

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 16th October, 2024

2.00 pm

Darent Room





AGENDA

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 16 October 2024 at 2.00 pm

Ask for: **Emily Kennedy -
emily.kennedy@kent
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**Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall,
Maidstone**

Telephone: **03000 419625**

Membership (8)

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Conservative (5): | Mr D Jeffrey (Chair), Mr N Baker, Mrs S Hudson and Mr D Ross |
| Labour (1): | Ms M Dawkins |
| Liberal Democrat (1): | Mr M J Sole |
| Green and Independent (1): | Rich Lehmann |

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

- 1 Apologies
- 2 Declarations of Interest
- 3 Member Development - Annual Report (Pages 1 - 8)
- 4 Member Development - 2025 Member Induction Planning (Pages 9 - 62)

EXEMPT ITEMS

(At the time of preparing the agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)

Benjamin Watts
General Counsel
03000 416814

Tuesday, 8 October 2024

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From: Dylan Jeffrey, Chairman, Member Development Sub Committee
Ben Watts, General Counsel

To: Member Development Sub Committee – 16th October 2024

Subject: Member Development – Annual Report

Status: Unrestricted

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 19th October 2023 Selection and Member Services Committee received a report from the Chairman of the Member Development Sub Committee and a list of priority training was identified for delivery over the 2024 period. Additionally, some training has been demand led and reactive to operational need.
- 1.2 This annual report provides an overview of the 2024 events to date, member development activity and future plans.

2 2024 Training Programme

- 2.1 The following training has been organised to date in the 2024 period:

Delivered Training	Date(s)
Cabinet Decision Making Training	8 January
Mod.Gov Training (Committee System)	11, 16, 17,23, 24, 30, 31 Jan (2) 8 Feb (2)
South East Employers Charing Skills	6 Feb
Pension Fund Training Day (Pensions Team Managed)	22 Feb
Armed Forces Covenant in Kent	16 April (postponed)
Cabinet Fraud Awareness Training	3 June
South East Employers - Scrutiny Committee Training	9 Sept
Cyber Security Training	16 (canc), 18, 30 September (Cabinet), 1, 10, 14 and 17 October

- 2.2 With the following future events planned for the remainder of the electoral term:

Training	Date(s)
PREVENT Training	22 October
Fraud Awareness – Governance & Audit, Scrutiny, General Member	TBC
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	TBC
Personal Safety	TBC

- 2.3 The Member Development programme has further been enhanced by Member Briefings delivered by Directorates during 2024:

Member Briefing	Date(s)
KCC's Commercial and Procurement Division	12 January
Highways Role in the Development Planning Process	30 January
Budget Briefing	13 February
The Revised Financial Regulations	8 March
Delayed Discharge from Acute Settings	22 March
The Planning Process	6 June
Specialist Teaching and Learning Service	27 June
Ukraine Co-Operation	8 July
Local Transport Plan	12 July
Sea Link Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project – Statutory Consultation	24 July
National Planning Policy Framework	11 September
EU Entry / Exit System (EES) Member Briefing	13 September

- 2.3 Members have been engaged with the programme and along with course feedback on some key events, that were not directorate led, have enabled valuable testing prior to the new term. Feedback on courses is available in Appendix A.
- 2.4 Committee Members may wish to consider reviewing the feedback form and questions to ensure that the Committee capture Member views on course quality and future needs, this will be particularly useful for our 2025 induction programme.
- 2.5 The awaited findings of the Governance Working Group are expected and may further enhance the member development package but have led to delays in actioning some Member Development activity. Additionally, the General Election led to further delays due to members being engaged elsewhere. This has therefore led to a busy schedule for the remainder of the year.

3. Member Training Records

- 3.1 Committee Members previously identified a need for formal recording of learning and development. From fact finding with other authorities there is never a consistent approach to such record transparency, however we do at times receive Freedom of Information requests and we therefore seek a view from the Committee about using the built in records management tool on Mod.gov, our Committee system, to publish such records online from May 2025.

4. Member Development Future Plans

Member Communications and Directorate Engagement

- 4.1 As part of planning for 2025 an officer working group has been established and the team are leading on a number of activities which will be covered in the 2025 Member Induction Planning report.
- 4.2 The aim of the officer working group is to not only establish a programme of events for 2025 but look beyond the first six months and aid member communications and directorate interactions. Changes will be implemented prior to the election and Member feedback sought, with Committee Members playing a key part in this feedback.
- 4.3 Member communication and council wide interactions was a key finding from the 2023 survey and along with a 2024 survey currently being conducted by the Monitoring Officer, will provide areas for enhancement. Previous informal discussions of the Member Development Sub Committee have created a range of activities that the team are working on and again will be covered in future Committee reports and the 2025 Member Induction Planning report.
- 4.4 The new Member Communications Team Channel has just been launched and plans are in place to develop dedicated resources for Members to access. This central location for key documentation and handbooks for Members will ensure an all-in-one location resource assist Members to navigate the council and access resources. The working group would welcome the Sub Committee's input on what they would like to see on this resource and what it could be used for.
- 4.5 Helpful resources from external organisations such as the Local Government Association (LGA) will also be available on this site and enhance the Member Development package.
- 4.6 Following a request for a review of how other authorities, as well as our District and Borough colleagues manage Member communications, it was noted a number of them were moving to SharePoint and/or Teams to aid consistent and up-to-date messaging.
- 4.7 This is also beginning to be rolled out across other Member networks such as within some Committees and is standard practice within operational teams for communications.
- 4.8 Member Hub will be available to show Members how to navigate such systems and Members are reminded that they can visit the Member Desk where the team can assist.

Casework Management

- 4.9 Conversations are currently taking place with our Engagement and Consultation team about how we can manage Member's constituent enquiries and ensure consistent enquiry handling. As part of that process we are meeting with other local authorities to explore what systems they have in place. Following such

investigations and, as part of a future paper on council communication and navigation, an item will be presented at a future committee meeting.

