



Rutland
County Council

Guide to becoming a Rutland County Councillor

A County for everyone and a place to live your best life





1. Thinking of becoming a councillor?

If you care about your community, want to be involved in decision-making for your local area and are looking for a worthwhile and rewarding way to help others, becoming a councillor may be the perfect choice for you.

This booklet tells you what you need to know about becoming a councillor and how to proceed once you have made the decision to stand for election.



For those who care deeply about where they live and want to make a positive contribution to society, there is no better job than being a Councillor. That doesn't mean it's easy – bringing about change can be difficult at the best of times and we are living through a particularly challenging period in our history. However, if you are hardworking, responsible, public-spirited, and willing to make tough decisions for the benefit of Rutland, as a whole, you will find being a Councillor incredibly rewarding.

Lucy Stephenson

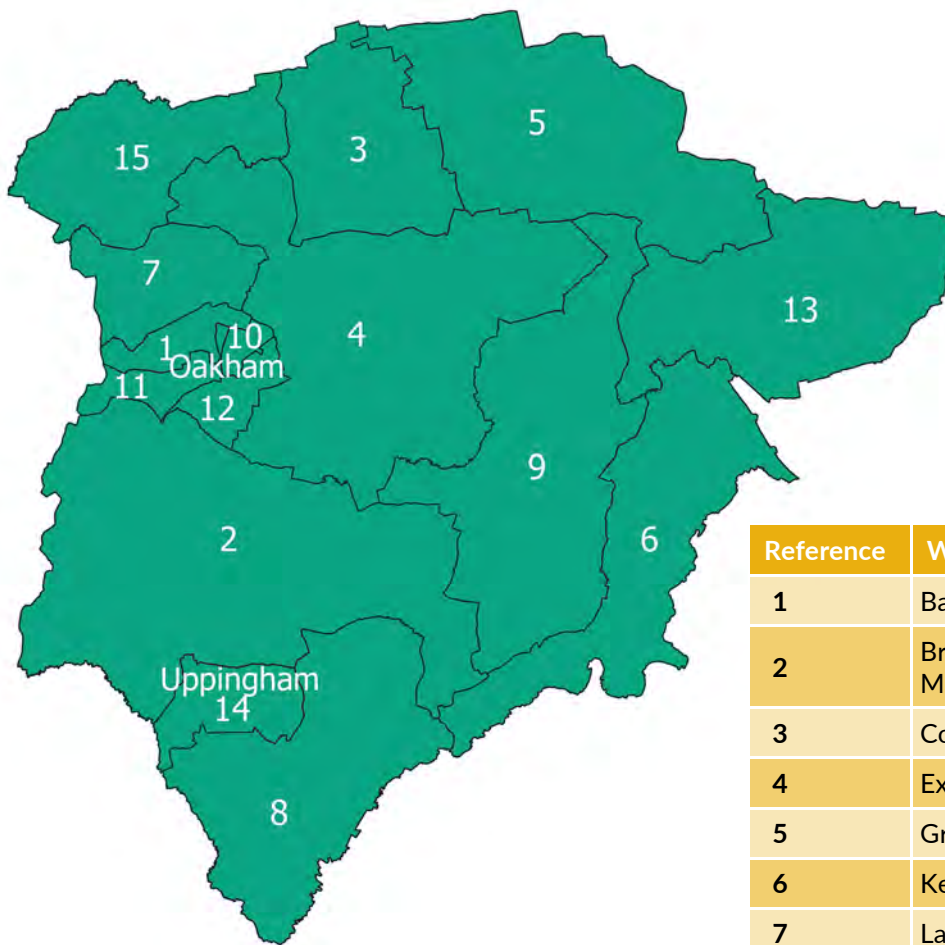
Leader of Rutland County Council



2. The county of Rutland

The historic county of Rutland is located in the East Midlands, characterised by its rural villages and the two Market Towns of Oakham and Uppingham. Rutland Water lies at the centre of the county and drives tourism and leisure in the area. Our population at the 2021 census was 41,000.

