MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PANEL

THURSDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2007
7.30 PM

PANEL AGENDA (STANDARDS)

**COMMITTEE ROOM 3
HARROW CIVIC CENTRE**

MEMBERSHIP (Quorum 3)	
Chair: Councillor Jean Lammiman	
	Councillors:
Paul Osborn	B E Gate Phillip O'Dell

Reserve Members:
1. Mrs Myra Michael   1. Keeki Thammaiah
2. Mrs Vina Mithani   2. David Perry

**Issued by the Democratic Services Section,
Legal and Governance Services Department**

Contact: Frouke de Vries, Democratic Services Officer
Tel: 020 8424 1785 E-mail: frouke.devries@harrow.gov.uk

AGENDA - PART I

1. **Appointment of Chairman:**
   To note the appointment of Councillor Jean Lammiman at the Standards Committee meeting on 11 September 2007 as Chairman of the Member Development Panel for the Municipal Year 2007/2008.

2. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**
   To note the attendance at this meeting of any duly appointed Reserve Members.

   Reserve Members may attend meetings:-

   (i)   to take the place of an ordinary Member for whom they are a reserve;
   (ii)   where the ordinary Member will be absent for the <u>whole</u> of the meeting; and
   (iii)   the meeting notes at the start of the meeting at the item 'Reserves' that the Reserve Member is or will be attending as a reserve;
   (iv)   if a Reserve Member whose intention to attend has been noted arrives after the commencement of the meeting, then that Reserve Member can only act as a Member from the start of the next item of business on the agenda after his/her arrival.

3. **Declarations of Interest:**
   To receive declarations of personal or prejudicial interests, arising from business to be transacted at this meeting, from:

   (a)   all Members of the Committee, Sub Committee, Panel or Forum;
   (b)   all other Members present in any part of the room or chamber.

4. **Arrangement of Agenda:**
   To consider whether any of the items listed on the agenda should be considered with the press and public excluded on the grounds that it is thought likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, that there would be disclosure of confidential information in breach of an obligation of confidence or of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

5. **Appointment of Vice-Chairman:**
   To appoint a Vice-Chairman of the Member Development Panel for the Municipal Year 2007/2008.

Enc.   6. **Minutes:** (Pages 1 - 4)
   That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2007 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

7. **Public Questions:**
   To receive questions (if any) from local residents or organisations under the provisions of Committee Procedure Rule 19 (Part 4B of the Constitution).

8. **Petitions:**
   To receive petitions (if any) submitted by members of the public/Councillors under the provisions of Committee Procedure Rule 16 (Part 4B of the Constitution).

9. **Deputations:**
   To receive deputations (if any) under the provisions of Committee Procedure Rule 17 (Part 4B of the Constitution).

Enc. 10. **Terms of Reference:** (Pages 5 - 6)
   To note the Panel's Terms of Reference.

Enc. 11. **Member Development Programme Progress 2007 and Planning 2008:** (Pages 7 - 48)
   Report of the Interim Divisional Director Human Resources and Development.

   AGENDA - PART II - NIL

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MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PANEL   17 APRIL 2007

Chairman: * Councillor Jean Lammiman

Councillors: B E Gate   * Paul Osborn
                   * Phillip O'Dell

* Denotes Member present

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL

PART II - MINUTES

24.   **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

       RESOLVED: To note that there were no Reserve Members in attendance at this meeting.

25.   **Declarations of Interest:**

       RESOLVED: To note that there were no declarations of interests made by Members in relation to the business transacted at this meeting.

26.   **Arrangement of Agenda:**

       RESOLVED: That (1) in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the following additional documents be admitted late to the agenda by virtue of the special circumstances and grounds for urgency detailed below:-

Agenda item	Special Circumstances / Grounds for Urgency
9. Member Development Programme 2007: (i) Learning and Development Newsletter (ii) Training Evaluation Results (iii) Training Evaluation Form	These documents were not available at the time the agenda was printed and circulated. Members were requested to consider these items, as a matter of urgency.

       (2) all items be considered with the press and public present.

27.   **Minutes:**

       RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings held on 13 September and 16 November 2006 be taken as read and signed as correct records.

28.   **Public Questions:**

       RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were put at the meeting under the provisions of Committee Procedure Rule 19.

29.   **Petitions:**

       RESOLVED: To note that no petitions were received at the meeting under the provisions of Committee Procedure Rule 16.

30.   **Deputations:**

       RESOLVED: To note that no deputations were received at the meeting under the provisions of Committee Procedure Rule 17.

31.   **Final Report of the Light Touch Review of the Education of Looked After Children – Reference from the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee Meeting held on 18 October 2006:**
       The Panel received a reference from the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting held on 18 October 2006, which suggested that a Member seminar on corporate parenting should be organised.

A Member noted that an invitation for the Corporate Parenting meeting had been sent out and stated that the full Council should be involved in corporate parenting.

Members asked the relevant officer to organise an event for Members regarding corporate parenting and to liaise with the Corporate Parenting Panel for input on the training. The officer confirmed she would report any progress at the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That (1) the reference be noted;

(2) an event on corporate parenting be organised and the Corporate Parenting Panel be consulted to provide input into this event.

32. **Review of Whistleblowing Policy - Reference from the Standards Committee Meeting held on 5 December 2006:**
The Panel considered a reference from the Standards Committee, further to that Committee's consideration of the review of the Whistleblowing Policy at its meeting on 5 December 2006.

RESOLVED: That the Whistleblowing Policy be incorporated into the Code of Conduct training.

33. **Question and Answer Session with the Portfolio Holder for People First – Children's Services and the Portfolio Holder for Legal Services - Reference from the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee Meeting held on 9 January 2007:**
Further to the question and answer session with Portfolio Holders that had taken place at the Special Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting on 9 January 2007, the Panel received a reference from that meeting which advised of discussions on anti-social behaviour in the bus station.

RESOLVED: That this issue, which had been incorporated in the action learning event for Members held on 6 February 2007, be noted.

34. **Member Development Programme 2007:**
An officer introduced a report of the Director of People, Policy and Performance, which outlined the Member Development Programme for 2007.

Following the action learning event "Help to reduce your fear of crime" held on 6 February 2007, the officer was looking to develop two further events for this year, and tabled a newsletter on the event held on 6 February 2007. The purpose of the events was to develop Members' skills in an interactive way, and ideas were sought from the Panel as to how to achieve this.

The Panel discussed the topic for the next action learning event and suggested that training activity on identifying trends in data and Management Information Systems ought to be included. The officer indicated that the events would challenge Members and advised that the set-up would be similar to the event held on 6 February 2007. The Panel asked the officer to invite engaging and challenging guest speakers to each event, who had expertise in the area being discussed.

A Member expressed concern that Cabinet Member training should be a high priority and mandatory, and suggested that training ought to be provided prior to official appointments. The Chairman suggested that the Chairman of Cabinet could identify Portfolio Holders' needs and notify the Learning and Development Team. Responding, the officer reported that the Harrow Leadership and Management Programme would provide leadership development for Members of the Cabinet. It was suggested that this programme should also cover succession planning for future Cabinet Members.

