



Make a difference for Torbay!

Essential Guide for Candidates



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Making the decision to stand

Why become a councillor?

Councillors are ordinary people doing an extraordinary job. By becoming a councillor you can make sure that decisions being made meet the needs of the people of Torbay. You will be the voice of your community by shaping and directing local services. People become councillors for a variety of reasons. Here's what some councillors say:

'I wanted to do something to influence change where I live for the better.'

'I wanted to get more involved in local issues and help reinvigorate a sense of community.'

'I really enjoy helping people to solve some of their problems.'

What does the Council and the councillors do?

Torbay Council and Brixham Town Council provide local services to residents, visitors and businesses in Torbay.

Torbay is split into wards and one, two or three councillors are elected to represent each ward. There are 36 councillors in total.

As a councillor you will represent everyone in your ward – not just those that voted for you – and serve the council as a whole. You will be a:

Representative, acting as a source of information or point of access to council services.

Community leader, developing links with all parts of the community and supporting local partnerships/organisations to campaign on local issues.

Policy maker, attending meetings to discuss and approve council budget and policy.

Scrutineer, you may become involved to act as Torbay Council's 'watchdog' to review/improve services for local people and investigate issues of local concern.

What does a typical day look like?

Life as a councillor is both challenging and rewarding and every day is different. The following gives you a flavour of a typical day as a councillor:

“My day begins with catching up on the news. The Government has just announced how much grant money Councils will get for next year. Officers at the Town Hall will be giving a briefing to councillors later today on what the announcement means for Torbay. The funding calculations are very complicated and checking the national news will give me an understanding so I can think of any questions I have in advance. Councillors will have to make some tough decisions this year which mean cuts, but we will need to balance these with what is best for the communities we serve.

Before I go to work for the morning, I check my Council emails at home. A lady in my ward has e-mailed me complaining about problems with fly tipping in her neighbourhood. I log the details on the councillor’s casework system so a response can be sent to her.

There is a planning application affecting my ward which will be decided at the next Development Management Committee meeting. Some of the residents in my ward are not happy about the application so I need to check the reports and decide whether I feel it is necessary to represent them and speak at the meeting.

After grabbing some lunch, I’m off to the local park in my ward to see the restoration and revamp of the play facilities. I helped the residents put together a successful bid for lottery funding and they have set up a ‘friends of the park’ group. I’m really proud that their hard work has come to fruition and there are better facilities for young people.

Then I’ll be at the budget briefing at the Town Hall. There is a lot of information you need to keep on top of as a councillor and I find these briefings really useful for keeping abreast of the major issues. A full understanding and background knowledge of issues are essential to ensure I am able to make informed decisions when voting at Council meetings. I then switch off from my council work and will have dinner with my family”

How can you become a councillor?

You are able to be a councillor if you:

- ✓ Are 18 years of age or over;
- ✓ Are British, or if you are a citizen of a member country of the European Union or Commonwealth;

And have at least one of the following:

- ✓ Are registered to vote with Torbay Council (and within Brixham to stand for Brixham Town Council); **or**
- ✓ Lived (or worked) in Torbay for one year (or within Brixham to stand for Brixham Town Council); **or**
- ✓ Occupied or resided in, as owner or tenant, any land or premises in Torbay for one year (or within 4.8 km of Brixham for Brixham Town Council).

You may not be a councillor if you:

- ✗ Work for Torbay Council or Brixham Town Council or your job is a politically restricted post;
- ✗ Have received a prison sentence or suspended sentence of three months or more within five years of the election; **or**
- ✗ Have been disqualified under any legislation relating to any corrupt or illegal practices or are bankrupt.

More detailed information on how to stand for election is available from the Electoral Commission – www.electoralcommission.org.uk/home.

Will you be able to do the job?

You do not need any formal qualifications or experience to become a councillor. The main requirement is that you want to be involved and help represent the interests of your local area. You may also have special skills (such as communication, problem solving, team working and engaging your local community) or business expertise that you feel you could contribute.

The councillors should represent the whole community so it is important people from all backgrounds are elected.



Can you be a councillor if you are disabled?

