetings take place?

Meetings of the Borough Council take place approximately seven times a year in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Ridley Street, Redcar and start at 2pm.

The primary role of Borough Council is to establish the budget and policy framework within which Members and Officers of the Council will operate. In addition, as a councillor you could be a member of the Cabinet, one of the Scrutiny and Improvement Committees or another committee of the Council.

The average length of a meeting is approximately three hours, but they can be longer than this and councillors are expected to stay for the full meeting. Meetings for other groups, partnerships etc. take place at a range of times and venues.

Details of all Council committee meetings and their dates can be found on the Council's website **www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/committees-and-meetings/list-of-committees-and-meetings** or by telephoning Sue Fenwick, Principal Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer on **01642 444413**.

Can I get time off work?

If you are working, by law your employer must allow you to take a reasonable amount of time off during working hours to perform your duties as a councillor. This is covered by Section 50 of the Employment Rights Act 1996.

The amount of time off will depend upon your responsibilities as a councillor and the effect of your absence on your employer's business. You should discuss this with your employer before making the commitment.

What support will I get..?

... from Council officers

Council officers are employed to implement the strategies and policies set out by Borough Council and the government. They are committed to help you fulfil your duties as a councillor. There will always be someone who is able to offer advice or support on any issue. More often though it will be the more senior officers such as the Managing Director and other members of the Executive Management Team who will help you to make the right decisions.

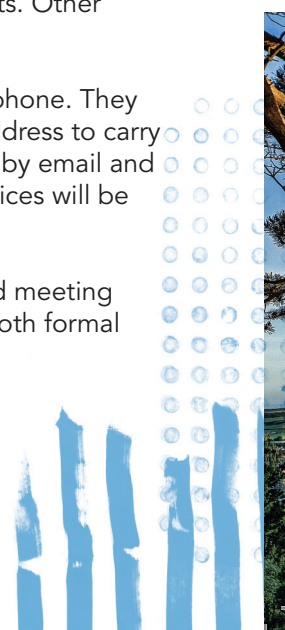
If you are a member of a political group, or other group, support and assistance will also be available from other members of your group.

... with my paperwork

Democratic Services can offer a range of assistance to councillors including, administration of Members allowances, advising on committee protocol, advising Members of meetings and sending agendas and reports. Other administrative assistance is provided for Members if required.

All Councillors are offered suitable IT equipment and a mobile phone. They are also provided with a Redcar and Cleveland Council email address to carry out their responsibilities. You will receive lots of communication by email and will need access to the internet. Full training on using these devices will be available.

You will also have access to fully equipped Members' rooms and meeting rooms at the Civic Centre, Redcar. All rooms have facilities for both formal and informal use.



Will I need to work at home?

You will be required to work at home reading your papers, preparing for forthcoming meetings and dealing with enquiries from the public.

Data Protection

You will come into contact with personal data on a frequent basis, as your residents will ask for advice and assistance and you will need to keep records in order to help them and be their elected representative. The Council will pay for you to be registered as a Data Controller with the Information Commissioner's Office, and you will need to be aware of, and comply with, GDPR and the Data Protection Act in order to respect and keep personal data safe and secure.

Training

There is training available for new councillors. Immediately upon election we arrange induction training for all councillors, and include introductions to the Executive Management Team.

In addition a series of Member Development sessions will take place throughout the year. Other training will also be arranged, to meet the needs of individual councillors, and specific to certain committees such as Regulatory Committee (Planning and Licensing) and Appeal Panels.



Will I get paid?

Councillors receive no salary for the time they give up to serve their community. However, you will be paid an allowance to reimburse you for time and expenses incurred whilst on Council business.

Every Redcar and Cleveland Borough councillor is entitled to a basic allowance, currently £9,985 a year. Some councillors are given an additional allowance to cover special responsibilities, such as Cabinet Members and Chairs of Committees.

Parish & Town Council Elections

Parish and Town Councillors do not normally receive any allowances.

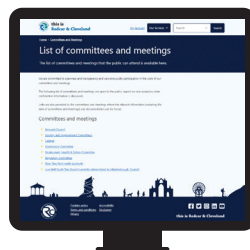
For more information about the Members Allowance Scheme please visit the Council's website at www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/councillors/councillors-allowances. Further information on allowances will be available during the induction period.

If you receive state benefits, these may be affected by your entitlement to councillor allowances. You are advised to seek the guidance of the local DWP office.