Elections will be held on 4 May 2023 for 15 County Council Wards and 54 Parishes. Each Ward has either one, two, or three Councillors elected to represent the people living in that area. The number of Councillors depends on the size of the electorate in each Ward.



Reference	Ward name	Councillors
1	Barleythorpe	2
2	Braunston & Martinsthorpe	2
3	Cottesmore	2
4	Exton	1
5	Greetham	1
6	Ketton	2
7	Langham	1
8	Lyddington	1
9	Normanton	2
10	Oakham North East	2
11	Oakham North West	2
12	Oakham South	3
13	Ryhall & Casterton	2
14	Uppingham	3
15	Whissendine	1
	Total	27

3. Rutland County Council

As a unitary Council, Rutland County Council provides a wide range of services that combine to help and support people on a daily basis.

As a County Councillor, you will be involved in decision-making, shaping policy and budget setting for these important services:

- Protecting children and vulnerable adults from abuse and harm
- Acting as a corporate parent to looked-after children
- Supporting vulnerable children at risk of poor outcomes
- Meeting adults care needs
- Collecting all types of waste and recycling from across the County
- Processing planning applications and setting long-term planning policy
- Maintaining roads, public rights of way and bridges in Rutland
- Operating libraries and a mobile library service, the County Museum and Oakham Castle
- Processing births, deaths and marriages
- Administration of Council Tax and Business Rates
- Processing and support for Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Support cases
- And much, much more...



Future Rutland – A shared vision

During 2021 Rutland County Council led an extensive community engagement exercise called ‘The Future Rutland Conversation’.

Through a range of workshops and activities we spoke to more than 2,000 residents (1 in 20) about what they value most about life here and what really matters to them. This resulted in a shared vision and a set of aspirations for the County, based on what residents had to say:

www.rutland.gov.uk/futurerutland.

Our Corporate Strategy 2022-2027

The Corporate Strategy is the Council’s overarching strategic planning document. It contains the Council’s high-level priorities based on the Future Rutland Vision, local needs, and regional and national strategies.

The current Strategy, adopted in July 2022, covers five years and lists the outcomes we aim to achieve during that time. The contents have been shaped by the Future Rutland Vision, which was coproduced with the community following an extensive engagement and consultation.

The Council’s priorities over the next five years are:

- **A Special Place:** Sustaining a vibrant rural county that harnesses the enterprise of its businesses, the ambition and creativity of its residents, and the passion of its local communities
- **Sustainable Lives:** Living sustainably and combatting the climate crisis through the power of choice, the removal of barriers, and real collective action
- **Healthy & well:** Promoting health, happiness and wellbeing for people of all ages and backgrounds
- **A county for everyone:** Celebrating diversity and ensuring everyone has the opportunity to live well, be heard and overcome any challenges they may face
- **A modern and effective Council:** Transforming the way we work to deliver effective and efficient services fit for the future

Each of the priorities includes five commitments which are underpinned by a two year delivery programme with Councillors receiving reports detailing how the Council is performing in relation to its corporate aims and objectives: www.rutland.gov.uk/corporatestrategy

Corporate projects

The Council delivers a wide range of projects to support its Corporate Strategy. To ensure that the most high-level projects are delivered successfully, we operate a Corporate Programme Management model, which is the backbone of successful project delivery.

For some Councillors, part of your role will be to get involved in these major projects. Below are just some examples of our current and recent projects:

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Special Provision

Using Department for Education capital funding to provide additional SEND facilities and local school placements for children, helping to keep children who have additional needs educated locally and reduce the funding pressure on the High Needs Budget.