The same criteria for being a councillor apply if you are disabled. The Council is not able to provide you with additional support to help you canvass potential voters, although a political party may be able to help. However, once you become a councillor, the Council will work with you to overcome any barriers to ensure you are fully involved. Being a councillor is not a full time job and may not affect any financial assistance you receive, however, you should check with the Department for Work and Pensions. The Local Government Association have prepared a helpful guide which can be found at www.local.gov.uk/our-support/highlighting-political-leadership/be-councillor.

How much time will it take?

How much time you put in as a councillor is largely up to you and the commitments you take on as a councillor. There are a number of meetings you will have to attend and you will also need to deal with telephone calls at home. It is important to understand that members of the public will want to contact you by telephone, by email or in person. Time commitment can range from between 5 to 20 hours per week depending on how much you want to get involved – what you get back depends on how much you put in, here are the sort of things that will take up your time:

- attending public meetings (most councillors attend at least 2 types of committees and council meetings)
- preparing for meetings (such as reading agendas and papers)
- attending workshops, briefings and training sessions with other councillors and officers
- being available to assist people with their queries and complaints (some councillors do this by holding ward surgeries) and following this up through casework

As you can see, being a councillor can be very busy. This may appear daunting but you will be provided with tools and techniques on how to manage your time to help you keep a balance between your role as a local representative and your every day life.

Once elected you can be a councillor for a maximum of four years when the elections are held again.

Will it cost you anything and will you be paid?

Councillors receive an allowance, plus travel and expenses. Further details on this can be found later in this guide under 'What support will I get?'. Please note that the allowances you receive may affect any financial assistance you receive and are taxable – you should contact the agency that provides the assistance to find out if you may be affected.

Do you need to be part of a political group?

No. You can choose to stand for election as an independent candidate or as a group/party political candidate. The political groups/parties undertake their own selection process and you should contact them directly for information. The contact details for the political parties can be found at the end of this leaflet.

How to decide which ward to stand for to become a councillor

Whether you decide to stand for a political group/party or as an independent candidate, you will need to decide which ward you would like to represent. A number of factors may influence your decision such as a particular issue which you are passionate about and want to address. Or you may live in the ward and are well placed to understand your community's needs. You can only stand for one ward within Torbay.

What about your boss?

The Employment Rights Act 1996 requires your employer to allow you a reasonable amount of time off for your work as a councillor. We try to arrange many of our meetings and training sessions at various times during the day, but there may be times where you will need to take time off work. The amount of time required will vary depending on your role in the Council and your working hours. You may need to discuss this and agree the details with your employer. Many employers recognise that the skills people develop as councillors are also very useful in the workplace.

The Elections

What are the key deadlines?

The elections process has strict and prescribed legal deadlines which must be followed. The full timetable for the Thursday 2 May 2019 Council elections will be included in your nomination pack which will be available from early 2019.

Who is the Returning Officer and what do they do?

The Returning Officer is the person who has the overall responsibility for the election and ensures that it is run in accordance with the law and the set procedure. The Returning Officer is an officer of the Council who is appointed under the Representation of the People Act 1983 and, although appointed by the Council, the Returning Officer role is separate from their day to day job with the Council. The appointed Returning Officer for Torbay Council is Caroline Taylor, the Council's Director for Adult Services and Housing and she has overall responsibility for:

- the nomination process for candidates and political parties
- ensuring sufficient and appropriate polling stations
- appointing staff to support the election and run the polling stations
- appropriate administration and security of polling stations
- preparation of all ballot papers
- issue, receipt and counting of postal ballot papers
- the actual count and declaration of results
- all candidates' election expenses returns

The Electoral Services Team support the Returning Officer to ensure the day to day preparations and running of the election. The Team will be your first point of contact for any help you may need on the elections process – their contact details are available at the end of this guide.

How do you get nominated as a candidate?

Firstly, you need a nomination pack. If you are standing with a group/ political party you should check with them whether they will be applying on your behalf, otherwise you need to speak to the Electoral Services Team direct to obtain a nomination pack. Nomination packs will be available from 1 March 2019 and must be submitted to the Returning Officer or her Deputies by the nomination deadline (which will be set out in the pack).

