# Do you want to be a councillor? Do you want to find out what councillors do?

Councillor Andrew Cooper Kirklees Council & Regional Campaigns Co-ordinator



## Who is this?



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## **Sheffield City Council**

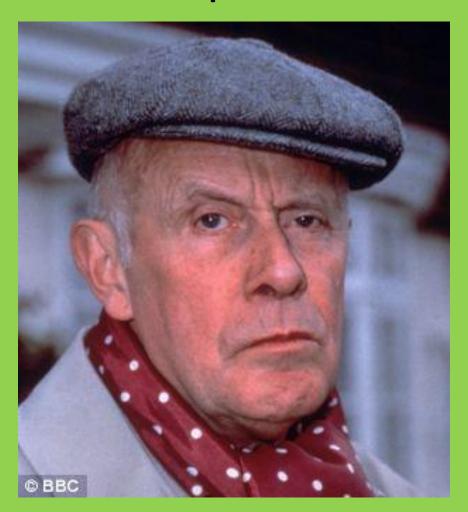
- 84 Councillors in 28 Wards (3 Councillors/ward)
- Elected for a 4 year term in 1/3rds
- But not in 2016 All out elections
- Labour 59
- Lib Dems 17
- Green Party 4
- UKIP 4
- Labour in overall control
- Strong Leader and Cabinet Model



## Where does Sheffield City Council's money come from?

- £1.429 Billion Budget
- Approx £1 Billion allocated
- Central Government 54%
- Business rates 8%
- Council Tax 12%
- Charges e.g rents, parking etc 26%

## "I pay full Council Tax and all I get is my bin emptied!!!!"



## Responsibilities of Sheffield City Council

- Education
- Social services Adult Social Care!
- Planning
- Waste disposal & recycling and collection
- Trading standards
- Emergency planning
- Roads, highways, streetlighting & transportation
- Housing
- Environmental Health
- Library Services
- Parks, open spaces and countryside
- Public Health

## The Council/Municipal Year

- February Budget Setting
- April 'Purdah'
- May Local Elections (3 years out of 4)
- May Annual Council meeting
- Summer ZZZZZZZZZ!
- Autumn Budget Preparation











#### What can Green Councillors achieve?

- Free Insulation to 60,000 households
- 2000 council homes with solar panels installed
- Investments in Allotments
- Abolition of Party Conference expenses for Councillors
- Banning Flying Lanterns on Council Land
- Establishing 'Passivhaus' as the standard for building on Council owned land.
- A Living Wage Council

## What sort of Councillor are you? What sort of Councillor could you be?

- Caseworker Every Councillor is a caseworker
- Policy Lead on a particular policy area e.g. shadowing a Cabinet member
- Scrutiny Councillor working on a Scrutiny panel in a particular area of work
- Community Activist issue based protecting land from development, supporting community groups, developing community facilities

## What sort of Councillor are you? What sort of Councillor could you be?

- Planning Committee Cllr member of committee or representing objectors/supporters
- Local Party Liaison ensuring the Council Group & local party have good lines of communication
- Party Group Spokesperson representing the Green Party Council group to the media
- Convenor/Leader self explanatory style of leadership
- Business Manager used to be called the whip –
  handling membership of committees, administrative
  issues associated with the Group
- Cross Party Relationship Builder Working with others cross party to achieve progress

#### **Casework - Why is it important?**

- It is the job! It is the basics. It has to be done.
- People like to feel that if they get what they want or if they don't that they have had their 'best shot' at resolving a matter.
- It is the Councillor role to give them their best shot.

#### Where does casework come from

- Local residents contacting us telephone/email/letter/in person
- Response to newsletters
- Advice Surgeries
- Casework Canvassing
- Election canvassing

#### How should casework be dealt with?

- Go round and see them? Take a photo!
- Email and/or phone officers with the issue. Which works best with which officer?
- Send copy of email/letter to the resident to show you have dealt with their issue e.g. an email to a Council officer raising their
- Send copy of response/phone the resident
- Build up a casework database
- Info for future newsletters if appropriate

### **Casework - Range of issues**

- Personal neighbour disputes, benefits issues, bins, applications for housing, planning
- Community issues litter, lack of facilities, potholes street lights out
- Policy issues issues with Council policies e.g. planning, housing allocations

## Facilities and Allowanness available for Councillors

Sheffield City Councillor

## Role of Lead Cllrs and ward budgets & what they can be used for

Sheffield City Councillor

## A Growing Green Group on Sheffield City Council

Influence!

Power!

Control!

## A Growing Green Party Group influence, control & power

- Lone Councillor
  - Small Group
  - Large Group
  - Hung Council
- Principal Opposition
  - Minority Control
  - Majority Control

#### A lone Councillor

- A voice on the Council
- Status and recognition
- Media Interest
- Demonstrably NOT a 'Wasted Vote'
- Possibility of isolation on the Council
- No guarantee motions to Council, amendments to Council Budget will be seconded
- Green Cllr is regarded as a 'one off' or the result of a personal vote.



### **A Small Group**

- 2 members = Group status!
- Not a 'flash in the pan'
- Motions seconded –
   Guaranteed!
- Budget Amendments seconded
- Leader (20% rule 17 members)
- Still a 'one or two ward party'



### A large group

- Beyond a 'one Ward' party
- No 'Whipping' in the Green Party
- More co-ordination needed
- Sharing out
   'Spokesperson/shadowing' roles
- Group consensus decision making
- Examples Bristol,
   Norwich



## **Green Party role in a Hung Council**

- What do you want?
- Joint Shared Administration?
- Cabinet positions?
- Confidence and supply support to a minority administration with no Cabinet positions.
- Key support points Election of Leader of the Council
   & Budget Council
- Kirklees Council 2000 to present



### **Principal Opposition**

- Cabinet in waiting?
- Green Policies will need to be geared around the possibility of running the Council in the near future
- First point of call for the media wanting an alternative view
- Political temperature in Council meetings will be higher
- Solihull 9 Green Councillors



### **Minority Control**

- Brighton
- Are you the largest Group?
- Pressures & Group cohesion
- Hostile and constructive opposition
- Is minority control worth it?
- What can you achieve?
- What are the risks?



### **Control with a majority**

- In Sheffield that means 43 Councillors
- Major shift in support from the Labour Party to the Green Party required
- Manifestoes should always be prepared as if you are going to have a majority

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