A Member stated that at present there was no training provided on finance in the mandatory Member training. The officer explained that a finance training session had taken place this year, but that it could as a contingency measure be part of the mandatory training package. Members suggested organising a separate mandatory finance training for all Members in June and an action learning event covering finance in November 2007. It was emphasised that the event ought to be made inviting in order to attract Members.

The officer tabled an evaluation report of learning events from the previous year. The Panel inquired if an evaluation had taken place following the event held on 6 February 2007.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Panel would not take place until September and it was queried whether an official meeting was needed before summer to discuss

the workplan and its timetable. The Panel agreed that it would be difficult to schedule a meeting and it would be better to liaise informally.

RESOLVED: That (1) an interim mandatory finance training session be held in June 2007;

(2) an action learning event covering performance and improvement be arranged in May/June 2007;

(3) an event on finance be arranged for November 2007 for all Members of Council;

(4) an evaluation form be distributed to attendees of the action learning event held on 6 February 2007 and results of which would be reported back to the Panel.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 6.05 pm, closed at 7.25 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR JEAN LAMMIMAN
Chairman

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MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PANEL

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Member Development Panel will have the following powers and duties:

(a)   to have oversight of the annual programme of member development;

(b)   to prepare and assist in the delivery of the induction of new Councillors following the Borough elections or any by-election;

(c)   to have oversight of the resources allocated for member development and make recommendations to Council for the appropriate resources for the member development function;

(d)   to liaise with external agencies providing development opportunities for members and procure their services as appropriate.

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*Harrow*COUNCIL
—— LONDON ——

Meeting:	Member Development Panel
Date:	15th November 2007
Subject:	Member development Programme
Key Decision: (Executive-side only)	No
Responsible Officer:	Interim Divisional Director Human Resources and Development
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Chris Mote
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	IDEA councillor competency framework

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report reviews the progress of the 2007 member development programme and sets out the proposals for the member development programme for 2008 for elected members.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
The Panel is requested to:
Note the progress of the 2007/8 programme and the development activity associated with the development of the programme for 2008/9

REASON: The programme is designed to meet the learning and development needs of elected members in the light of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment and Joint Assessment Review feedback, as part of the improvement plan and performance development.

Section 2 – Report

1. 2007/08 Member Development Plan

The Member Development Strategy and programme is key to achieving the Council's vision and corporate priorities, and to building capacity in community leadership, and in leading service improvement. Following the Member Development Panel April 2007 a five-strand member development programme was developed of:

- **Mandatory Training sessions-** to provide members with the awareness and skills to carry out specific statutory duties.
- **Quarterly Briefing sessions-** to provide an opportunity for members and officers to discuss current local issues across the council, the borough and local government. These sessions offer the chance to develop new member/officer relationships and signpost members to further information and support.
- **Action Learning Events** to be scheduled every four months to cover key Development needs related to performance, service planning and service Delivery
- **E-learning modules**
  This modern councillor package has been developed by learning pool as support for councillors in their role. There are 20 modules that can be completed electronically by members to offer guidance and answer any question.
- **1:1 Coaching Sessions**
  1:1 coaching sessions in order to identify individual training needs analysis.

2. Progress to Date

The following events have taken place since May 07.

Mandatory Training		
Date	**Module**	**No. Of Attendees**
30th May 2007	Code of Conduct	27
25th June 2007	Code of Conduct	20
11th July 2007	Planning – Telephone Masts	10
23rd July 2007	Planning – Design & Access Statement	5
26th July 2007	Licensing	5
31st July 2007	Gambling	6
4th October	Corporate Parenting	9
Quarterly Briefings		
Date	**Agenda**	**No. Of Attendees**
19th June	- Financial Awareness - Managing Risk *Economic Development Strategy* - Consultation: Community Development Strategy	7
11th September	- Data Quality - Strategic Housing - LDD Strategy - Health and Safety Service - Policy & Partnership - Data Quality	12

One to one coaching

In June 2006 information was gathered from members on their specific training requirements, these included:

The members role, including:

- Representing the Council on outside bodies, Community Leadership, the constituency role and dealing effectively with constituency problems, role in scrutiny, role in Development Control and Planning

The general skills required, including:
- IT training, chairing meetings, report writing, managing paperwork and information

Legal requirements and council rules including:
- Issues pertaining to "Enforcements", Finance, Performance monitoring and data quality management, Freedom of Information, HR Management (Chief Officers Panel)

Developments in local government including:
- Government Policy for Local Government (white paper)
- Inspection regimes including Corporate Assessment and JAR

Developments in Harrow including:
- Harrow Strategic Partnership, Communications
- Information on how the Council Departments work

In order to explore these and other needs more fully and to prioritise accordingly, the Roffey Park Institute has been selected to carry out the one to one coaching sessions with all Councillors. Each councillor will meet with a Personal Leadership Development coach from Roffey Park to gather individual development plans that can be fed into a generic Training Needs Analyses for all councillors. This will form the basis of the Member Development additional training 2008/9.

3. Evaluation of events

3.1 Quarterly Briefings

Councillors evaluated the September session. Members made the following comments:

1. What did you learn/ what went well?
   - Diverse range of questions
   - Balance of issues-questions & listening
   - Members were up-to- date with current issues
   - Range of presentations
   - Good handouts
   - Meeting new officers-networking
   - Good to learn about funding
   - Quality of officers was high
2. What do you need to know more about?
   - Information on Harrow Strategic Partnership
   - More information on Local Area Agreement
   - Budget/funding formula
   - Population formula
   - New targets

3. What did not go so well?
   - Hard to get through volume of issues in 2hours
   - Need to focus on specific subjects
   - Fewer subjects in 2hours

Using this information, only 5 host tables will be included in the final Quarterly Briefing this year.

3.2   Mandatory Training
A full evaluation of the mandatory training programme will take place after the last training session in November 2007.

3.3   Action learning
Responses to the evaluation of the event held on the 6th February "How will you reassure people and help reduce the fear of crime" were very positive. The councillors were asked three questions. Responses are summarised below.