Service Procurements

Major re-procurement of contracted services including waste, leisure and highways service contracts, in the Places directorate, with the intention to deliver savings where possible through more efficient contract agreements:

- **Waste Services:** The re-procurement of the collections, recycling and disposal contracts currently with numerous providers.
- **Leisure Facilities:** Rationalisation of current services being provided and to determine the service offer with which to find a new delivery partner.
- **Highways Services:** Understanding the delivery strategy and looking to procure a partner with whom to deliver the maintenance contract.



MyAccount

Developing a new online customer account system, allowing customers to raise service requests directly, while following their progress and being kept informed of resolutions. Numbers of customers registered is increasing each month, as more services are added on to the system.

Local Plan

Developing a Local Plan that will shape how and what services, housing, schools, etc. are delivered across Rutland. This is a very important project to be delivered by 2026 which will require input from Members and the public to ensure it is delivering what the County needs.

Catmose College Extension

A £5m project to extend Catmose College to increase the number of school places available for Rutland students. As demand increases, it is imperative we can offer school places to the children of Rutland.

Adult Social Care (ASC) Reforms

With the introduction of new statutory regulations around this project will look how these reforms will be implemented and the impact they will have on the staff, technology and operational processes.

New Website

The introduction of a new corporate website to enhance the user experience and improve the way the corporate information is presented to the end user. Part of the solution will entail rationalising all the information so that it is clearer and accessible for all users, in addition to offering more services online.

Corporate Business Intelligence

The development of a council-wide Business Intelligence service through the introduction of a new corporate performance process and model. This will produce easily accessible data which supports the ability to make corporate decisions based on the evidence being presented.

Transformation Programme

A project to transform the way the council operates and to increase efficiencies with a view to generating potential savings. The extent of the impact will be determined once the initial review is complete, towards the end of 2022.

4. What is a County Councillor?

The roles and responsibilities of the County Councillor include:

- Setting corporate policies which are then followed by officers
- Informed decision-making on behalf the whole community
- Scrutiny of the decisions taken by the Cabinet/Executive
- Scrutinising and helping develop policies
- Representing the ward for which you are elected
- Community leadership and engagement
- Regulatory, quasi-judicial and statutory duties

Councillors play an important part in decisions about council services and may be nominated to sit on a number of committees. Most of these Committees currently sit in the evenings:

- Full Council
- Cabinet
- Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Audit and Risk Committee
- Planning and Licensing Committee
- Employment and Appeals Committee
- Conduct Committee
- Constitution Commission



As you are elected by the public to represent a specific area within the County, one of your key roles will be listening to your community. Members of the public – your constituents – may approach you for advice or information and you will work with Council officers to resolve these queries and report back to them ([See Section 7](#)).

Equally, you will have a role in being the Council's voice and sharing information with your community. This may include directing people to specific services, explaining policies and decisions, or encouraging participation in consultations and other forms of engagement.

You may also play an active role on any Parish Councils within your area, attending meetings, informing them of developments which may affect them and helping provide information concerning the delivery of council services which may affect the community.

In some cases, you may be appointed as the Council's representative on various external bodies. Examples include:

- Representing the Council and County's interest at national and regional bodies such as the Local Government Association or East Midlands Councils
- Contributing to the governance of key public services across counties as the Council's representative on the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Fire Authority or Police and Crime Panel
- Advising relevant bodies on public rights of way on the Countryside Access Forum
- Advising on the format and delivery of religious education on the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
- Attending partnership bodies with local stakeholders, such as the Rutland Water Partnership

5. What attributes does a Councillor need?

Skills and experience

You don't need to have any specific qualifications to be a Councillor. Experience and knowledge gained through employment, raising a family, being a carer for a family member or being an active member of local groups will have equipped you with valuable life skills which will be beneficial in your new role.

If you do happen to have a specific area of knowledge or expertise, this will be of benefit. It is also important to remember that Councillors are expected to represent the diverse communities they serve and all their needs. These are just some of the skills that will help you to fulfil the role:

Decision making

Councillors at all levels will be required to make important decisions so it is important you are able to consider all the evidence before you and make sound judgements that may impact the county and its residents for years to come.