To get nominated you need to complete the nomination forms. Please note that there are different nomination forms for Torbay councillor and Brixham Town councillor applications. When submitting your nomination forms you need to make an appointment with the Electoral Services Team.

When you complete the nomination form and it has been formally accepted by the Returning Officer, you will become an official candidate for the election on the last day for the publication of election. In a nutshell the nomination form requires two people (on the Torbay Register of Electors) to propose and second your nomination and ten Torbay residents (who are also on the Register of Electors) to sign in support of your nomination. The number of signatures required varies depending on which election you are standing for.

Full instructions on getting nominated will be provided in your nomination pack, but do contact the Electoral Services Team if you have any queries about the nomination process as it is important that it is completed correctly.

Will you have to pay a deposit to become a candidate?

Candidates standing to become councillors for Torbay Council or Brixham Town Council do not have to pay a deposit.

What is an election agent and do you need one?

An Election Agent is the person recognised in law as responsible for your election campaign. In particular, your Election Agent is responsible for the financial management of your election campaign and for ensuring that the declarations and returns for expenses are properly completed and delivered to the Returning Officer. Details of your Election Agent must be provided to the Electoral Services Team and will be advertised to the public. If you do not formally provide notification of the appointment of an agent, then you, as the candidate, will be deemed to be your own agent.

What about campaigning?

There are some rules around what you can and can't do when campaigning to get people to vote for you. You need to make yourself fully aware of these and guidance is provided by the Electoral Commission's Guidance for Candidates and Agents. You will receive a copy of the Guidance with your nomination pack and is also available from the Electoral Commission website: **www.electoralcommission.org.uk**.

Is there a limit on how much you can spend on your campaign?

Yes, there is a limit to ensure accountability, fairness and transparency about your campaign. Your expenses must be declared which will be publicised by the Electoral Commission. Please note that you are not able to claim back your expenses. Expenses must be submitted to the Returning Officer within 35 days of the announcement of the results of the election.

Full details on what you can spend on your campaign will be available in the Electoral Commission's Guidance for Candidates and Agents and is also available from the Electoral Commission website: **www.electoralcommission.org.uk**.

Will you get a copy of the electoral register?

Yes, you will be entitled to one copy of the register of electors for the relevant ward or area you are standing in. The register will give you details of the people in your area who are able to vote at the election. If you require more copies your request must be made in writing to the Electoral Services Team. The register will be available once you become an official candidate (see 'How do you get nominated as a candidate?' above). You are given a full copy of the register and you must be mindful that the content of the register should be used only for the election and no other purpose.

What happens with postal votes?

There are currently 147,000 postal voters in Torbay. All postal voters have to provide personal identification e.g. date of birth and signatures when they apply for a postal vote. Postal voters receive, with their ballot paper, a statement which requires their date of birth and signature. When we receive completed postal votes they are opened and verified on a daily basis and in advance of the day of poll. You are entitled to attend the opening of postal votes at Torquay Town Hall and details of opening sessions will be provided in your nomination pack.

What happens on polling day?

Polling stations open at 7.00 a.m. and shut at 10.00 p.m. There are certain rules which you must follow on polling day such as campaigning and visiting polling stations. You must make yourself fully aware of what you can and cannot do on polling day and further information is available on in the Electoral Commission's Guidance for Candidates and Agents and is also available from the Electoral Commission website:

www.electoralcommission.org.uk

How are the votes counted and what happens at the count?

As a candidate, you and your Agent are entitled to attend the counting of the votes. You may be able to bring other people with you to watch the count and the Returning Officer will advise how many people you will be able to bring.

What's next if you're elected? The Learning Curve!

Being a councillor – What's expected?

Getting elected is only the first hurdle of becoming a successful councillor. If you are successfully elected and new to the job the next steps will be to find out how the Council operates, how you want to work with your community and discover the many responsibilities that these roles bring as a councillor. The three months after the election may be a bit of a roller-coaster ride – there will be a lot of meetings, reports, community involvement and induction training, but don't panic as you will get help and support from fellow councillors and officer colleagues. We will also give you plenty of notice of the dates you will need in your diary. You can start preparing before the election and in between canvassing – you've already made a start by reading this guide!