1. What did you learn?
   - The session highlighted the importance of communication between councillors and police officers in addressing crime together and appreciating how influential councillors and officers can be.
   - Also individual councillors need to have more information and knowledge to enable them to engage further and more directly with residents.
   - Councillors need to do more work with schools to help tackle youth discipline and boredom.
2. What do you need to know more about?
   - Partnership working
   - Local perceptions of fear of crime and the council
   - Success stories that we can use as a catalyst for change
   - Identify the most important problems in each ward
   - How to create close liaison and information exchange between police and the council
   - How we get up to date information and statistics published in Harrow People Magazine
   - Learning more about people and other roles
   - How to conduct community engagement
   - Local statistics on crime and fear of crime
3. What would you like to do next?
   - We want to help make Harrow the safest borough in the country
   - We want street repairs conducted in order of importance
   - We want to find out what people want done about congestion
   - We want to follow up on this event so we can say what we've done 6 months on from now
   - We want more of the same events!
   - We want a report back on the outcomes and achievements from tonight's session

4. Budget and Spend to date

Date	Company	Description	Authorisation	Amount
12/07/2007	Engineered Communications Solutions	Mandatory planning Training Course	Frank Stocks	1773.36
29/05/2007	Learning Pool	E-learning package for	Lindsey Kelham	1480.50

		councillors		
05/10/07	LGIU	Dealing with casework seminar	Jon Turner	352.50
Various dates	Internal printing and catering	Action learning and mandatory training sessions	Lindsey Kelham	300.00
15/08/2007	Roffey Park (Raised Order)	1:1 Coaching for councillors	Lindsey Kelham	23,850
				27.756
Remaining Budget £22,244				

The programme for 2007 and development of the 2008 programme will be contained within the budget for 2007/8

5. Continued Activity for Member Development 2007/08

5.1 Mandatory Training
Two further training sessions are planned on the code of conduct. The 1st November and a further session at a convenient time in December

5.2 Quarterly Briefings
The final briefing is planned for the 4[th]of December, Committee Rooms 1&2 6.30-8.30pm. The agenda will cover Current HR issues, Strategic Housing, External Funding, E-Learning (A representative from Learning Pool will be attending the Member's Quarterly Briefing on 4th December 2007 to discuss this further with councillors) and Legal Governance

5.3 e-Learning
Over 64% of all councils in England have signed up to bite sized e-learning designed by learning pool on today's hot topics, specially designed just for elected Members. Members will be introduced to these Learning Pool e-learning programmes at the December briefing.

6. **Planning for the 2008/09**

6.1 Initial programme

The programme for 2008/9 is underway and will continue to build on the 5-strand approach adopted for 2007/8:
- Mandatory training
- Quarterly briefing sessions
- Action Learning events
- E-learning
- A programme to meet identified individual needs

The programme will be largely provided through in-house speakers and will minimise costs wherever possible, largely around catering, accommodation, equipment and printing costs. However external speakers will be sought where appropriate.

Initial plans for the member development programme are outlined in overleaf

EVENT	DATES	PROVIDER		DETAILS	COST
		In-house	**External**		
Mandatory Training					**Officer Time**
Code of Conduct	TBC	Organised internally-lead by Senior Officers		Ethical standards framework	
Recruitment & Selection	TBC	Organised internally-lead by Senior Officers		Council's recruitment & selection process	
Harrow Strategic Partnership	TBC	Organised internally-lead by Senior Officers		To develop a common understanding of Harrow's Local Area Agreement	
Scrutiny	TBC	Organised internally-lead by Senior Officers		Session to complement Scrutiny member development programme.	
Disciplinary & Grievance	TBC	Organised internally-lead by Senior Officers		Statutory framework & Council's procedures	
Planning – Telephone Masts	TBC	Organised internally-lead by Senior Officers		Purpose, legal framework, Member's role	
Planning – Design & Access Statement	TBC	Organised internally-lead by Senior Officers		Purpose, legal framework, Member's role	
Licensing	TBC	Organised internally-lead by Senior Officers		Licensing Act, role of Committee & panel	
Gambling	TBC	Organised internally-lead by Senior Officers		Gambling Act, role of Committee & panel	
Members Quarterly Briefings	The event is informal and is designed to encourage members and officers to discuss current issues informally, develop new member/officer relationships and to sign post members to further information and support.				Officer Time
1st Quarter	5/3/08 6.30-8.30pm	Organised internally-hosted by Senior Officers		**AGENDA TBC**	
2nd Quarter	4 / 6/08 6.30-8.30pm	Organised internally-hosted by Senior Officers		**AGENDA TBC**	
3rd Quarter	3 /9/08 6.30-8.30pm	Organised internally-hosted by Senior Officers		**AGENDA TBC**	
4th Quarter	3 /12/08 6.30-8.30pm	Organised internally-hosted by Senior Officers		**AGENDA TBC**	
E-Learning Modules	Completed in Councillors own time. 20 separate courses each lasting approx 30min.		Designed to be easy to use the courses are short and engaging, typically lasting 30 minutes and consisting of separate modules. The content is structured like this to allow Councillors to dip in and out of a course as their schedules permit.		Total Cost £1485.50
Action Learning Events	These cover key development needs related to performance, service planning and service delivery and are joint events with senior officers				
	April		External speaker	TBC	
	August		External speaker	TBC	

6.2 **Competencies and Appraisal processes**

A competency framework and review process for members will be put in place in order for individual members to gain most from their one to one coaching sessions. This process is adopted widely by other local authorities with positive outcomes.

The IDEA have developed a national framework for Councillors (attached as Appendix 1) The Chief Executive and Leader have requested that Roffey Park develop a framework for Harrow prior to the one to one coaching sessions taking place. ,

The framework is designed to:
- Help Councillors become increasingly effective as they understand in depth what is required of the ever developing role
- Provide councillors with an opportunity to take stock of how they are doing in relation to those requirements
- Provide councillors with the knowledge and skills they need to keep abreast of the requirements of the role.

It is proposed that members will take stock through a process of self-assessment, supported by the assessment of those they work with. Following that assessment, the one to one coaching sessions would work with individual members to build personal development plans. Shared needs, identified by Roffey Park, would be used to build member development plan for 2008/9.

As part of the development of the approach, it is proposed that a pilot of a group of 15 members take part in the assessment process during January and February 2007, to be evaluated in March / April and finalised for full implementation for other members in May 2007.

7. Budget

The 2008/9 programme will be contained within the members learning and development budget for 2008/9.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name:…Sheela Thakrar………………	x	On behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: …1/11/2007……………………………..		
Name: Jill Travers	x	On behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 1/11/2007……………………………..		