Recommendation(s):

The Member Development Sub Committee is asked to:

- a) Discuss and comment on the Member Development Annual Report
 - b) Contribute to the development of feedback mechanisms for course improvement, identifying areas for improvement
 - c) Consider the use of Mod.gov to provide a published record of Member training attendance to be implemented from May 2025
 - d) Provide feedback on Appendix A, including the current course feedback form
 - e) Endorse the report and request that it be presented to the Selection and Member Service Committee.
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Appendices:

Appendix A – Current Feedback Form, 2024 Course Overview and Feedback Report

Report Author and Relevant Director

Benjamin Watts, General Counsel
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benjamin.watts@kent.gov.uk

Jill Kennedy-Smith, Operational Delivery Team Manager
03000 416343
jill.kennedy-smith@kent.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Current Feedback Form Questions – Average Completion Time is 1 minute

All answers are anonymous

1. The objectives of the training were clearly defined?
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
2. The level of participation and interaction was suitable?
 - a. It was just right
 - b. There could have been more
 - c. There should have been less
 - d. The participation and interaction was not relevant
3. The topics covered were relevant to me.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
4. The provided materials were helpful
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
5. This training experience will be helpful in my role
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
6. The trainer was knowledgeable about the training topics
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
7. The trainer was well prepared
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
8. The training objectives were met
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree

Appendix 1

9. I had sufficient notice to attend the event
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
10. Was the course appropriately advertised?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
11. Please take a minute to suggest some alternative methods to reach you for similar events.
12. Are there any other training subjects that you would like to suggest for future sessions? *newly added to the form following fact finding.

Feedback Responses

❖ Mod.Gov Training

Members Invited	81
Attendees	14
Feedback Forms Returned	0

❖ South East Employers Chairing Skills

Members Invited	20 (course limited)
Attendees	13
Feedback Forms Returned	4
Objectives were met	4 Members Agreed
Level of participation and interaction	4 Members thought it was just right
Topics covered were relevant	4 Members Agreed
Materials provided were helpful	3 Members Agreed 1 Member was neutral
Training experience was helpful	1 Member strongly agreed 3 Members agreed
Trainer was knowledgeable	4 Members agreed
Trainer was well prepared	3 Members agreed 1 Member was neutral
Training objectives were met	3 Members agreed 1 Member was neutral
Sufficient notice to attend	1 Member strongly agreed 2 Members agreed 1 Member was neutral
Was the course appropriately advertised	4 Members said yes
Alternative Methods	0

❖ South East Employers Scrutiny Committee Training –

Members Invited	13
Attendees	8
Feedback Forms Returned	5
Objectives were met	1 Member Strongly Agreed 3 Members Agreed 1 Member Disagreed
Level of participation and interaction	4 Members thought it was just right 1 Member thought there could have been more
Topics covered were relevant	2 Members Strongly Agreed 3 Members Agreed
Materials provided were helpful	1 Member Strongly Agreed 2 Members Agreed 2 Member was neutral

Appendix 1

Training experience was helpful	1 Member Strongly Agreed 4 Members Agreed
Trainer was knowledgeable	3 Members Strongly Agreed 1 Members agreed 1 Member was neutral
Trainer was well prepared	3 Members Strongly Agreed 1 Member Agreed 1 Member was neutral
Training objectives were met	4 Members Agreed 1 Member was neutral
Sufficient notice to attend	2 Member strongly agreed 3 Members agreed
Was the course appropriately advertised	5 Members said yes
Alternative Methods	0

- ❖ Cyber Security – Still running, one round of feedback requested and to date:

Members Invited	80
Attendees	26 (to date)
Feedback Forms Returned	15
Objectives were met	9 Members Strongly Agreed 3 Members Agreed 1 Member Strongly Disagreed
Level of participation and interaction	11 Members thought it was just right 4 Members thought there could have been more
Topics covered were relevant	12 Members Strongly Agreed 3 Member Agreed
Materials provided were helpful	7 Members Strongly Agreed 8 Members Agreed
Training experience was helpful	8 Members Strongly Agreed 7 Members Agreed
Trainer was knowledgeable	12 Members Strongly Agreed 3 Members Agreed
Trainer was well prepared	11 Members Strongly Agreed 4 Members Agreed
Training objectives were met	10 Members Strongly Agreed 5 Members agreed
Sufficient notice to attend	11 Members Strongly Agreed 4 Members Agreed
Was the course appropriately advertised	15 Members said yes
Alternative Methods	0

From: Dylan Jeffrey, Chairman, Member Development Sub Committee
Ben Watts, General Counsel

To: Member Development Sub Committee – 16th October 2024

Subject: Member Development – 2025 Member Induction Planning

Status: Unrestricted

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Member Development Sub Committee has a role to support the development of the induction programme in appropriate years and on 1 May 2025, Kent County Council will be holding its election.
- 1.2 An officer working group has been established and will be working with colleagues across the Council to design and deliver a programme for our newly elected members. The Committee is asked to consider the draft programme to date and provide evaluation and guidance on the proposed plans before they are finalised.

2. Draft Programme

- 2.1 The draft programme has been developed by analysing other county authority induction programme delivery, as well as via liaison with Kent's District and Borough colleagues in a lessons learned exercise. Previous and current surveys have, and continue to, assist in the development too.
- 2.2 Appendix 1 documents the first iteration for Committee and has been designed to provide a large amount of information and training, whilst being mindful that Members may be employed, have personal commitments or hold twin hatter roles in other authorities. The current design focuses around four phases:
- 2.3 Phase 1 – Early candidate engagement and preparation for Member changes
 - a) Elections cannot be predicted and we will not know some Member changes until election day. However, following candidate selection we may know some changes prior to nominations opening. We can therefore start to prepare for known knowns and communications will go out in early January to Groups to enquire about those standing again. This will enable us to prepare for return of equipment and prepare closedown of IT and HR accounts, as well as provide guidance to non-returning Members.

A view would be welcomed from the Committee on this process, as well as on constituent case handover to avoid disruption to our residents and officers case management handling.

- b) A lesson learned from the 2021 induction was that relevant notice was not given to newly elected Members of the early induction requirements. From

listening to Members engaged in district elections and subsequently in the conversations with District and Borough colleagues it is good practice to issue the agreed induction programme, and in particular those first few months of activity, as early as possible and where possible on more than one occasion. The Member Development team will work closely with the Elections team to coordinate that.

- c) Due to the nature of Kent County Council services, County Members also require to be Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checked and that will be communicated too to plan document routes and avoid concerns post-election about such processes. This process will be more swift with a dedicated team from HR assisting us with this this time, therefore our new Members will be need to be ready on week 1 with their documentation.