From day 1 you will be expected to attend certain meetings and help constituents with their issues or queries. You will also need to be mindful of your limitations and the boundaries of your remit – you may have made promises during your campaign on a particular topic, but please be aware that if you are successfully elected you cannot 'change the world overnight'. You will need to work with your fellow councillors and officers and follow the correct channels for getting things done. Full advice and guidance will be provided by your group leader or officers if you are not part of a group.

Your specific responsibilities and expectations:

✓ Code of Conduct and Acceptance of Office

Before you can act as a councillor, you must make the 'Declaration of Acceptance of Office' with the Chief Executive or other appropriate officer. This has to be done within two months of being elected or you will no longer be a councillor and signing the declaration will be included as part of your induction. By signing the Declaration of Acceptance of Office you make a commitment to adhere to the Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct ensures the high standards expected of councillors are followed and sets out the rules for how you should carry out your duties. It covers areas of individual behaviour and makes sure you do not abuse your position or the Council's resources. The Code also sets out rules about disclosing your interests so you do not get involved in decisions that you may personally gain or lose from. Full training will be provided at an early stage of your induction.

✓ Training and Development

As with starting any new job, you will need to undertake appropriate induction and training to enable you to carry out your roles fully. You will also be required to develop your skills to become a successful councillor. The Code of Conduct requires you to attend core training and is agreed annually in the Members' Development Programme. Core training is selected to enable you to be fully equipped to carry out your duties and safeguard the Council in respect of legislative requirements such as the Code of Conduct, Planning and Licensing. The Code also asks that you undertake voluntary training included in the Members' Development Programme. To ensure we are working efficiently and effectively we make full use of modern technology to carry out our business. You will also be expected to fully utilise the Council's IT equipment and there will be dedicated IT support as part of the induction programme to help you with this. To find out more check out 'What Support will I get?' which can be found later in this leaflet.

✓ The Children of Torbay

As a councillor you will be responsible for ensuring that the Council meets the Government's requirements in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people. You will have responsibilities to ensure that the Council, in partnership with other agencies, is commissioning the best services to achieve these aims.

You will also have specific responsibilities for groups of vulnerable children, particularly in your role as Corporate Parent for children who are in the care of the Council. Your duties include ensuring that arrangements are in place to enable children in care to have the same opportunities and attain the same outcomes as all other children.

We also have a legal responsibility to have a Lead Member for Children's Services. This Lead Member has a range of tasks which includes ensuring that the Council gives the delivery of services to children and young people an appropriate priority.



Equality and Diversity

The Equality Act 2010 made equality laws clearer and stronger. This means the Council has specific duties in relation to equality and diversity covering nine 'protected characteristics' these include age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity.

The Code of Conduct (as described above) requires all councillors and the Mayor to promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person on the grounds of each of the protected characteristics. This means you must not discriminate against anyone on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Council is also required to promote equal opportunities and treat people from different groups fairly and equally.

You will need to discover different groups in your community (e.g. younger and older people). Sometimes people may have different views on a particular issue and you will need to use sensitive judgement when making difficult decisions. These decisions should always be made in an open and reasoned way. You are responsible to keep yourself well-informed, especially about diverse local views. It is important that you talk with local people so that you can represent their interests. You need to be aware of minority groups or individuals (sometimes referred to as 'hard to reach' groups) in your community as often they find it difficult to get their views known.

Health and Safety

Although the Council has a duty to ensure your health and safety whilst carrying out your role, you also have a responsibility to keep yourself and others safe whilst on Council business.

You will be issued with a photo identification card. This card will act as your official proof of identity when on Council business as well providing you with security access to Council buildings.

You will be required to meet with constituents to discuss queries, concerns and complaints. It is important to take steps when meeting with an individual or a group to ensure that you remain safe. Whilst this will be largely based on your judgement, you should consider that situations and events can, on occasion, become volatile and aggressive. To ensure your personal safety you should meet people at the Town Hall or in a public place. If you are requested to meet a person at their home it is advisable to take another councillor with you.