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

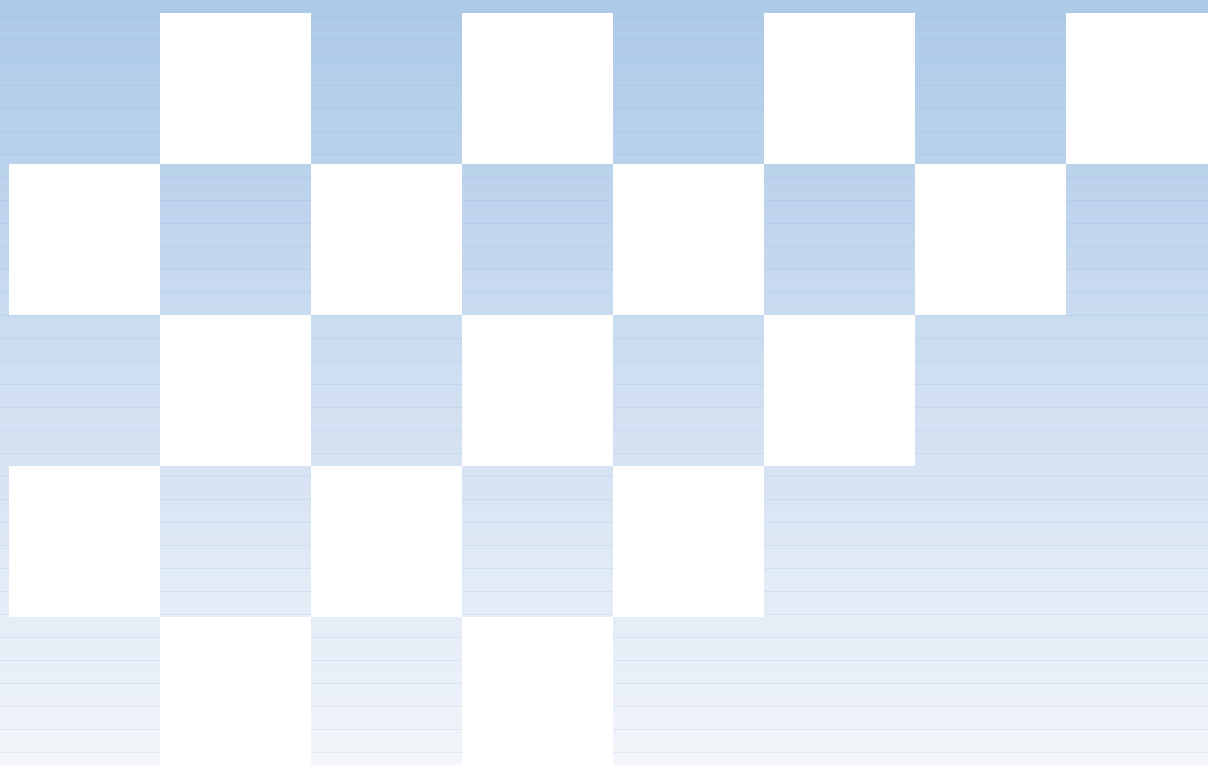Contact: Maggie Rees, Interim Learning and Development Manager, 0208 424 1130

Background Papers: Member Development Panel Report April 2007

If appropriate, does the report include the following considerations?

1.	Consultation	NO
2.	Corporate Priorities	YES

I&DeA

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the political skills framework
a councillor's toolkit

Created by Professor Jo Silvester for

the Improvement and Development Agency

contents

introduction

Welcome to Version 2 of the Political Skills Framework. After its first phase of development some three years ago we were absolutely astonished at its acceptance and impact. It was the first time that councillors from all political parties and types of councils had sat down with us to really analyse what the role involves in its different components, and we were really keen to produce a framework which was flexible, useful and easy to understand. Councils and councillors all over the country have now used it in a number of different ways and tell us that it has been beneficial.

What we also realised of course is that being a councillor is the only role in which however high up you are promoted, to cabinet or scrutiny chair or leader of the council, you still have to undertake all the parts of the role you started with and forget the local leadership, political understanding and good communication at your peril as far as the electorate is concerned.

While we all, as councillors, want to do a good job for our communities, we can all point to examples where our behaviour or that of colleagues seems to have had the opposite effect. Some councils spend time absorbing lots of councillor and officer energy in petty local squabbles. This is often not because the councillors are ill intentioned but because they are not considering the practical outcome of their behaviour.

3

The new, revamped Political Skills Framework takes into account feedback from our evaluation of how the original version has been used as a development tool for frontline councillors. It also includes examples of ways in which it can be used, and the benefits of using it for your individual, group or whole council learning.

We hope you will find it useful.

Judi Billing
Head of National Leadership, IDeA

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what is the political skills framework and why was it developed?

To be effective in any job you need to know what is required of you and have the knowledge and skills to achieve it. Teachers, doctors, plumbers and chief executives are not born with the knowledge and skills they need for their jobs – these are learnt, practised and improved over time.

Surprisingly little attention has been paid to the knowledge and skills required by local councillors despite their role being one of the most complex in politics or the wider work context. It is certainly more complicated than that of Member of Parliament. The local councillor role has also gone through many changes and continues to evolve. There is therefore a growing need to support new and experienced councillors in their efforts to develop the knowledge and skills they need to be effective.

Two years ago the Work Psychology Partnership worked with the IDeA to identify and map the core skills required by councillors. We set up an advisory group, conducted 45 critical incident interviews and held focus groups with senior officers, politicians and visionaries. We validated our findings by surveying more than 350 politicians and officers from all political parties and types of council.

The result was the Political Skills Framework [PSF] and a copy was sent to all local authorities with the aim of supporting development opportunities for councillors and ultimately of attracting new 'members of talent'.

4

two years on – evaluating the political skills framework

Two years after the PSF was launched, we conducted a review of how and where it has been used in local authorities, explored what users like – and do not like – about the PSF, and determined how it can be improved. We talked to many different groups including politicians and officers, local authorities, and other local government organisations using the PSF, such as the North East Improvement Board, the Local Government Information Unit and the South East Employers' Organisation.

5

We found that a substantial culture change had happened in attitudes towards political roles and how they are carried out. This included growing recognition of the need for training and development among councillors themselves. We also found that there was widespread support for the PSF, plus evidence of it being used in different ways by different user groups – such as self-review materials, training needs analysis, 360-review systems, structured mentoring programmes, development centres, personal development plans, induction programmes and learning materials.

Nearly all those interviewed said they would like to see wider use of the PSF. They also wanted more information about how it could be used together with tools they could use in their own councils. Many pointed out that the Local Government White Paper, published in November 2006, described new responsibilities for councillors including place shaping, community cohesion and engaging hard to reach groups. All of this led us to review the original PSF to bring it closer in line with what users need.

the toolkit

As a consequence of our review we have created this toolkit to support councillors and those working with them to review and support individual development needs. The toolkit contains:

- a revised, easy-to-access political skills framework that takes account of the changes in councillors roles since 2004 and incorporates recent thinking from the White Paper

- background information about the PSF and how it can be used by councillors themselves, or by others supporting member development

- examples of how the PSF has been used by councils to create their own development processes to meet unique local needs

- personal learning reviews based on each of the PSF skill sets that can be used by councillors to identify their own areas of strength and areas for development.

six core skills
for councillors

There are six core skill areas that apply to all councillors, with more for cabinet members and leaders. This toolkit focuses on the first six core skill areas. They are defined as:

- **local leadership**
  characteristics: engages enthusiastically and empathetically with the community in order to learn, understand and act upon issues of local concern. Mediates fairly and constructively, encouraging trust by representing all sections of the community

- **partnership working**
  characteristics: builds positive relationships by making others feel valued, trusted and included, and by working collaboratively to achieve goals. Maintains calm and focus, recognises when to delegate or provide support, and is able to take a long-term view in developing partnerships

- **communication skills**
  characteristics: listens sensitively, uses appropriate language and checks for understanding. Communicates regularly with individuals and groups in the community, speaks clearly and confidently in public and makes sure that people are informed

- **political understanding**
  characteristics: acts ethically, consistently and with integrity when communicating values or representing group views in decision-making or actions. Works across group boundaries without compromising values or ethics

- **scrutiny and challenge**
  characteristics: acts as a critical friend by seeking opportunities for scrutiny and providing constructive feedback. Analyses information quickly and presents arguments in a concise, meaningful and easily accessible way

- **regulating and monitoring**
  characteristics: understands and executes judicial role by following protocol, adhering to the coed of conduct, evaluating arguments and making decisions that balance public needs and local policy. Ensures progress by monitoring and intervening where necessary.

positive and negative indicators

The skill set definitions show what is expected of councillors if they are to be effective and influential representatives of the electorate. We recognise that there is no 'one best way' to be a councillor – after all, we don't want councillors to be clones of one another. While one member may approach the role of community leader in a different way from another, the comments of more than 350 members and officers have allowed us to identify commonly held views about what actions are associated with good and bad councillor behaviour.