Communication

You will be expected to communicate with a variety of people including members of the public, fellow councillors and council officers through a variety of mediums. The ability to clearly communicate your own views and those of the people you represent is very important.

IT Skills

The Council is trying to reduce its costs and environmental impact and we live in a digital age where over 90% of adults now use the internet to access services such as banking, shopping and communicating. We therefore ask Councillors to work digitally as much as possible including receiving most documentation electronically, and bespoke support is available to help those who may have less experience of working digitally be able to work independently and digitally.

Local knowledge

It is very important to understand the area in which you are standing for election so that you are aware of the facilities, the views of local residents and how the area might be improved.

Confidence

You will regularly meet new people from a variety of backgrounds and organisations. You will also be expected to speak in public forums such as Council meetings and external bodies.

Integrity

You will need to be honest and trustworthy so that the public have confidence that you will do your best to deliver what you have promised, make trusted decisions, and will represent them in a way which reflects their values and ideals. This will sometimes mean that you have to manage the expectations of your community and explain why it is not always possible to deliver things in exactly the way people want.

Resilience

Local Authorities are facing financial challenges and this sometimes means that there are difficult decisions to make regarding funding services that the Council provides. These decisions will not always suit everyone and you need to be robust in your decision making and prepared to defend your stance on certain issues and provide sound and factual reasoning for why the Council has made certain decisions.

Specific knowledge gained through professional, personal or community experience, such as financial management and reporting, legal and governance requirements, health and social care or housing and regeneration will give you valuable insight. However, local government can be quite different to other sectors and you will be provided with support and training to enable you to fulfil your role.



Do you have the time?

The time you need to allocate depends on your role within the Council and the demands of your constituents. It could range from a minimum of several hours a week to a few hours a day, depending on what duties you take on. Either way, your time as a councillor will be split between your two key responsibilities, the Council and your Ward.

Council duties	Ward duties
Help form overarching policies that are then implemented by officers	Dealing with queries and complaints and working with Council Officers to resolve outstanding issues
Make or scrutinise important decisions	Explaining Council Policy and Processes
Attendance at Council meetings and reading associated papers in advance	Attending Parish Council Meetings within your Ward
Help develop the council's budget and agree the level of Council Tax	Holding Surgeries for local residents
Representing the Council on outside organisations/working groups	Representing your Ward at meetings (e.g. where decisions are being made which directly affect your local area, such as Planning Application) while having regard for relevant policies

These are just a few of the responsibilities you will have as a Councillor. You work for the people of your Ward. However, you work for them in conjunction with the Council and its officers.

Why become a Councillor?

People choose to become councillors for a variety of reasons:

- You may have specific skills and knowledge outlined in this booklet that you would like to use to benefit your community
- You may already be part of local organisation and feel that becoming a councillor would be a natural progression
- You may feel strongly about a particular issue or the well-being of your community as a whole and feel you would like the opportunity to influence decision making on these issues and others.
- You may see yourself a good spokesperson for your community and feel you could represent the views of the people living in your area
- You may want to pursue political beliefs

Do you get paid?

Councillors do not receive a salary, but they do receive a basic allowance. Sometimes, in addition to this, you may receive a special responsibility allowance for undertaking certain roles. You will also be reimbursed for specific expenses incurred while on authorised Council business, such as travel expenses and childcare fees.

Our allowances are currently under review by an Independent Panel, which is due to report in 2023.

Basic Allowance

A Basic allowance of £4,944 per annum is payable to each Councillor. This allowance is intended to recognise the time devoted by members to their Council work and to cover incidental costs.