It is important to remember that in terms of health and safety the Council leads by example to the wider community.

Confidential and Exempt Paperwork

You have a duty to ensure that you do not disclose any Council information that is classed as confidential or 'exempt'. You can easily recognise this information in reports as it will be marked as 'restricted'. You must not share this information with anyone who is not a fellow councillor or appropriate officer.

Confidential or exempt information is usually discussed in private at meetings and the press and public are asked to leave the room. You should not discuss this information outside of the meeting.

Data Protection

The Data Protection Act gives people rights to access personal information that is held about them and imposes controls on organisations about how that personal information is used. The Act applies to councillors in the same way as it does to employees and covers paper and computerised records, whether owned by councillors or provided by the Council, which relate to their role as a councillor. You will be your own Data Controller and you will be provided with training on how to manage the personal data.

How does the Council work and how are decisions made?

Councils provide three different types of services:

- statutory (these are services a Council must provide such as refuse collection)
- regulatory (these are services that a Council monitors and controls such as Licensing and Planning)
- discretionary (services that a Council chooses to provide such as tourism)

Torbay Council is a 'unitary' council and is responsible for the delivery of most services. Within Torbay's boundaries is Brixham Town Council which was formed in 2007.

All 36 councillors meet formally as the 'Council'. At these meetings the Council sets a budget for services and the Council Tax, and the Council's plans are also agreed (called the 'policy framework'). Officers then make most day to day decisions to deliver services within the budget and policies.

The Council also deals with harbours, licensing and planning issues and appoints smaller groups of Councillors (committees) to deal with these areas of work. The Council's Constitution provides the legal framework for how we do business and make decisions.

The Council publishes all major decisions that the Council intends to make in a 'Forward Plan'. We also publish papers (agendas, reports and minutes) for meetings at least five days beforehand and are available on the Council's website.

How will you be selected for Committees and other organisations?

Selection for committees and other bodies happens at the Adjourned Annual Council meeting in May. There will be meetings of political groups before the Annual Council meeting to determine who will be nominated. You will need to think about what areas interest you and where you can make a contribution with any particular expertise you may have. You will also need to think about where you may have a possible conflict of interest, for example a councillor working as a pub landlord would need to think whether they could be a member of the Licensing Committee.

There are also a number of other public and voluntary organisations that require councillors to be a representative for that organisation e.g. Fire and Police Authorities. Again, these appointments are made following the election and you may want to think about which organisations you would like to work with.

What's it like being publicly available as a councillor?

As a councillor you will be seen by some people as a community figure working 24 hours a day! This can include when you are out and about at your local restaurant, doctors or dentists. Days off from your role can prove difficult!

You will need to decide your approach for dealing with queries from your constituents, these could be in the street, via telephone or people calling at your house. It is important to think about your own personal, family and work circumstances and balance these with the need to be available to your constituents. Fellow councillors will be able to provide advice on this.

We will need contact details for you which you are happy to be made public. When thinking about which details to provide, you should consider whether you want to be contacted at work or whether you want your home telephone number to be made available. You could use a mobile phone specifically for council use. These details will be available at Council offices and via the council's website.

Being in the public eye does mean that you can be subjected to criticism and challenge by the public, press and fellow councillors particularly if you are involved with controversial decisions. This is part of the territory of being a councillor and you will receive training and support to develop your skills – see section later in this guide.

How to communicate effectively with constituents and the media

Communication is one of the key skills that you will need to be an effective councillor. It will be necessary for you to let people know what you have been doing, but it will also be important for you to listen to your constituents, fellow councillors, officers and other organisations within Torbay. Remember that communication should always be a two-way process and you will need to think about how you will communicate with different audiences.

As a community leader, you will be very much in the public eye. The local media take interest in the Council's work and will be particularly keen to get your views on issues, some of which will be controversial. Anything you say may be used by the press. However, the media can play a crucial role in communicating our messages to the public.

You should always be aware that the media and public can attend Council and committee meetings. The media may use quotes from the things that you say at these meetings in their articles even though they may not 'officially' interview you.