We have included these as Positive, desirable characteristics and Negative, undesirable characteristics for each of the skill sets. No member could be expected to demonstrate excellent levels of Positive behaviours all the time, but excellent councillors would be expected to demonstrate many more Positive than Negative characteristics.

The key aim is to achieve a shared understanding of what constitutes excellent councillor performance and to help councillors and those who work with them to communicate and celebrate this with the wider community.

8
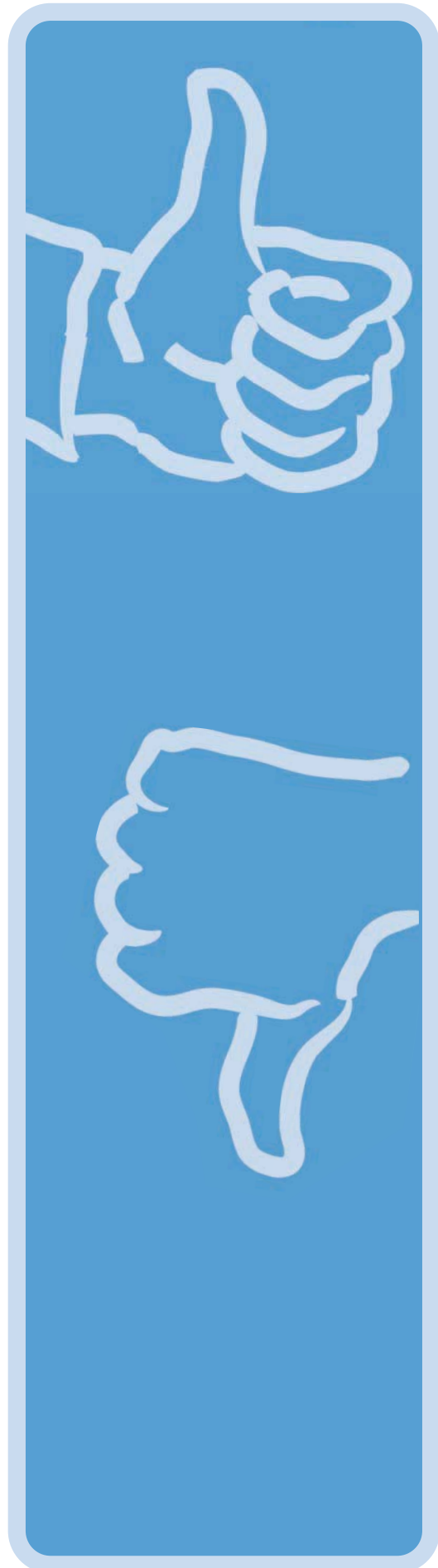
It's worth noting that at different times some skills may be more in demand than others. In extremis, some that would normally be regarded as 'negative' behaviours could be effective in the short term in getting the council out of severe difficulties.

9
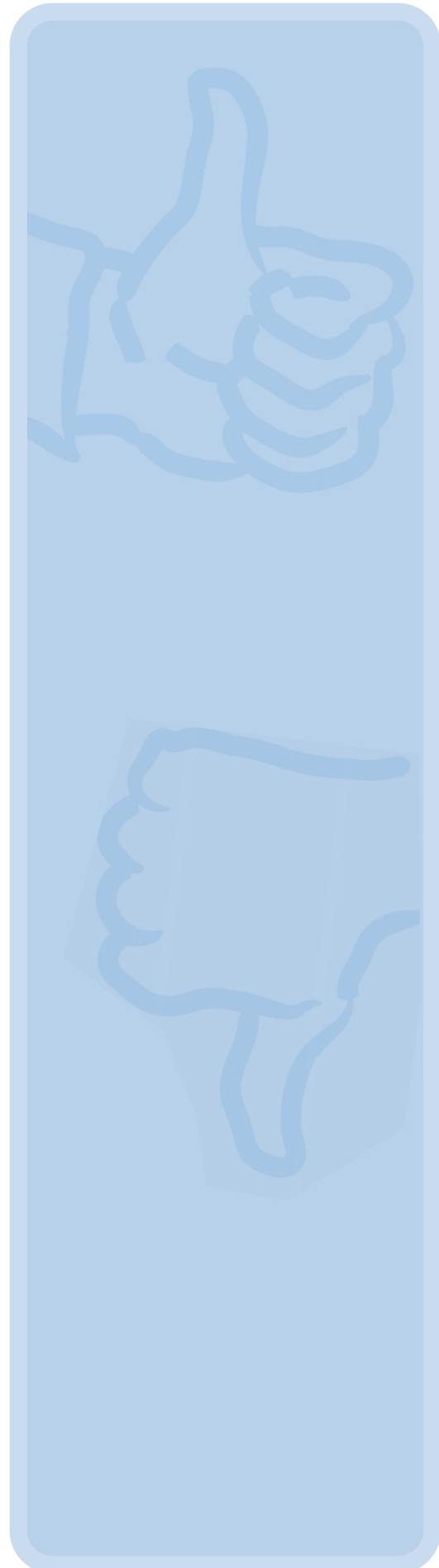
local leadership

> **'The best…councillors already work closely with citizens and communities'**
> (Strong and Prosperous Communities, White Paper, volume 1, p.7)
>
> **'Local councillors should be known by all the key local public services, community organisations and institutions. They should bind people together, broker solutions and be the advocate for their residents and their localities'**
> (LGA: People and Places, p.29)
>
> **'Leadership – members should promote and support these principles by leadership, and by example, and should act in a way that secures or preserves public confidence.'**
> (The ten general principles of public life, Relevant Authorities (General Principles) Order 2001)

positive

- engages with their community, canvasses opinion and looks for new ways of representing people
- keeps up-to-date with local concerns by drawing information from diverse sources, including hard to reach groups
- encourages trust and respect by being approachable and empathising with others
- creates partnerships with all sections of the community and ensures their participation in decision-making
- mediates fairly and constructively between people and groups with conflicting needs
- acts as a champion for others by campaigning with enthusiasm courage and persistence.

negative

- doesn't engage with their community, waits to be approached and is difficult to contact
- keeps a low profile, not easily recognised in their community
- treats groups or people unequally, fails to build integration or cohesion
- has a poor understanding of local concerns and how these might be addressed
- concentrates on council processes rather than people
- is unrealistic about what they can achieve and fails to deliver on promises.

partnership working

'The essential ingredients of successful partnerships are a common vision, shared values and mutual respect.'
 (Strong and Prosperous Communities, White Paper, volume 1, p.95)

'Respect for others – members should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. They should respect the impartiality and integrity of the authority's statutory officers and its other employees.'
(The ten general principles of public life, Relevant Authorities (General Principles) Order 2001)

positive

- builds good relationships with colleagues, officers and community groups

- focused on achieving goals by maintaining focus and co-ordinating others

- knows when to delegate, provide support or empower others to take responsibility

- makes people from all backgrounds feel valued, trusted and included

- understands and acts on their role in building and shaping key local partnerships

- remains calm and focused when criticised or under pressure

- is prepared to assert authority in resolving conflict or deadlock.