Special Responsibility Allowance

Special Responsibility Allowances are payable to the following office holders:

Office holder	Allowance
Leader of the Council	£17,304 pa
Deputy Leader	£14,832 pa
Cabinet Members	£12,360 pa
Chair of Scrutiny Committee(s)	£7,416 pa
Chairman of the Council	£4,590 pa
Chair of Planning & Licensing Committee	£9,888 pa
Chair of Employment and Appeals Committee	£131 per meeting
Chair of Audit & Risk Committee	£6,180 pa
Leaders of Opposition Groups	£1,000 split proportionally

6. Training and development

Regardless of the skills and attributes you bring, it's likely you will have a lot to learn about the workings of local government. Don't worry, you will be supported by the Council through an induction programme and ongoing development plans to ensure that you have the skills and training you need to fulfil your role as a councillor.

Some training will be compulsory depending on the roles you undertake but most training will be available to all Councillors regardless of role. Some examples of training the Council organise include:

- Meetings Procedures
- Code of Conduct
- Committee-based training (Planning, Audit & Risk, Employment & Appeals)
- Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding Children
- Chairing and facilitation skills
- IT Training
- The Role of Scrutiny

All Councillors are also automatically entitled to free training and development courses from regional and national bodies, while all Councillors can access the Local Government Association's free e-learning platform. If you are elected as a representative of a national political party, they will also provide a number of training courses.

You will receive regular updates and information about training opportunities and you will be able to choose courses that you think will help you to develop in your role as a Councillor.

7. Support for Councillors

The Council's Governance Team provide support to elected Members on matters, including:

- Provision of papers and support for Chairs at public meetings
- Supporting in logging and implementation of actions requested at meetings
- Advice on constitutional processes
- Processing of expenses claims

All Councillors are also automatically entitled to free training and development courses from regional and national bodies, while all Councillors can access the Local Government Association's free e-learning platform. If you are elected as a representative of a national political party, they will also provide a number of training courses.

You will receive regular updates and information on available training opportunities available and you will be able to choose course that you think will enable you to develop into your role as a Councillor.



8. Who can become a Councillor?

There are some conditions and criteria which you must meet if you want to be a Councillor:

- You must be aged 18 or over and a be a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of any European Union state
- You must meet at least one of the following four qualifications:
 1. You are registered as an elector for the area in which you wish to stand from the day of your nomination onwards
 2. You have lived in the local authority area for a whole 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election
 3. The local authority area has been your main or only place of work for the 12 months before your nomination and the day of election
 4. You have lived in the local authority area for the whole 12 months before your nomination and the day of election

You cannot stand for election if:

- You are employed by the local authority or hold a paid office under the authority (including joint boards or committees)
- You hold a politically restricted post for another authority
- You are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order
- You are the mayor for a combined authority area that includes the local authority
- You have received a prison sentence of three months or more (including a suspended sentence) in the five years before polling day
- You have been disqualified under the Representation of the People Act 1983 (which covers corrupt or illegal electoral practices)
- You are subject to the notification requirement of or under Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003

Political Parties

You can either stand as an independent or a party-political candidate. So, you do not have to be a member of a political party to stand for election as a councillor. You can stand as an independent which means you have no affiliation with any party.

9. Next steps

If you make the decision to stand, you will need to make sure you are officially nominated.

You will need to request a nomination pack by contacting the Council's Elections Team. These will be available to collect from early March 2023. You will need to have your nomination papers signed by two electors who are registered in the Ward where you wish to stand. All documents must be submitted 19 working days before the day of the election.

The Elections Team are also on hand to answer any queries you may have about nominations and the electoral process.

Contact us

Website: www.rutland.gov.uk/elections
Phone: 01572 758 385 or 01572 720 907
Email: elections@rutland.gov.uk
Address: Electoral Services
Rutland County Council
Catmose
Oakham
Rutland, LE15 6HP

Our Governance Team can answer any queries you may have on the role of a Councillor or any other information in this booklet.

Website: www.rutland.gov.uk/governance
Phone: 01572 722 577
Email: governance@rutland.gov.uk
Address: Governance Team
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