2.4 Phase 2 – Welcome to the County Council and being a County Councillor

- a) This phase will take place during May. The opening programme is built around onboarding activities and with a focus point on the County Council AGM, scheduled for Thursday 22nd May.
- b) Learning from 2021 and with advanced communications the first week, slightly impacted by a bank holiday on Monday 5th May, will have a series of events where our new Members will be invited to book an appointment on Tuesday-Friday; the aim is to have 20 appointments a day. The draft programme details the overview for those appointments.
- c) The following week the focus will turn to learning about the County Council and the services it provides. This will be at high level, followed by dedicated directorate information sessions in phase 3 and 4. Learning from other authorities they use a 'Hot Topic' briefing, which may be particularly useful for new Members that will focus on current county events, pressures and opportunities within the Council for the year ahead.
- d) The first meeting that our new Members will be involved in will be the County Council AGM and a session on procedures and processes for that meeting will be delivered to familiarise Members.

There may be an opportunity to run this session as part of the onboarding week with a session in the Chamber and a view from the Committee would be welcomed on that.

- e) Attention will then turn to roles and responsibilities, standards, committees and decision making. Members will be aware that as part of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) this is and, continues to be, an area for development. If the Council gets this correct from the start of a new Member term it will provide a good foundation for improved governance and behaviour. With the aim to continue to build on that through the four year term.
- f) Phase 2 concludes with personal safety, a session on how Members can be safe in the community, including a focus on lone working.

2.5 Phase 3 – Getting to Know Democracy and the Council

- a) Phase 3 is our details and learning phase. By this stage Groups and Independent members will know proportionality and appointments to committee and other bodies. Once again listening to feedback this phase has been designed to provide committee key skills, areas where Members are involved in constituent representation such as Appeals and areas of responsibility held within the Member role.
- b) At the time of writing, results of a Member survey are being analysed and will feed into the continued development of this phase but a view from Committee is sought to assist in answering the question – what did I not know by month 2 or 3 that would have been of benefit to me and my constituents?

2.6 Phase 4 – Knowledge Builder

- a) As we move into phase 4 we are starting to look to immediate and future skills that a Member may need to undertake their role. From previous feedback and learning from other authorities some learning and development has been identified and can be built upon by the Committee.
- b) Committee may also wish to consider their approach to Personal Development Plans (PDP) or consider this at a later committee. There is a mixed approach to PDP in other authorities, some stating and, as previously experienced by Learning and Development and Member Services, that engagement with such a process tends to be low and therefore does not provide effective representation in building a structured Member Development Plan and/or Strategy.
- c) Other authorities appear to favour a feedback mechanism either with surveys or using feedback forms sent from delivered courses to inform future subjects of interest. This feedback is then provided to committee to build the learning and development annual plan.

2.7 Supplementary Programme – Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) Essential Learning Programme

- a) Members will be aware that the Council cannot mandate learning unless stipulated by the Constitution or if agreed under a constitutional change. However, the Governance Working Party is considering some additional elements of mandated learning and these will be put forward as a suggested requirement in due course. Committee could however recommend essential learning, something championed by other authorities.
- b) The draft programme includes several subjects that are considered to be essential learning for such roles but is not an exhaustive list and the committee may wish to review and expand upon that. Consultation will also take place with SRA holders and their support officers on this programme if proposed by the Committee.

- c) The supplementary programme, if adopted, should also give consideration to SRA post holder changes and, similar to a by-election, be automatically implemented at change of role. This will ensure consistency in learning and for the Member have an informed development plan for their new role.

3. The Political Skills Framework

- 3.1 Created by Professor Jo Silvester for the Local Government Association (LGA), in association with the Work Psychology Partnership, The Political Skills Framework has been developed to provide a supporting mechanism for local councillors and local authorities to support development opportunities for politicians and attracting new 'members of talent'.
- 3.2 Further analysis was undertaken and a revised Political Skills Toolkit was developed. The Toolkit is available in Appendix 2 along with a brief overview. We understand that the Framework is potentially under review and would expect that once updated local authorities will be notified.
- 3.3 We currently do not use the Framework as a basis for our member development programme and views are sought from Committee on whether they may wish to adopt this. If adopted, learning could be aligned to the six core skills:
- Local Leadership
 - Partnership Working
 - Communication Skills
 - Political Understanding
 - Scrutiny and Challenge
 - Regulating and Monitoring
- 3.4 Additionally, if PDP is a requirement of the committee then the core skills could be used in that process. With examples of PDP proformas in the toolkit for consideration.

4. Communications and Navigating the Council

- 4.1 Member feedback has and, continues to be, demonstrating that Members have difficulty in navigating the Council and finding suitable information. The officer working group is designing plans, that will be brought before the committee in December on how we intend to enhance this. Furthermore, engagement with the Corporate Management Team and Directorates will commence at pace to develop a system that will assist with Member casework and information sharing, while being mindful that the Council remains under resource pressure.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 In summary, the report poses a number of questions for the Committee to consider and comment on:

Phase 1 Activity

1. How do we engage with current Members on the transition from one term to the next?

2. What plans should we put in place for Member changes – handovers, mentoring?
3. What should the path for finalising the draft programme and dissemination take?

Phase 2 Activity

4. Week 1 activities – are they enough or are they too much?
5. When should preparing for County Council take place – on induction day or a dedicated session?
6. Phase 2 subject overview – what did you not know by month 2 or 3 that would have been of benefit to me and my constituents?
7. What did I find useful in the first few weeks?
8. What would I have found useful in the first few weeks?

Phase 3 Activity

9. What immediate and future skills do Members need to undertake their role – short and long term?
10. Do we adopt PDP or some other mechanism for building the member development programme?
11. Phase 3 subject overview – what did you not know by month 2 or 3 that would have been of benefit to me and my constituents?
12. What did I find useful in the first few months?
13. What would I have found useful in the first few months?

SRA Essential Learning Programme

14. Do we require an SRA Essential Learning Programme?
What essential learning do SRA holders require to undertake their role?