- treat others with respect.

negative

- habitually prefers to use status to exert control and impose solutions, rather than involve others

- fails to recognise or make use of others' skills and ideas

- finds it difficult to collaborate or work across the political divide

- prefers to act alone rather than work as part of a team

- often uses divisive tactics to upset relationships within their group, or council policies and decisions

- defensive when criticised, blames others and doesn't admit to being wrong

- doesn't declare interests.

11

communication skills

> **'Councillors have a key role to play in ensuring that people's concerns are listened to….'**
> (Strong and Prosperous Communities, White Paper, volume 1, p.35)
>
> **'Openness – members should be as open as possible about their actions and those of their authority, and should be prepared to give reasons for those actions.'**
> (The ten general principles of public life, Relevant Authorities (General Principles) Order 2001)

positive

- regularly informs and communicates with their community using newsletters, emails, phone or local media

- listens to others, checks for understanding and adapts their own style when necessary

- creates opportunities to communicate with different sectors, including vulnerable and hard to reach groups

- speaks confidently in public – avoids the use of jargon or 'council speak'

- provides regular feedback to people, keeping them informed and managing expectations

- speaks and writes clearly, using appropriate language

- declares and registers interests and gifts appropriately.

negative

- slow to respond to others, communicating only when necessary

- doesn't listen when people are speaking and uses inappropriate or insensitive language

- communicates in a dogmatic and inflexible way

- unwilling to deliver unpopular messages, uses information dishonestly to discredit others

- doesn't take part in meetings and lacks confidence when speaking in public

- presents confused arguments using poor language and style

- doesn't declare and register interests and gifts appropriately.

political understanding

> '**political parties can…help sell the role as 'political entrepreneurs' – activists who, with the support of their parties, can work as informed advocates for their local communities and effectively support and challenge a range of local agencies'**
> (Political Recruitment: How Local Parties Recruit Councillors, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, executive summary)
>
> '**Personal judgement – members may take account of the views of others, including their political groups, but should reach their own conclusions on the issues before them and act in accordance with those conclusions.'**
> (The ten general principles of public life, Relevant Authorities (General Principles) Order 2001)

positive 👍

- clearly represents the group's views and values through their decisions and actions

- helps to develop cohesion within the group and good communication between the group and council

- communicates political values through canvassing and campaigning

- actively develops their own political intelligence (e.g., understanding local and national political landscapes)

- looks for ways to promote democracy and increase public engagement

- is able to work across political boundaries without compromising their political values.

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negative 👎

- lacks integrity, has inconsistent political values and tends to say what others want to hear

- puts personal motives first or changes beliefs to match those in power

- has poor knowledge of group manifesto, values and objectives

- fails to support political colleagues in public

- doesn't translate group values into ways of helping the community

- shows little understanding of central government policy or its implications for council and community.

scrutiny and challenge

> **'We want to strengthen the ability of local councillors to speak up for their communities and demand an answer when things go wrong'**
> (Strong and Prosperous Communities, White Paper, volume 1, p.42)
>
> **'Accountability – members should be accountable to the public for their actions and the manner in which they carry out their responsibilities, and should co-operate fully and honestly with any scrutiny appropriate to their particular office.'**
> (The ten general principles of public life, Relevant Authorities (General Principles) Order 2001)

positive

- identifies areas suitable for scrutiny and ensures that citizens and communities are involved in the scrutiny process

- quickly understands and analyses complex information

- presents concise arguments that are meaningful and easily understood

- understands the scrutiny process, asks for explanations and checks that recommendations have been implemented

- objective and rigorous when challenging process, decisions and people

- understands and acts on judicial role to meet legal responsibilities (e.g., duty of care, corporate parenting).

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negative

- doesn't prepare well or check facts and draws biased conclusions

- too reliant on officers, tends to back down when challenged

- fails to see scrutiny as part of their role

- too focused on detail, doesn't distinguish between good, poor and irrelevant information

- prefers political 'blood sports' to collaboration: uses scrutiny for political gain.

regulating and monitoring

‘**The making of bye laws will be fully devolved to local authorities**’
(Strong and Prosperous Communities, Summary, p.2)

‘**Stewardship – members should do whatever they are able to do to ensure that their authorities use their resources prudently, and in accordance with the law.**’
(The ten general principles of public life, Relevant Authorities (General Principles) Order 2001)

‘**93% of respondents support the need to sign the code of conduct for councillors**’
(The ten general principles of public life, Relevant Authorities (General Principles) Order 2001)

positive

- uses evidence to evaluate arguments and make independent, impartial judgements

- chairs meetings effectively, follows protocol and keeps process on track

- follows legal process, balances public needs and local policy

- monitors others' performance and intervenes when necessary to ensure progress

- seeks feedback for self and looks for opportunities to learn

- understands and acts on their judicial role in meeting legal responsibilities (e.g., duty of care, corporate parenting)

- understands responsibilities to abide by the councillors' code of conduct.

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negative

- doesn't declare personal interests, makes decisions for personal gain

- fails to check facts or consider all sides and makes subjective or uninformed judgements

- habitually leaves monitoring and checks on progress to others

- makes decisions without taking advice, considering regulations or taking account of wider issues

- doesn't recognise or address limits of own knowledge or expertise

- misses deadlines, leaves business unfinished and lacks balance between council and other commitments

- bullies or intimidates others to get own way.

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questions and answers

One important message from the work that went into creating the PSF, is that there are common views about what makes a good or a poor councillor and, wherever possible, councillors should strive to demonstrate Positive rather than Negative behaviour.

> ## > all these characteristics look very daunting, aren't they a little unrealistic?

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There will be many different ways in which councillors can perform their roles well and no two councillors are likely to perform their roles in exactly the same way. Every member will have their unique areas of strength as well as others they would like to improve.

Councils may of course require different sets of skills at different times – and since a council is a team it's not necessary or even desirable for all members to have all the skills. For example, if the Leader is not a particularly inspired communicator, she or he could ask a colleague to handle the media or major presentations while the Leader concentrates on utilising their strengths.

The PSF provides a starting point for individual councillors to review and understand their own skill profile, before considering what might be the best way to develop. Although some councillors might decide that they want to be excellent in all areas, others might prefer to focus on one or two key areas.

> learning prompt for councillors

Think about the way you perform your role. Focus on one of the skill areas and decide how you would rate yourself. Can you think of times when you have demonstrated any of the positive characteristics? Have there been times when you have used the negative characteristics? Are any of them surprising?

