

## **Role of the Clerk**

The clerk is the 'Proper Officer' of the council in law.

The clerk is a vital team member providing legal and financial advice and information to support the council's decisions.

The agenda is the clerk's responsibility. The clerk must sign the agenda and can decide how it will be set out. This process is often undertaken in consultation with the chairman. You may ask the clerk to add items to the agenda if you feel a relevant subject should be discussed.

The clerk writes the minutes as a legal record of what was decided at the meeting. It is important that the minutes are accurate and therefore the minutes of the last meeting are confirmed and signed at the start of the next meeting.

The clerk provides advice and administrative support, and takes action to implement council decisions.

The clerk may have to act as a project manager, personnel director, public relations officer or finance administrator.

The clerk can also be the Responsible Financial Officer (but does not have to be).

The clerk is not just a secretary and is not at the beck and call of the chairman or other councillors; the clerk is answerable only to the council as a whole.

Legally councils can agree to delegate certain decisions to clerks because they are professional officers whose independence allows them to act on behalf of the council.

The best councils will have a clerk and councillors who work as a team to provide a service for the community.

## **Role of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)**

The RFO is a separate role to that of the clerk with responsibility to support the council with its financial affairs. Tasks will include the management of the cash book and financial records, the preparation of the budget and management, work within agreed internal financial controls, sign the annual accounts of the council, formulate Financial Risk Assessments, management of bank accounts and reserves and to liaise with internal and external auditors.