Political Skills Framework

15. Does the committee wish to adopt the framework and toolkit to underpin the member development programme? Taking into account PDP if adopted.
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Recommendation(s):

Member Development Sub Committee is asked to:

- Discuss and comment on the report, including key questions posed under 5.1.
- Contribute to the draft member induction plan, with the aim of providing a reworked draft programme to Selection and Member Services on 5th December for first comment.
- Request a report is brought before the December Committee meeting to discuss communications and council navigation plans.
- Request further areas of interest on Member Induction and Development.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Draft Induction Programme

Appendix 2 - Political Skills Framework

Report Author and Relevant Director

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Councillor Induction Programme 2025 – schedule

Phase 1 –

- Members no longer standing for office – “non-returning members” tasks to complete [IT access removed from 2nd May]
- Decision making and record retention preparation.
- Pre-election comms about timetable and documentation requirements if elected
- induction pack

Phase 2 – Welcome to the County Council and being a County Councillor [May]

Title	Individual or group	Essential	Date(s)	Where	Overview
Getting started sessions/Onboarding activity	Individual	Y	6-9 May	Sessions House - where possible all rooms to be booked	Relevant services stalls – Member Hub, Democratic Services, IT, Time with the Monitoring Officer/Deputy Monitoring Officer and his Governance Team Processes to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal info form – managed by Member Hub Team • DPIs – managed by Governance Team • declaration of office – managed by Monitoring Officer and suitable delegations • photo – suitable location(s) to be identified for photographs – indoor and outdoor • IT – managed by Cantium • DBS – managed by Employment Check Team Opportunities to meet as political groups? Tour

Appendix 1

Title	Individual or group	Essential	Date(s)	Where	Overview
IT induction	Group		TBC		TBC – Commission to be developed for this programme
Intro to the County Council - Hot Topics •	Group	Y	12-16 May	Hybrid?	If we have a large turnover of Members and Party dynamics – a hot topic conversation would be useful. Used in other authorities.
County Council procedures • Constitution • CCQs • Procedures • Election of chair Chamber layout, webcasting protocol	Group	Y	could we incorporate that into week 1 as one of the events?	Chamber And Recording for those not able to attend	An introductory session on how the Chamber operates and a settling in period – be familiar with surroundings before AGM.
Roles and Responsibilities incl. Intro to Decision Making Process	Group	Y	Share in week 2 2-4 June in person	Sessions House And Recording	As an action from the Annual Governance Statement, a structured overview of the roles and responsibilities of our Members. Bespoke Sessions for Cabinet Members in follow up or better as one Group for consistent messaging?
Title	Individual or group	Essential	Date(s)	Where	Overview

Appendix 1

Standards	Group	Y	Share in week 1	Video for reference Supplemented by no question to stupid drop in sessions for first few months.	Session to Cover: DPI, Gifts and Hospitality, Complaints, Code of Conduct Member/Officer relationships ID Card allocation
Transport appeals panel training			26 May – 30 May		TBC as we will be in Appeals Season and so business as usual will need to be coordinated around the programme. Session is expected to cover: Role of the Panel Member Role of the Member representing a constituent.
Committee overviews	Group		*In advance of first meeting and following election of Chair.	Virtual and recorded	Managed by Dem Services, will provide an overview of the role of Cabinet Committee and the subjects they cover. *Would Members benefit from knowing committee background prior to choosing their membership – could a recorded video assist in this?
Title	Individual or group	Essential	Date(s)	Where	Overview
Committees requiring	Group	Mandated	*12-23 May	Sessions	Mandated Training for:

specific training as defined by the Constitution.				House and needs to be a recorded attendance	<p>Personnel Committee Personnel Committee – Member Appointments Panel Regulation Committee Planning Applications Committee Governance and Audit Committee **Pension Fund Committee **Pension Board</p> <p>*Would Members benefit from knowing committee background prior to choosing their membership – could a recorded video assist in this?</p> <p>We also need to boost substitution list – how do we achieve that?</p> <p>**manage their own programme</p>
Member Support	Group and individually supplemented by Member Hub		Week commencing 2 nd June	Virtual and recordings available for specific subjects	Sessions will cover: Grants Expenses Allowances Support Offer Communication and Navigational Tools
Title	Individual or group	Essential	Date(s)	Where	Overview
Personal Safety					TBC - This is run by Health and Safety teams in other authorities – we also must have lone

					worker training system - LGA Supplementary Learning
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Phase 3 – Getting to Know Democracy and the Council

Title	Individual or group	Essential	Date(s)	Where	Overview
Directorate overviews	Group		TBC	TBC	In development – ideas based at the moment: Strategic Overview from Corporate Director and Director Level. Key focus points and then enhanced by a mixture of Market Stall events? Supplemented by videos Podcasts being explored too.
Finance and budget*	Group		TBC	TBC	Series of Sessions delving into Local Government Finance
Cyber security & Information Governance	Group	Y	June/ July	In Person Virtual Sway Handouts Teams Channel	Session to explore: Cyber Security The ICO; Council Information Governance Processes and Procedures Being a data controller; Freedom of Information
Title	Individual or group	Essential	Date(s)	Where	Overview
Fraud Awareness	Group Cabinet Scrutiny	Y	June/July	In Person Virtual	Looking at Fraud Awareness generally in the Council and with a focus on Decision Making.

Appendix 1

	G&A				
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Bystander Training	Group	Y	Early June Early July Bi-annual DELTA	In Person	Programme Being Developed and due for testing shortly.
Chairing Skills	Group X2 as limited to 20 attendees 1 x key skills learning	Y		Virtual by an external provider 5 sessions in June being explored	Providing advice and guidance on being an effective Chair. A series of dates will be offered for Chairs, those looking to a Chairing role in the future and some local authorities suggest all Members attend so everyone understands the role. Sessions are a minimum of 20
Scrutiny Skills	Group				Provided to Scrutiny Committee Members. Proposal for condensed version to Cabinet. Districts have a joint session with Members/officers – showing the differences in role? Session covers work programming, role of scrutiny for Members and for Officers, call-in processes and topic reviews.
Governance & Audit Skills	Group	Y	In line with Committee dates	In person	TBC - Variety of activity designed by the Monitoring Officer and the Governance Team.
Title	Individual or group	Essential	Date(s)	Where	Overview
Planning Applications Committee	Group	Y	In line with committee dates	In Person	TBC - Variety of activity designed by Democratic Services, legal and Planning Team.

Appendix 1

Questioning Skills	Group		TBC	TBC	Given the subject, we will explore an external provider. Discussions to be held with learning and development colleagues.
Civic Office	Group		TBC	Virtual	TBC – Providing and overview of the role of the Civic Office and the service they provide to the Council, people of Kent and to those they support. The role of the Member in supporting the work of the Chairman will also be explored.
Standards (repeat)	Group	Y	TBC	Please see above	Please see above
Corporate Parenting	Group	Y	TBC	In Person	Member Development Sub Committee mentioned a really good event that we can incorporate to define responsibilities and raise awareness of the Member role in Corporate Parenting.
Outside bodies	Group	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC – Exploring use an external speak on this subject and the complexities of serving on an outside body. SACRE and KMFRA will also form part of this.
Military Covenant	Group	Y	TBC	TBC	The role of the Member in joining with KCC as an organisation who supports our Armed Forces.