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> why are there negative characteristics?

> can I change some of these characteristics?

In any role it is just as important to be clear about what we think is unacceptable or poor behaviour as it is to be clear about what we view as excellent. Although there may be some differences of opinion, this work has helped us understand the views most people share. For example, we know that behavioural integrity is important because most of the people we interviewed considered it unacceptable for members of any political group to continually change their views to fit with those in power. Neither was it considered appropriate for them to act in a way that did not reflect their values or those of their political group. Lack of self-awareness is a commonly found, overarching, negative characteristic.

These indicators are valid because they are based on the views of more than 350 councillors and officers, so we do not recommend that you change them. However, they are not prescriptive they provide a base for members and officers to consider their own unique council structure, culture and context. You may decide that the culture within your own authority influences the way in which councillors are expected to behave towards officers, for example, or the way in which political groups communicate with each another.

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> learning prompt for councillors

Take time to reflect on your own personal values – does your behaviour always reflect what you believe? When is it difficult to act with integrity? Do you think that some styles of behaviour are not appropriate in politics – or does 'anything go'?

> learning prompt for councillors

Think about the behaviour of political colleagues in your own council. How might this reflect the council's prevailing organisational culture? For example, how do members generally keep up-to-date with community issues and local concerns? What support is provided to help them to do this? Are there reasons why some members are not as able to keep as up-to-date with these issues as other members?

> why is political understanding included?

Most councillors are affiliated to a political party. Even if standing as an Independent, values form an important guide for the electorate in deciding how to vote. Political systems are at the heart of local government and to be successful, councillors must be able to understand the processes by which decisions are taken and influence exerted.

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> learning prompt for councillors

Learning prompt for councillors: How do the political parties in your local authority work together? Is there the opportunity for cross-party working? In what way does this impact on the success of large council projects?

using the political skills framework

The PSF can be used in many different ways and in many different areas. As part of our evaluation we asked councillors and officers how they were using the PSF and here are some of the examples they gave:

- councillor induction

- training and development programmes

- self-review

- 360-review systems

- mentoring

- learning materials

- personal development plans

- development centres.

For example, Irene MacDonald, a councillor and IDeA accredited peer, has used the PSF for new councillor induction: drawing up and delivering a programme of training linked to the PSF. She has also used it for work with political groups to stimulate discussion. Irene says this works very well because it encourages the political group to share their perceptions of the group's strengths and where they could develop further. This has led to action plans focusing on what is needed to achieve organisational development.

On the following pages we have provided examples of how the PSF has been used in councils as the basis for creating bespoke development activities for councillors.

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case 1

Personal Development Plans in Sandwell MBC

Lindsey Rogers, manager of the Member Services Unit in Sandwell MBC, has used the PSF as a basis for one to one review sessions with councillors to identify training needs and create personal development plans (PDPs). Her aim was to create opportunities for members to reflect on and discuss how they see themselves in relation to the PSF skill areas.

In 2006 Sandwell started to grow the process as part of its move to achieve full member development charter status. They incorporated a process of ongoing performance review and provision of feedback by members for members. Each member has a PDP interview with another member who is nominated based on their involvement in and experience of specific areas such as scrutiny.

All members conducting the PDP interviews receive a half-day training session and every effort has been made to make the paperwork for the process available to all and as user friendly as possible.

case 2

Key role effectiveness criteria in Sheffield City Council

Louise Pellet, member development officer, describes how a cross party working group led on setting up a structured approach to member development in Sheffield City Council. They held workshops where the group consulted with a wide cross section of councillors to design key role descriptions based on a councillor's key tasks and the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to carry them out. In a further workshop, councillors used the PSF to decide on key headings and effectiveness criteria for each role.

So far, Sheffield City Council's role effectiveness framework has been used to carry out personal development planning and the PSF is now being incorporated into learning and development programmes. One example is a session called Representing Our Diverse Communities, which looks at the key effectiveness criteria for community leaders, and is aimed at understanding how best to reach out to diverse communities.

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how can I use the PSF in councillor development?

On the following pages we have provided some review forms that can be used by councillors to reflect on how they perform different aspects of their roles related to the six political skill sets. It is designed for personal reflection and self-evaluation. Although councillors are asked to consider their own strengths and development areas, they can also use the forms to ask colleagues to provide them with feedback from their perspective.

It is important to remember that the councillor role is complex and there will be many different ways to perform it well. Councillors will have their own personal objectives but this process can provide a way of helping them reflect on their personal style and communicate this to others.

how do I see myself as a ward member?

What do you think are your particular strengths – for example, what do you bring to the role of councillor that you think is particularly good?

Prompts…
- what sections of my community have I engaged with and canvassed opinion?
- how have I looked for new ways of representing people?
- how up-to-date am I on local concerns?
- would others see me as approachable?
- who have I built partnerships with?
- when did I last act as a mediator?
- how do I champion others' needs?

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Can you illustrate these strengths by writing down examples of things you think you have done really well over the past year?

In which of these areas would you like to improve and how?

how good am I at regulating and monitoring?

What do you think are your particular strengths in this area – for example, what do you bring to this area of your work as a councillor that you think is particularly good?

Prompts…

- are my judgements based on evidence?
- how do I chair meetings and keep things on track?
- do I know enough about legal process?
- do I monitor others to ensure progress?
- when have I sought feedback or looked for opportunities to learn?
- how well do I understand and act on my judicial role? (e.g., corporate parenting)

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Can you illustrate these strengths by writing down examples of things you think you have done really well over the past year?

Which of these areas would you like to improve and how?

how good am I at scrutiny and challenge?

What do you think are your particular strengths in this area – for example, what do you bring to this area of your as a councillor that you think is particularly good?

Prompts…
- what areas have I identified for scrutiny?
- how well do I deal with new information?
- are my arguments always concise, meaningful and easily understood?
- do I ask for explanations and check that things have happened?
- am I objective and rigorous when challenging processes or people?

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Can you illustrate these strengths by writing down examples of things you think you have done really well over the past year?

Which of these areas would you like to improve and how?

how good am I at communicating with others?

What do you think are your particular strengths in this area – for example, what do you bring to this area of your as a councillor that you think is particularly good?

Prompts…
- how regularly do I use newsletters, emails, phone or local media to communicate?
- how well do I listen to others and adapt my style to their needs?
- what opportunities have I created to communicate with key groups?
- am I confident when speaking in public?
- do I feedback regularly to others to keep them informed?
- would others say I speak and write well?

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Can you illustrate these strengths by writing down examples of things you think you have done really well over the past year?

Which of these areas would you like to improve and how?

how good am I at working in partnership?

What do you think are your particular strengths in this are – for example, what do you bring to this area of your work as a councillor that you think is particularly good?

Prompts…

- do I have good relationships with colleagues and officers?
- would others describe me as focused and persistent in my efforts to achieve?
- how do I support and empower others?
- do I value and include people from different backgrounds?
- what networks and partnerships have I developed?
- do I stay calm and focused under pressure?

