

THE CHAIRMAN

- Holds a statutory post defined in law
- Is a member of the Council and is elected annually
- Has the authority at meetings and must be obeyed when issuing lawful direction or direction in line with adopted Standing Orders.
- Is the interface between the public and Council
- The one to welcome speakers and make them 'feel at home'
- Is to make sure the decision is clear for the clerk to act upon.

The Chairman should:

- Know that the agenda was put up in time and be familiar with business to be covered
- Arrive in good time, adequately briefed and with all the necessary papers in correct order.
- Ensure the meeting is quorate
- Start the meeting on time by declaring it open, and end it by clearly stating it closed and the time it ended.
- **Know that he/she has no more statutory power than any other Councillor except that of the casting vote.**
- Ensure that all points of view have a clear hearing
- Keep the discussion to the point, and that it is relevant and ensure the Council deals with clear issues
- Ensure the Council/committee acts only within its terms of reference and/or legal powers and functions
- Ensure compliance with standing orders, financial regulations, Council policies, etc.
- To ensure that where and when appropriate and allowable the Council takes a vote to exclude the public and press from Council meetings.
- Understand the principles of debate and voting (see adopted Standing Order of the Council and the Good Councillor Guide)
- **Remain impartial and not 'guide' Councillors to his/her desired decision.**
- Ideally not allow the meeting to continue for more than 2 hours without a break (depending on Standing Orders).
- Create an atmosphere which encourages participation
- Be in control of the meeting.

- **Know that he/she cannot be a committee of one (Hillingdon Case Law)**
- Respect and understand the role of the clerk/RFO and other officers, and ensure that employment issues (e.g. performance, disciplinary matters) are only raised in Council meetings when appropriate and in line with Council policy and employment law.
- **Co-operate with officers and Councillors**
- Act as a representative of the Council at civic or local events

The Chairman on his/her own has no power to make decisions without the Resolution of the Council.

The Chairman cannot decide which items should appear on the agenda for meetings. The Clerk is responsible for the agenda, apart from Extraordinary Meetings. Normal practice would be for the Clerk to consult with the Chairman when drawing up the agenda to ensure that appropriate and necessary items are added.

The Chairman should not involve him/herself in the day to day administration of the Council, but can be a point of reference for officers if agreed by Council.

Handling Public Disturbances at a meeting:

No one is entitled to interrupt or obstruct the proceedings of the Council or its committees. The Chairman should never argue or allow argument with an interrupter. If the public becomes disorderly it may eventually be necessary to close the meeting or to adjourn to a more private place. It is, however illegal to decide to exclude the public from any future meeting. The press is in a privileged position inasmuch as its representatives must so far as possible be given facilities for taking their reports.