Phase 4 – Knowledge Builder

Title	Individual or group	Essential	Date(s)	Where	Overview
Social Media	Group		TBC	TBC	Assisting Members with navigating the world of

Appendix 1

					social media and also demonstrating the various channels that KCC are part of.
Media Training	Group Or Individual (tbc)		TBC	TBC	In such a high profile and due to the media attention on local government Members may at times be involved in media interviews and quotes. This session will provide techniques and guidance on how to manage that.
Safeguarding for Councillors	Group	Y	TBC	In Person	This will be a series of events: PREVENT Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness Serious Organised Crime Wellbeing signs in others
Health and Safety	Group	Y	TBC	In person	TBC - This is a reference in the constitution and other authorities deliver such sessions – further exploration of the delivery method and subject is currently being explored.
Wellbeing and Mental Health awareness	Group		TBC	Virtual Comms Channel	Courses as part of the wider KCC programme on health and wellbeing. Accompanied by handouts and LGA learning resources.
Complaints and Customer Service	Group	Y	TBC	Virtual	A process is being explored for Member reporting tools but this session will give an overview of how KCC manages complaints and compliments and expectation management. This will assist with Member enquiry navigation.
Title	Individual or group	Essential	Date(s)	Where	Overview
Public Speaking	Group		TBC	Virtual In Person	TBC - but expected to be delivered by an external partner. Course is expected to cover how to be an effective speaker.

Supplementary Programme – Special Responsibility Allowance Essential Learning Programme

Programme to be developed if recommended by Committee and following discussions – suggested topics:

Title	Individual or group	Recommended	Date(s)	Where	Lead presenter	Overview
Roles and Responsibilities						
Decision Making						
Scrutiny						
Fraud Awareness						
Media						
Leadership Skills						
LGA Supplementary Courses						
Effective Opposition						
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion						
Chairing Skills						

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A Councillor Tool-Kit

THE POLITICAL SKILLS FRAMEWORK

Local Government Association



WHAT IS THE POLITICAL SKILLS FRAMEWORK AND WHY WAS IT DEVELOPED?

The Political Skills Framework



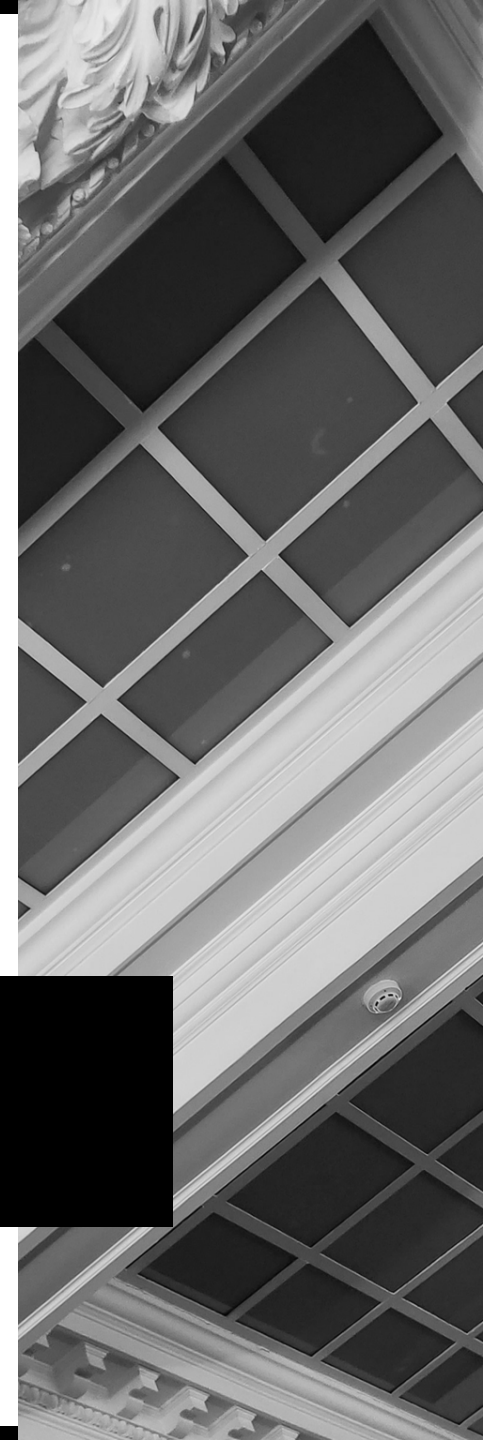
- Work began on the Framework in 2004.
- Professor Jo Silvester began working with the Local Government Group (at time IDeA) to identify and map the core skills required by councillors.
- By a variety of means voices were heard from several focus group and interviews. This was then validated by surveying 350 elected members and officers.
- Resulted in production of the Framework.
- Copies were sent to all local authorities to aid development opportunities for politicians and ultimately new 'members of talent'.
- Is under constant review and an updated Framework is imminent.
- Currently Political Skills Toolkit II is the reference point.

Background



- The Framework itself.
- Background information on reason for the Framework.
- Examples from local government of use of the Framework.
- Self-reflection learning reviews examples.

Tool-Kit Contents



Skill 1 – Local Leadership

Refers to the need for councillors to engage with members of their community in order to learn about issues of local concern and help to facilitate a vision for the locality. It involves encouraging trust and respect between individuals and groups by mediating fairly and constructively between different organisations and sections of the community.

Local leadership

"People can elect their councillor confident in the knowledge that they will be able to act on the issues they care about and have campaigned on."

(A Plain English Guide to the Localism Act, November 2011, p.5)

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, empathising and finding new ways to engage with others
- ✓ Creates partnerships with different sections and groups in the community and ensures their involvement in decision-making
- ✓ Mediates fairly and constructively between people and groups with conflicting needs
- ✓ Works with others to develop and champion a shared local vision

Negative

- ✗ Doesn't engage with their community, waits to be approached and is difficult to contact
- ✗ Maintains a low public 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



Six Core Skills for Councillors

Skill 2 – Partnership Working

This aspect of the councillor role focuses on the need to build good relationships with others (ie colleagues, officers, community groups and other organisations) by identifying and working collaboratively to achieve shared goals. It recognises the need for councillors to recognise and value different contributions, delegate or provide support as required, and to take a long-term view in developing partnerships.