There are legal requirements and national guidelines around how councillors and officers communicate with the media. Legislation states that the Council must not publish any material which appears to voice support for a political party.

Certain councillors, including the portfolio holders, Chairmen/women of committees and working parties/review panels, act as official spokesperson on behalf of the Council to the media about matters relating to their special responsibilities. All requests made by the media to interview these councillors are co-ordinated by the Communications Team.

Any member acting as Council spokesperson is speaking for the Council and not in a party political capacity. Your political group may have protocols for dealing with the press and you should familiarise yourself with these.

How to communicate with your ward

Officers should keep you up to date on issues that affect your ward so that you are best placed to answer questions and give accurate information and advice. You should also keep in touch with your ward to ensure you are aware of any issues. You can do this quite simply by walking around your ward. This gives you the opportunity to talk with local residents to find out their views. You should also become an active member of your local Community Partnership.

Community Partnerships provide an opportunity for people who live or work in the different parts of Torbay to discuss issues of common concern, influence the way in which services are provided and improve their local area.

How do you build working relationships with Council Officers?

Good relationships between councillors and officers are vital to ensure that our services are delivered effectively and to enable us to reach our goals. By combining our energies and skills we can deliver real benefits to the community.

We have a dedicated team of officers whose role is to ensure that our services are delivered effectively by actioning the Council's policies. The Chief Executive is legally responsible for staffing the Council and co-ordinates departments (or business units) to ensure the Council runs efficiently. Officers are a valuable source of advice and by building mutual respect and trust you can achieve positive working relationships.

Officers are required to give unbiased professional advice and sometimes this will include advice that you may not be happy with. They cannot respond to personal criticism in the same way as councillors can.

To ensure this does not have a negative impact on your relationship with officers it is important to maintain good communications and familiarise yourself with the Local Protocol on Member and Officer Relations which is available on the Council's website.

When requiring help from officers you should talk to an Executive Head or the Governance Support Team who will be able to point you in the right direction. You need to remember that if you ask an officer to do some work on your behalf, that the officer will have other work which may have a higher priority or is required to ensure the delivery of services.

What support will you get?

The role of a councillor should not be underestimated – as you will see from reading this guide there is a lot involved and expectations are high. But you are not alone! You will receive support from fellow councillor and officer colleagues and there will be plenty of opportunities for you to develop your skills and knowledge.

To ensure councillors are effective in their role and the support provided by officers is efficient we are putting together a Member Officer Compact. This Compact has been developed with councillors and officers and sets out the high standard of support you can expect from the Council and what they need to do in return to make the support as effective as possible.



Will there be any induction and ongoing training?

The Council is committed to ensuring that all councillors are equipped with the relevant skills to do the best job possible. This commitment has previously been recognised nationally as we have achieved Member Development Charter Plus status for our approach to developing councillors skills and knowledge. We are among only a few councils in the country who have achieved this standard. With constant changes and increasing national and local demands placed on councils it is essential that you keep your knowledge and skills up to date to fulfill your various roles.

From day one after the election, your community will expect you to know all the answers. To get you going, we are preparing an intensive 'early survival' induction programme which will provide a good grounding and help you develop your skills to undertake the various roles and understand what is expected of you. We will also bring you up to speed on the critical areas of performance/key challenges for the Council.

We recognise that you have a variety of skills and backgrounds to bring to the role. Our Members' Skills Framework has been designed specifically to help you harness these skills in your new role. The Framework sets out the skills and knowledge required for all aspects of being a councillor and will help you to identify any areas where you may need particular training. You will be offered a confidential one to one personal development planning session to help you identify any areas where you may need support. We will use the results from these sessions to inform our Members' Development Programmes each year through to the end of your term of office. Further training and development will be available throughout your time as a councillor to help you develop your skills and keep up to speed with local and national issues.

Will you get support from other councillors and officers?

A number of current councillors who are re-standing will be available to you as 'Peer Support Councillors'. These councillors will be available for you to contact if you require any help or advice. They will be able to share their valuable experience with you and provide you with guidance on being a councillor. All Senior Officers will be able to provide you with information and advice as they are there to support all councillors. There will always be someone available to answer any of your questions – no matter how simple they may seem.

