

Draft

The Role of the Chairman

The Chairman has an important role to fulfil as the Civic Head of the District. The Chairman is distinct from the political leadership of the Authority and this separation is sometimes not obvious to the public.

The Chairman with his/her Insignia and traditions of office acts as a figurehead and a symbol of continuity and has the prestigious role of representing the whole District during the civic year. As its representative he/she can influence public perception and enhance the image of the Council.

While fulfilling the many engagements that crowd the official diary, the Chairman has the opportunity to act as a link between the various groups and organisations visited and the Council and has a unique overview of the needs and concerns of the community he/she serves. The Chairman is also in a position to take out to the community the message and aims of the Council.

Civic Engagements

There are 7 specific categories of 'Civic Engagements' they are:

1. **Council/statutory/tradition** – chairing Council meetings, attending Remembrance Day, etc
2. **Promoting** – Council/partnership initiatives, inward investment, etc
3. **Community** – attending events such as local amateur theatre, sports clubs, church groups, etc
4. **Civic hosting** – receptions, buffets, banquets, etc in connection with community and promotion
5. **Civic circuit** – visiting other authorities for civic dinners, church services, etc
6. **Charities** – fundraising events
7. **Social** – personal entertaining

Guidelines for accepting invitations to events

The Chairman will have to consider each invitation on its own merits, as each one is different. Priority is always to local events. Supporting events outside the district is fine, but will always take second place to our district.

Consideration should be given to the following when accepting an invitation:

Is the invite from an internal service area or external invite?

Remember when accepting an invitation that local events take precedence over events outside the district.

Is the invitation a community or commercial invite?

If it is a commercial invite checks should be made to ensure that there are no outstanding planning applications or environmental investigations. Would the company 'gain' any credence from the Chairman supporting of such a commercial venture? Will the Chairman's charity be supported from such a visit?

What roles does the Chairman have to perform?

Is it just making up numbers at a reception or will the Chairman have a role to play in the event?

What are the justifications for the Chairman to attend?

Has the invitation been made to benefit a specific promotion by a service area, to promote the Chairman's charity or to endorse a local community group?

What value can the Authority gain from the Chairman attendance?

Is there relevance for the Chairman to attend i.e. the community group are in receipt of Grant Aid from the council.

Is there a conflict of dates/times?

Do two invites clash or is there enough time between events for the Chairman to attend both?

Are there any potential 'political' clashes?

The Chairman must always remain 'politically neutral' during their year in office.

Who will be in attendance?

Are there any other notable guests that the Chairman should be aware of before attending the event. Names of relevant people to thank or groups to acknowledge.

Guidelines for planning civic events

Civic Events should be used to promote the Key Priorities of the Corporate Plan and the emphasis should be on 'quality' rather than 'quantity'

Consideration should be given to the following when planning an event:

What is the purpose of the event?

When planning an event it is necessary to have a main aim i.e. is the event a way to promote or enhance the district council. Or is it an opportunity to raise the profile of a local charity? Can we justify why the event is being held?

What budget is available?

Depending on the event and its aim, it will be necessary to decide the budget and its origins. This may mean that as a charity event the Chairman may fund any costs

from his/her budget or if a civic event which cost codes are to be debited. Care should also be made not to allocate the entire financial year's budget as there may be unexpected events that we may be asked to arrange at short notice.

Are there any other associated costs?

Consideration should be given to staffing costs both directly and indirectly. This may include obtaining estimates from various companies for the use of specifically trained staff (ie First Aid Trained) or required equipment.

What implication will the event's costs have on the year's budget?

If costs are to be made by the council, what percentage of the annual budget will be used and will the remainder be sufficient to cover the remaining planned Civic Events for the financial /civic year?

When will the event take place?

When a decision to organise an event is taken thought must be given not only to booked Council Meetings but also on a wider scale as to events possibly taking place around the district/county or even countrywide. A clash of dates /times can lead to poor support at a function.

Is this suitable a venue/location?

Having established the reason for hosting an event and who is to be invited it will be necessary to confirm that the venue has easy access and sufficient safe parking? It should be taken into account any 'problem' that a venue may present is passed onto the guests so they are fully informed before they attend. Checks should also be made with Environmental Services and Planning to ensure that there are no outstanding issues relating the council business or security issues.

How many people and who will attend?

Care must be taken when compiling a guest list that the guests are relevant to that particular event and not just a blanket invite for each event. Checks must be made to ensure that guests do not use the event to raise their own profile or to bring the council into disrepute.

Answering these questions and giving the guests as much information as possible on the invitation will ensure that everyone involved with the organisation or attendance of the event will understand their role and requirements which in turn will ensure an enjoyable and successful occasion.