Partnership working

Positive

- ✓ Works proactively to build good relationships with colleagues, officers, community groups and other organisations
- ✓ Emphasis on achieving shared goals by maintaining focus and mobilising others
- ✓ Knows when to delegate, provide support or empower others to take responsibility
- ✓ Makes people from all backgrounds feel valued, trusted and included (eg, says "thank you")
- ✓ Understands and acts on their role in building and shaping key partnerships at local, regional and national levels
- ✓ Understands how and when to assert authority to resolve conflict or deadlock effectively

Negative

- ✗ Prefers to exert control and impose solutions by using status rather than through persuasion and involving others
- ✗ Fails to recognise or make use of others' skills and ideas
- ✗ Typically avoids working with people with different views or political values
- ✗ Prefers to act alone and fails to engage or network with others
- ✗ 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



Six Core Skills for Councillors

Skill 3 – Communication Skills

This skill area recognises the need for councillors need to demonstrate excellent communication skills across many different settings, including the ability to listen sensitively and use appropriate language with different groups. Councillors must also communicate regularly and effectively with all parts of their community using different forms of media.

Communication skills

Positive

- ✓ Provides regular feedback to people, making sure they are kept informed and manages expectations
- ✓ Regularly informs and communicates with their community using all available media (eg, internet newsletters and email)
- ✓ Listens to others, checks for understanding and adapts their own communication style as required
- ✓ Creates opportunities to communicate with different sectors, including vulnerable and hard to reach groups
- ✓ Speaks confidently in public settings (eg, in council and community meetings, and the media)
- ✓ Communicates clearly in spoken and written forms (eg, uses appropriate language and avoids jargon or 'council speak')

Negative

- ✗ Slow to respond to others; tends to communicate 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
- ✗ Tends not to participate in meetings and lacks confidence when speaking in public
- ✗ Presents confused arguments using poor language and style



Six Core Skills for Councillors

Skill 4 – Political Understanding

This skill set recognises the need for councillors to develop a range of political skills in order to communicate their values, promote a political vision, and encourage democratic process and public engagement. It recognises that councillors need to work across group boundaries at times, yet still be able to maintain their own political integrity.

Political understanding

Positive

- ✓ Demonstrates a consistency in views and values through their decisions and actions
- ✓ Helps to develop cohesion within and between different groups and also between different groups and the council
- ✓ Clearly communicates political values through canvassing and campaigning
- ✓ Actively develops their own political intelligence (eg, understanding local and national political landscapes)
- ✓ Looks for ways to promote democracy and increase public engagement
- ✓ Is able to put party politics aside and work across political boundaries when required, without compromising political values

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
- ✗ Lacks a clear political vision of what they would like to achieve



Six Core Skills for Councillors

Skill 5 – Scrutiny & Challenge

Scrutiny and challenge is an important day-to-day aspect of the councillor role. Councillors need to act as a critical friend by identifying opportunities for scrutiny and outside the council, and by providing constructive challenge and feedback to others. To be effective in this role, councillors need to analyse information quickly and present arguments that are concise, meaningful and easily understood.

Scrutiny and challenge

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
- ✓ Asks challenging but constructive questions

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
- ✗ Uses scrutiny resources inappropriately (eg, on issues over which they have no influence)
- ✗ Overly aggressive: prefers political 'blood sports' to collaboration and uses scrutiny for political gain

Six Core Skills for Councillors

Skill 6 – Regulating & Monitoring

This skill set relates to the more judicial aspects of the role that require councillors to understand their legal responsibilities and follow protocol when evaluating arguments and making decisions. Not only do councillors need to balance public needs and local policy, they must also monitor progress and seek feedback on their own learning needs.

Regulating and monitoring

Positive

- ✓ Understands and acts on their judicial role in meeting legal responsibilities (eg, duty of care, corporate parenting)
- ✓ Uses evidence to evaluate arguments and make independent, impartial judgements
- ✓ Chairs meetings effectively, follows protocol to make sure all views are explored and keeps process on track
- ✓ Understands and abides by the councillor's code of conduct
- ✓ Follows legal process, balances public needs and local policy
- ✓ Monitors others' performance and intervenes when necessary to ensure progress
- ✓ Is committed to self-development, seeks feedback and looks for opportunities to learn

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
- ✗ Leaves monitoring and checks on progress to others
- ✗ Makes decisions without taking advice, considering regulations or taking account of wider issues
- ✗ Misses deadlines, leaves business unfinished and lacks balance between council and other commitments



Six Core Skills for Councillors

Every Member has their unique areas of strength as well as areas they would like to improve

The Framework provides a starting point and provides some learning prompts for councillors to consider – could we use this as part of our Personal Development Plan process? Key questions posed by the toolkit include:

- Think about the way you perform your role. Focus on one of the skill areas and decide whether you (or others) would rate this as an area of strength. Can you recall any recent occasions when you have demonstrated any of the Positive characteristics for this skill set?
Have there been times when you have used negative behaviours?
- Are any of the behaviours surprising?
- Take time to think about 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’?
- Think about the behaviour of your political colleagues. How might their behaviour reflect the council’s culture?
- For example, do members generally keep up-to-date with community issues and local concerns?



Every Member has their unique areas of strength as well as areas they would like to improve

- 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?
- 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?

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Some examples of PDP layout incorporating the skills and learning prompts are available in the document - [read-revised-version-poli-243.pdf \(local.gov.uk\)](#)

Learning Prompts on Behaviours



Every Member has their unique areas of strength as well as areas they would like to improve

Self reflective learning

How am I at scrutiny and challenge?	
<p>What do you think are your particular strengths in this area? (eg. what do you bring to this area of your role as a councillor that you think is particularly good?)</p>	<p>Prompts...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do I engage in scrutiny as an everyday part of my role?• What new areas have I identified for scrutiny?• How do I deal with new information?• Are my arguments always concise, meaningful and easily understood?• Am I constructive in my criticism?• Am I fair, objective and rigorous when challenging processes or people?
<p>Can you illustrate these strengths by writing down examples of things you think you have done well over the past year?</p>	
<p>Which of these areas would you like to improve and how?</p>	

PDP Example



The Political Skills Framework a councillor's toolkit



Created by Professor Jo Silvester
for the Local Government Association (LGA)



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Introduction

Councillors by their very nature have strong leadership instincts and we must continuously develop those skills to ensure that we are able to meet the challenges, opportunities and risks that come with the Localism agenda. Government has given us a set of tools with which to lead and it has never been as important to properly equip Members to take full advantage of these new powers and provide genuine local leadership in our towns, cities and villages.



The landscape is far more complex than it was a decade ago and local government has a democratic right to provide leadership across a geographic area, not confined to local government services, but a right to influence every aspect of services provided locally.