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Can you illustrate these strengths by writing down examples of things you think you have done really well over the past year?

Which of these areas would you like to improve and how?

how good am I at political understanding?

What do you think are your particular strengths in this area – for example, what do you bring to this area of your as a councillor that you think is particularly good?

Prompts…

- are my group's values reflected in what I do?
- how do I build cohesion within my group and improve communication?
- does my campaigning reflect my political values?
- how have I developed my political intelligence?
- how have I promoted democracy and increased public engagement?
- when did I work across political boundaries?

Can you illustrate these strengths by writing down examples of things you think you have done really well over the past year?

Which of these areas would you like to improve and how?

learning resources

There is a growing array of learning resources available to councils and councillors and most councils will, no doubt, already have many resources to draw upon. However, learning and development should be based on a needs analysis and the learning objectives clearly described. The PSF provides a basis for conducting individual and organisational learning needs analyses. Once the needs have been identified the types of development opportunities available might include:

- member handbooks

- new councillor handbook

- induction training

- officer briefings

- guidance notes

- e-learning resource packs

- workshops and seminars

- external training and know-how

- work shadowing

- visits to other councils

- mentoring and coaching

- training

- learning needs analysis

- 360-degree review

The IDeA offers a wide range of information, development programmes and activities for councillors including:

- The Councillor's Guide – an annual publication for new councillors explaining their role, responsibilities, opportunities and the expectations of citizens and central government

- IDeA Knowledge website – www.idea.gov.uk

- Local leadership Academy – development modules on specific themes, capacity building activities, mentoring, and the Community Champion Review, tailored for individual councils, delivered locally, and suitable for all councillors

- Leadership Academy – a variety of residential development programmes, for leaders, portfolio holders, scrutiny chairs and other senior councillors

- Councillor magazine – a quarterly publication featuring the achievements of councillors in their communities

- Toolkits and publications – on various topics, available in printed form and as downloads from the IDeA website.

- Summer schools and the annual Local Leadership Conference

- Charter for Member Development

- Councillor Mentoring – provides opportunities for one-to-one or small group mentoring by an IDeA Member peer

- The Member Development Community of Practice gives access to a range of development materials and to support and advice

For more information about the IDeA's products and services for elected members visit www.idea.gov.uk/councillors or email national.leadership@idea.gov.uk.

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case 3

Rotherham's training map

This training map, which is used by Rotherham Council, identifies and charts relevant training courses, learning resources and information sources such as e-learning materials for five of the PSF skill sets. You may like to consider how resources within your own council could be included here.

local leadership

- freedom of Information (policy, elected member briefing note and e-learning)

- data protection (policy and practice guidelines)

- the Influential Councillor (audio CD)

- information management – working smarter (e-learning)

- financial skills manual (general reference)

- negotiation skills (e-learning

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partnership working

- corporate plan (general reference)

- building partnerships (e-learning)

- member / officer protocol (general reference)

- disability discrimination (e-learning)   diversity handbook (practice guidance)

- drugs awareness – CADES (course)

- valuing diversity (course)

- managing time for better results (e-learning)

scrutiny and challenge

- benchmarking (practice guidelines)

- performance information standard (practice guidelines)

regulations and monitoring

- constitution (practice guidelines)

- the council's report making and decision making guide

- decision making and problem solving (e-learning)

- management learning guides (e-learning)

- the skills of chairing meetings (Audio CD)

- planning approval – councillors (e-learning)

- project management - Prince2 (e-learning)

- project management – 'The fundamentals' (e-learning)

- project management – to support improvement (practice guidelines)

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communication skills

- A-Z of services (general reference)

- centrex telephone users' guide (practice guidelines)

- coping with a hostile and aggressive situations (audio CD)

- email and the internet (on-line)

- facilitation skills (training course)

- glossaries of acronyms and terms (general reference)

- IT training calendar (training courses)

- media release (practice guidelines)

- meeting skills (e-learning)

- meeting skills – organising (e-learning)

- presentation skills (e-learning and course)

- protocol for Mayoral parties at civic functions (guidelines)

- sign language – British (e-learning)

- style guide – corporate (practice guidelines)

- presentation and speaking skills (training course)

- effective use of English (practice guidelines)

- effective business writing (training course)

- writing reports (e-learning)

- making the speech (audio CD)

the new code of conduct

All councils are required to adopt a Code of Conduct that sets out rules governing the behaviour of their members. All elected, co-opted and independent members of local authorities are covered by the Code.

The Government issued a new Model Code of Conduct for members on 4 April 2007.

The Codes of Conduct cover areas of individual behaviour such as members not abusing their position or not misusing their authority's resources. In addition, there are rules governing disclosure of interests and withdrawal from meetings where members have relevant interests. Members are also required to record their financial and other interests.

top tips

do…

• take account of the 10 general principles of public life

• follow the Code of Conduct when you are representing your authority

• be aware of what personal and prejudicial interests are - refer to the Standards Board guide

• keep your register of interests up-to-date

• register gifts and hospitality, received in your role as a member, worth more than £25

• treat others with respect.

don't...

- bring your authority or office into disrepute

- use the authority's resources for party political purposes

- compromise the impartiality of people who work for your authority

- discriminate against people on the grounds of race, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and age

- bully, intimidate or attempt to intimidate others

- use your position improperly for personal gain or to advantage your friends or close associates

- attend meetings or be involved in decision-making where you have a prejudicial interest - except when speaking when the general public are also allowed to do so

- disclose confidential information, other than in exceptional circumstances - refer to the Code of Conduct and our guide if you are unsure

- prevent anyone getting information they are entitled to.

**Visit www.standardsboard.gov.uk
for more information.**

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over to you

This toolkit is a starting point. It can be used with new members to help them understand their roles as well as a base for member reviews and personal development planning. We encourage you to innovate and adapt the materials for your own use. Our ultimate aim is to support and enhance the performance of local councillors in what can be a complex and isolated role.

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useful contacts

Councillor development contacts in:

Improvement and Development Agency

tel	020 7296 6600
fax	020 7296 6635
email	ihelp@idea.gov.uk
web	www.idea.gov.uk

SOLACE

tel	0845 652 4010
fax	0845 652 4011
email	hope.house@solace.org.uk
web	www.solace.org.uk

Leadership Centre for Local Government

tel	020 7630 2180
fax	020 7630 2195
email	info@localleadership.gov.uk
web	www.localleadership.gov.uk

Local Government Association

tel	020 7664 3131
fax	020 7664 3030
email	info@lga.gov.uk
web	www.lga.gov.uk

SEEMP

tel	01962 840664
fax	01962 842018
email	info@seemp.co.uk
web	www.seemp.co.uk

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The Standards Board for England

tel	0845 078 8181
fax	0161 817 5499
email	enquiries@standardsboard.gov.uk
web	www.standardsboard.gov.uk

Work Psychology Partnership

tel	07970 518911
email	info@workpsychologypartnership.com
web	www.workpsychologypartnership.com

Member Development Community of Practice

email	local.leadership@idea.gov.uk
web	www.communities.idea.gov.uk

I&DeA
improvement and development agency