Come along and see for yourself!

There is no better way to see what life is like as a councillor than to attend one of our meetings be that Borough Council or a Committee meeting.

All meetings advertised on Redcar and Cleveland Council's website are open to the public. This will give you a flavour of some of the work that councillors do. These can be found at www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/committees-and-meetings/list-of-committees-and-meetings





Be a Councillor Events

Our event sessions provide prospective councillor candidates with more information about the role of a councillor, how councillors fit in the council structure and the different type of council meetings. There will also be the opportunity to ask any questions you may have.

Dates below:

Tuesday 13th December 2022

15:00 – 17:00

Civic Centre, Redcar, TS10 1RT

Friday 27th January 2023

10:00 – 12:00

Civic Centre, Redcar, TS10 1RT



Glossary

Agenda – This is a formal public document that sets out the business that is to be considered at formal meetings of the Borough Council, Cabinet, Boards, Committees and Panels

Borough (Local) Councillors – Councillors who are elected to represent the ward areas within the Redcar and Cleveland Borough

Cabinet – A group of senior councillors, appointed by the Leader of the Council, whose roles are for a specific topic. For example, Health and Welfare.

Code of Conduct – A code based on a national model that must be followed by all Councillors, governing their behaviour and responsibilities

Constituents – These are the residents of ward area that the councillor represents

Constitution – Every principal council must produce a document known as the Constitution, which sets out how that council will conduct its business

Borough Council – All 59 Borough Councillors meet to discuss business

Leader of the Council – The Leader of the Council is elected by the other serving councillors of the Council and acts as an ambassador for Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council and its residents promoting them locally, regionally and nationally

Members – Another word used for councillors but can also reference the Members of the Cabinet





Monitoring Officer - The Monitoring Officer is responsible for reporting the actual or potential breach of a legal requirement to the Council Meeting or Cabinet and for dealing with complaints of breaches of the code of conduct by Councillors, reporting as necessary to the Standards Committee. The Director of Governance is the designated 'Monitoring Officer'.

Parish/Town Council – Parish/Town Councils are civic local authorities and are the first tier of Local Government. They are elected corporate bodies with several powers and duties to carry out during their term of office. There are 3 Parish Councils and 2 Town Councils in Redcar and Cleveland.



Surgeries – Councillors' surgeries are drop-in sessions that provides their residents the opportunity to meet with them to discuss local issues and concerns

Ward – A geographical area of Redcar and Cleveland that is represented by one or more councillors. There are 24 wards in Redcar and Cleveland.

Useful Contacts

Steve Newton

Governance Director (Monitoring Officer)

steven.newton@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

Tel: 01642 444648

Ali Haver

Electoral Services Manager

alison.haver@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

Tel: 01642 444528

Alison Pearson

Governance Manager

alison.pearson@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

Tel: 01642 444063

Sue Fenwick

Principal Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer

susan.fenwick@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

Tel: 01642 444413



Useful Links



The Electoral Commission

The Electoral Commission is the independent body which oversees elections and regulates political finance in the UK. They aim to cultivate public confidence in the democratic process and ensure its integrity.

www.electoralcommission.org.uk



Local Government Association

The Local Government Association (LGA) is a national membership body of local authorities and exists to support, promote and improve better local government.

www.local.gov.uk



National Association of Local Councils

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) is a membership organisation of parish and town councils and works in partnership with county associations to support, promote and improve local councils.

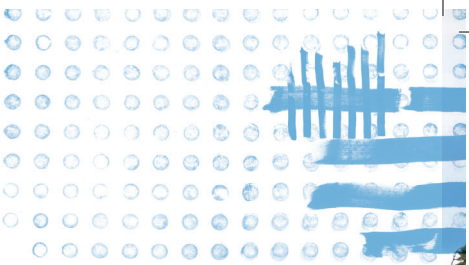
www.nalc.gov.uk



The National Association of Councillors

The National Association of Councillors is an organisation which represents the interests of elected members in all types of local authorities and all political persuasions.

www.nationalassociationofcouncillors.org



Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council is a unitary authority in the North East of England. It is a fantastic and diverse place to live and work, encompassing the spectacular coastline and all this has to offer, as well as the beauty of the North Yorkshire countryside and the surrounding small market towns and villages.