Developing new leadership skills to meet this challenge is vital and it is through shared learning that Councillors can and will maximise the opportunity to provide genuine local leadership of place

At the Local Government Association we believe that great leaders make great places. In 2004 when we commissioned the first version of the political skills framework there had been very little research into what traits and skills define great local political leaders. The aim of this framework is to provide a foundation for the support and development we offer to our elected members. We are proud to be producing the third iteration of the political skills framework as we aim to keep pushing forward the thinking and development of political support for councillors.

Councillor Richard Stay

Lead Member on Leadership Development,
Improvement Board LGA
Executive Member,
Central Bedfordshire Council
Chairman, Improvement East

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 learned, practised and improved over time. The Political Skills framework sets out the key knowledge and skills needed to support new and experienced councillors in their efforts to develop the knowledge and skills to be effective in their role.

The framework was originally drafted in 2004 and revised again in 2007 in recognition of the substantial culture change in attitudes towards political roles and how they should be carried out. This included growing recognition of the need for training and development among councillors themselves.

The latest version of the framework reflects the fact that whilst councillors' responsibilities may remain largely unaltered, they have evolved over time and the political and social environment in which they carry out these responsibilities has changed fundamentally. New council structures, vastly increased use of new technology and social media, public sector spending cuts, and rising public expectations (to name but a few) are all having a profound effect on how councillors undertake their role.

Political Skills toolkit II

The Political Skills toolkit (PSF) is designed to support local councillors and those working with them in their efforts to review and support individual development needs. The tool-kit contains:

1. A revised easy-to-access political skills framework that takes account of changes in councillors' roles prompted by recent developments in local government and the wider social context.
2. Self-reflective 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 for all councillors in this tool-kit. Depending upon your specific role as a councillor the circumstances and contexts within which you apply these skills may vary, the core skill areas will remain relevant for all councillors.

Local leadership

This refers to the need for councillors to engage with members of their community in order to learn about issues of local concern and help to facilitate a vision for the locality. It involves encouraging trust and respect between individuals and groups by mediating fairly and constructively between different organisations and sections of the community.

Partnership working

This aspect of the councillor role focuses on the need to build good relationships with others (i.e. colleagues, officers, community groups and other organisations) by identifying and working collaboratively to achieve shared goals. It recognises the need for councillors to recognise and value different contributions, delegate or provide support as required, and to take a long-term view in developing partnerships.

Communication skills

This skill area recognises the need for councillors need to demonstrate excellent communication skills across many different settings, including the ability to listen sensitively and use appropriate language with different groups. Councillors must also communicate regularly and effectively with all parts of their community using different forms of media.

Political understanding

This skill set recognises the need for councillors to develop a range of political skills in order to communicate their values, promote a political vision, and encourage democratic processes and public engagement. It recognises that councillors need to work across group boundaries at times, yet still be able to maintain their own political integrity.

Scrutiny and challenge

Scrutiny and challenge is an important day-to-day aspect of the councillor role. Councillors need to act as a critical friend by identifying opportunities for scrutiny inside and outside the council, and by providing constructive challenge and feedback to others. To be effective in this role, councillors need to analyse information quickly and present arguments that are concise, meaningful and easily understood.

Regulating and monitoring

This skill set relates to the more judicial aspects of the role that require councillors to understand their legal responsibilities and follow protocol when evaluating arguments and making decisions. Not only do councillors need to balance public needs and local policy, they must also monitor progress and seek feedback on their own learning needs.

Positive and negative indicators

Each of the skill set definitions describe what is expected of councillors if they are to be effective and influential in their role. It is recognised that there is no 'one best way' to be a councillor. Each member will approach their role as a community leader in a very different way from their colleagues, but by discussion with over 350 members and officers the indicators below reflect commonly held views about what might be considered excellent and poor councillor behaviour.

Positive (desirable) behaviours and Negative (undesirable) behaviours are included for each of the skill sets. No member could be expected to demonstrate excellent levels of positive behaviour all of the time, and never demonstrate any Negative behaviour, but excellent councillors generally demonstrate far more Positive than Negative characteristics.

These behaviours are described as positive and negative indicators because they provide an indication of the types of behaviour that councillors associate with excellent and poor performance. They are not meant to be prescriptive – but rather to help councillors and those who work with them reflect on how they perform their role and how what they do fits with each of the skill areas. They also provide a way to foster a shared understanding of what constitutes excellent councillor performance among the wider community.

Why are there negative indicators?

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 difference of opinion, this work has helped us to 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 to change their views just to fit with the views of 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.



Local leadership

“People can elect their councillor confident in the knowledge that they will be able to act on the issues they care about and have campaigned on.”

(A Plain English Guide to the Localism Act, November 2011, p.5)

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, empathising and finding new ways to engage with others
- ✓ Creates partnerships with different sections and groups in the community and ensures their involvement in decision-making
- ✓ Mediates fairly and constructively between people and groups with conflicting needs
- ✓ Works with others to develop and champion a shared local vision

Negative

- ✗ Doesn't engage with their community, waits to be approached and is difficult to contact
- ✗ Maintains a low public 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



Self reflective learning

How do I see myself as a ward member?

What do you think are your particular strengths?

(eg, what do you bring to the role of councillor that you think is particularly good?)

Prompts...

How is my role changing and what is driving that change

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?

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

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

Partnership working

Positive

- ✓ Works proactively to build good relationships with colleagues, officers, community groups and other organisations
- ✓ Emphasis on achieving shared goals by maintaining focus and mobilising others
- ✓ Knows when to delegate, provide support or empower others to take responsibility
- ✓ Makes people from all backgrounds feel valued, trusted and included (eg, says 'thank you')
- ✓ Understands and acts on their role in building and shaping key partnerships at local, regional and national levels
- ✓ Understands how and when to assert authority to resolve conflict or deadlock effectively

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- ✗ Prefers to exert control and impose solutions by using status rather than through persuasion and involving others
- ✗ Fails to recognise or make use of others' skills and ideas
- ✗ Typically avoids working with people with different views or political values
- ✗ Prefers to act alone and fails to engage or network with others
- ✗ 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



Self reflective learning

How am I at working in partnership?

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

Prompts...

- Do I have good relationships with colleagues and officers?
- How do I help others build partnerships?
- 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?
- Am I engaging with all relevant groups within my ward?