The Governance Support Team is a council department and is on hand to provide support for councillors' queries and can signpost you if you are not sure who you should go to. You will also be given access to an email account and necessary IT equipment.

What will you get paid?

As explained earlier, you will receive an allowance and you can claim for certain expenses. The Council sets a Members' Allowances Scheme which is included in the Council's Constitution. The Scheme is kept under review by the Independent Remuneration Panel which is made up of people who are independent from the Council. The Scheme includes the following, however, this level of funding may change when the Scheme is reviewed in the summer of 2019.

You will receive a basic allowance (currently £8,249 per annum) which is paid monthly into your bank account. This is intended to recognise your commitment as a councillor in respect of your time at meetings with officers, constituents and political groups.

If you take on a special responsibility, such as being a Chairman of a Committee, you will receive an additional allowance to take into account your additional commitments connected to this role.

You can also claim for travel, meals and carer's allowance (e.g. a child-minder or carer for dependents if you have children and/or people you may care for) for attending official meetings such as Council, committee meetings and training events.

You can choose not to claim for allowances and/or travel and expenses. However, the allowances may still affect any financial assistance you receive and you should check with the agency that pays these.

What equipment and other services will be provided?

All the support/equipment described in this section is for use whilst you carry out Council business only. All councillors currently receive the following support from the Council:

- The provision of an iPad to access agendas and reports for meetings and emails. You will be provided with an IT induction and training on how to use an iPad.
- Members' Common Room – a room is provided at the Town Hall, Torquay for you to undertake work or meet with other councillors
- You will have a post tray at Torquay Town Hall or Brixham Town Hall to receive post.
- Holidays and apologies for meetings – if you notify the Governance Support Team when you are away we will automatically give your apologies at any committee meetings.
- Advice on declaring and registering interests – this can be provided by the Monitoring Officer or the Governance Support Team prior to meetings.
- Webpage – your details will be posted on our website. This includes details about your membership of committees, Ward surgery dates and times and your contact details.

Specific Requirements

If you have any specific requirements (such as special dietary needs or specific arrangements for accessing our buildings or reading documents) we will try to meet these. Please contact the Governance Support Team to discuss your requirements.

So you want to stand for Council? What's next?

Thank you for taking the time to read this guide. We hope you found it useful and that it has given you a good insight of the elections process and what being a councillor is all about.

If you want to stand you need to apply for a nomination pack and as explained earlier you will need to approach the political party if you have decided to stand for a particular political group or the Elections Team direct if you are standing as an independent candidate – contact details can be found at the end of this leaflet.

If you need any further help or we have missed something in this guide, please do not hesitate to contact the Elections Team on any aspects of the elections process or the Governance Support Team for any queries about being a councillor.



Where to get more information/Useful contacts

Find out more about Torbay Council and Brixham Town Council by visiting their websites:

www.torbay.gov.uk

www.brixhamtowncouncil.gov.uk

To find out about the election rules contact:

Electoral Commission website: **www.electoralcommission.org.uk**

**Electoral Services Team, Torbay Council,
Town Hall, Castle Circus, Torquay, TQ1 3DR**

Tel: **01803 207171**

Email: **Electoral.registration@torbay.gov.uk**

To find out more about being a councillor and the support you will receive contact:

**Governance Support Team, Torbay Council,
Town Hall, Castle Circus, Torquay, TQ1 3DR**

Tel: **01803 207026**

Email: **governance.support@torbay.gov.uk**

Website: **www.torbay.gov.uk**

Useful information and experiences of other councillors can be found on:

www.beacouncillor.org.uk

The following political organisations have councillors' associations.
You can find out more from their websites:

Conservative Councillors Association

www.conservativecouncillors.com

Association of Labour Councillors

www.labouronline.org/councillors

Association of Liberal Democrat Councillors

www.aldc.org

Association of UKIP Councillors

www.ukip.org/new_ukip_councillors_association_committee_elected

The Local Government Association Independent Group

www.local.gov.uk/lga-independent

This document can be made available in other languages, on tape, in Braille, large print and in other formats. For more information, please contact 01803 207171.