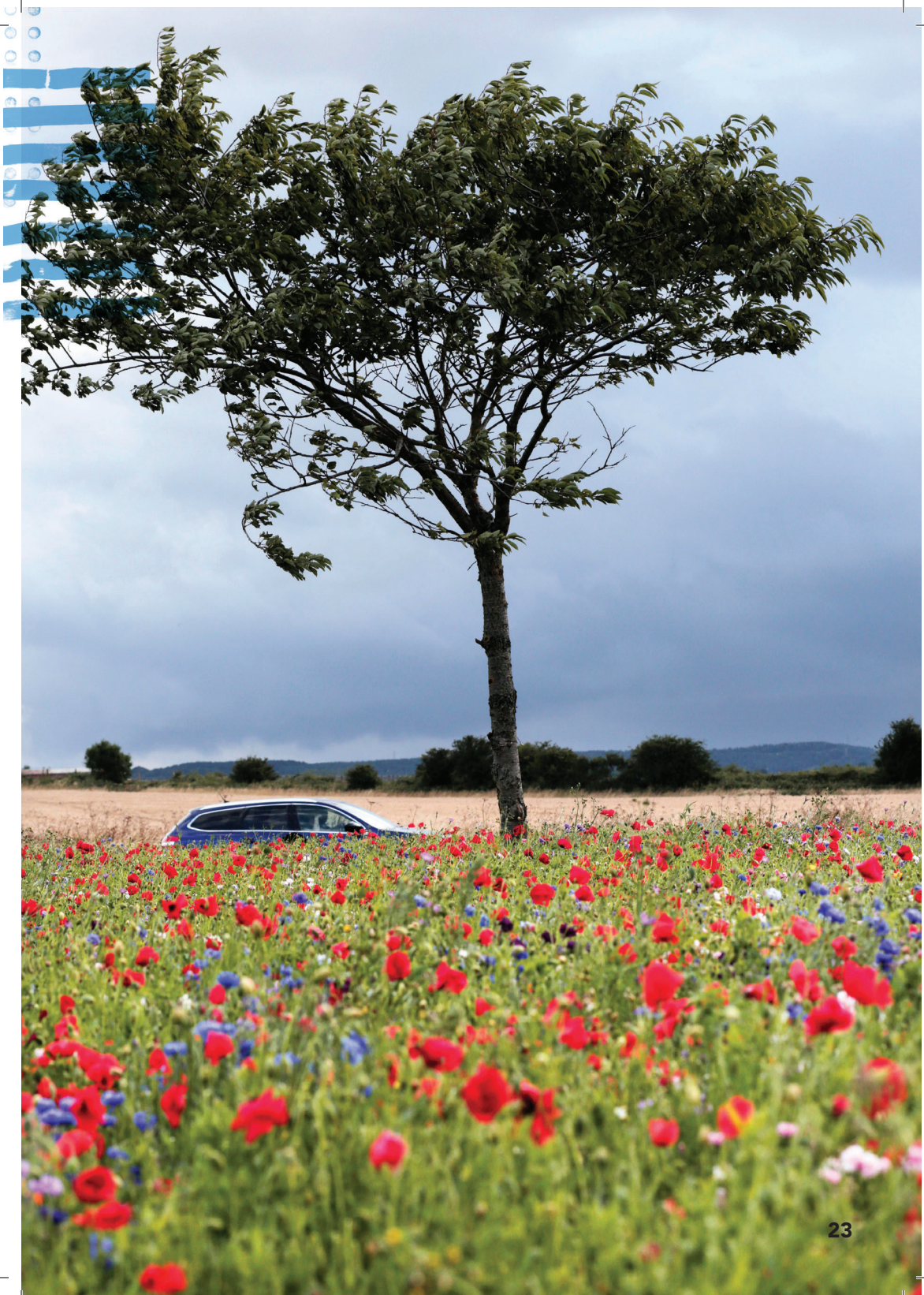
There are 59 councillors (also known as elected members or members) serving on Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council who represent the diverse and wide geographic spread of the residents of the Borough.

These councillors represent 24 Borough Wards which vary in size and population. To ensure equality of representation the number of councillors for each ward varies accordingly depending on the population of those areas, there being 12 wards with three councillors, 11 with two councillors and one ward which is represented by a single councillor.

Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council needs different kinds of people willing to stand for election: councillors who are capable, vibrant, energetic and engaged, with a commitment to local people and a passion for change.



***Could you be
one of them?***





For further information, please contact the Election Team on:

Tel: 01642 444410

Email: electoral_registration@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

Website: www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/voting-and-elections

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