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

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

Communication skills

Positive

- ✓ Provides regular feedback to people, making sure they are kept informed and manages expectations
- ✓ Regularly informs and communicates with their community using all available media (eg, internet newsletters and email)
- ✓ Listens to others, checks for understanding and adapts their own communication style as required
- ✓ Creates opportunities to communicate with different sectors, including vulnerable and hard to reach groups
- ✓ Speaks confidently in public settings (eg, in council and community meetings, and the media)
- ✓ Communicates clearly in spoken and written forms (eg, uses appropriate language and avoids jargon or 'council speak')

Negative

- ✗ Slow to respond to others; tends to communicate 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
- ✗ Tends not to participate in meetings and lacks confidence when speaking in public
- ✗ Presents confused arguments using poor language and style



Self reflective learning

How am I at communicating with others?

What do you think are your particular strengths in this area? (eg, what do you bring to this area of your role as a councillor that you think is good?)

Prompts...

- How regularly do I communicate with different sections of the community?
- What different methods do I use to communicate?
- How well do I listen and adapt to others?
- Do I feel comfortable using technology to communicate with people?
- Am I confident when speaking in public?
- Do I feedback regularly to others to keep them informed?

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

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

Political understanding

Positive

- ✓ Demonstrates a consistency in views and values through their decisions and actions
- ✓ Helps to develop cohesion within and between different groups and also between different groups and the council
- ✓ Clearly communicates political values through canvassing and campaigning
- ✓ Actively develops their own political intelligence (eg, understanding local and national political landscapes)
- ✓ Looks for ways to promote democracy and increase public engagement
- ✓ Is able to put party politics aside and work across political boundaries when required, without compromising political values

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
- ✗ Lacks a clear political vision of what they would like to achieve



Self reflective learning

How am I at political understanding?

What do you think are your particular strengths in this area? (eg, what do you bring to this area of your role as a councillor that you think is particularly good?)

Prompts...

- How have I promoted democracy and increased public engagement?
- Are my values clear and reflected in what I do?
- How do I build cohesion between members of my own group?
- Can I work effectively in other political environments (eg, outside council)?
- How have I developed my political intelligence?
- How well do I work with people with different views and values?

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

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

Scrutiny and challenge

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
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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
- ✗ Uses scrutiny resources inappropriately (eg, on issues over which they have no influence)
- ✗ Overly aggressive: prefers political 'blood sports' to collaboration and uses scrutiny for political gain

Self reflective learning

How am I at scrutiny and challenge?

What do you think are your particular strengths in this area? (eg, what do you bring to this area of your role as a councillor that you think is particularly good?)

Prompts...

- How do I engage in scrutiny as an everyday part of my role?
- What new areas have I identified for scrutiny?
- How do I deal with new information?
- Are my arguments always concise, meaningful and easily understood?
- Am I constructive in my criticism?
- Am I fair, objective and rigorous when challenging processes or people?

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

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

Regulating and monitoring

Positive

- ✓ Understands and acts on their judicial role in meeting legal responsibilities (eg, duty of care, corporate parenting)
- ✓ Uses evidence to evaluate arguments and make independent, impartial judgements
- ✓ Chairs meetings effectively, follows protocol to make sure all views are explored and keeps process on track
- ✓ Understands and abides by the councillor's code of conduct
- ✓ Follows legal process, balances public needs and local policy
- ✓ Monitors others' performance and intervenes when necessary to ensure progress
- ✓ Is committed to self-development, seeks feedback and looks for opportunities to learn

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
- ✗ Leaves monitoring and checks on progress to others
- ✗ Makes decisions without taking advice, considering regulations or taking account of wider issues
- ✗ Misses deadlines, leaves business unfinished and lacks balance between council and other commitments



Self reflective learning

How am I at regulating and monitoring?

What do you think are your particular strengths in this area? (eg, what do you bring to this area of your role as a councillor that you think is particularly good?)

Prompts...

- How well do I understand and act on my judicial role? (eg, corporate parenting)
- How effectively do I chair meetings?
- Do I know enough about legal process?
- Are my judgements based on evidence?
- Do I monitor others to ensure progress?
- When have I sought feedback or looked for opportunities to learn?

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

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

Some questions and answers

All these behaviours look very daunting, aren't they a little unrealistic?

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

Councils may of course require different sets of skills at different times – and since a council is a team whilst it may be desirable for all members to have all the skills it isn't always necessary that they do. For example, if the Leader is not a particularly inspired communicator, s/he could ask a colleague to handle the media or major presentations while the Leader concentrates on using their strengths elsewhere.

The PSF provides a starting point for individual councillors to reflect on their own skill profile, before deciding what they want to develop and how. Some councillors might decide that they want to be excellent in all areas, whereas others might prefer to focus on one or two key areas.

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 behaviours.

Learning prompt for councillors



Think about the way you perform your role. Focus on one of the skill areas and decide whether you (or others) would rate this as an area of strength. Can you recall any recent occasions when you have demonstrated any of the Positive characteristics for this skill set? Have there been times when you have used negative behaviours? Are any of the behaviours surprising? Also take time to think about 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'?

Can I change some of these characteristics?

These characteristics are based on the views of over 350 elected members and officers. 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 of your own authority influences the way in which members are expected to behave towards officers, for example, or the way in which political groups communicate with one another.

Learning prompt for councillors



Think about the behaviour of your political colleagues. How might their behaviour reflect the council's culture? For example, 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 how influence is exerted.

However, there is also an ongoing need for political skill with a small 'p'. Political skill means being able to influence and persuade others, and the ability to mobilise support to achieve objectives. Members must be able to work in political environments inside and outside the council.

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 reviews we have asked members and officers how they have used the PSF, these were some of the examples they gave:

- member induction
- training and development programmes
- self-review
- 360-review systems
- mentoring
- learning materials
- personal development plans
- development centres.

For example, Irene MacDonald (a former councillor and member 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.

In the full report there are case studies which describe how the PSF has been used as basis for creating bespoke development activities for councillors.

Learning resources

There is also a growing array of learning resources available to councils and councillors and most local councils will 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/seminars
- external training and know-how
- work shadowing
- visits to other councils
- mentoring and coaching
- training
- learning needs analysis
- 360-degree review.

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.

Useful contacts – update

Councillor development contacts in:

- Local Government Association
Political Mentoring Toolkit –
download from:
<http://tinyurl.com/btjk2l4>
- SOLACE
- SEEMP
- Work Psychology Partnership:
info@workpsychologypartnership.com
<http://www.workpsychologypartnership.com/>





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We consider requests on an individual basis.

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