

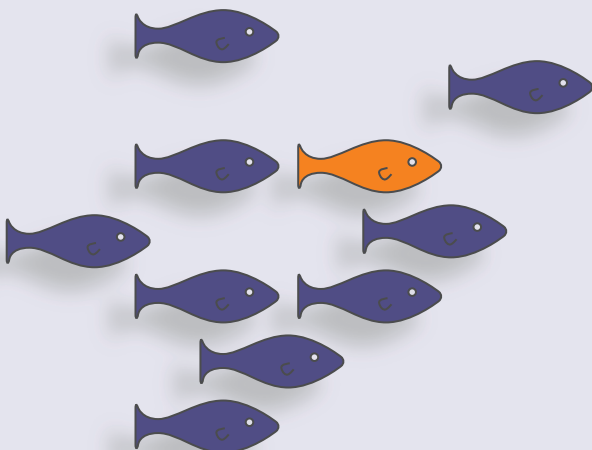
stronger political leadership

# Giving councillors the tools for the job

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the supporting councillors framework:  
a best practice guide for councils

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## Improvement and Development Agency for local government (IDeA)

The IDeA works for local government improvement so councils can serve people and places better.

We use experienced councillors and senior officers, known as peers, who support and challenge councils to improve themselves.

We enable councils to share good practice through the national Beacons scheme and regional local government networks. The best ideas are put on the IDeA Knowledge website.

Our Leadership Academy programmes help councillors become better leaders so they can balance the diverse demands of people living in the same community.

The IDeA also promotes the development of local government's management and workforce. We advise councils on improving customer service and value for money. And we help councils work through local partnerships to tackle difficult problems such as crime and poor public health.

The IDeA is a member of the LGA group, comprising of five partner organisations who work together to support, promote and improve local government. It is owned by the Local Government Association and belongs to local government.

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## Contents

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Introduction	2
Who is the framework for?	3
Councillor support requirements	4
Support arrangements for roles	10
Materials and sources of further information	12
Appendices	
i Example of councillor administrative support arrangements (Kirklees Council)	13
ii Councillor support (Newark and Sherwood District Council)	16
iii Sample induction programme (South Tyneside Council)	17
iv Membership of the Councillor Support Reference Group	19

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# Giving councillors the tools for the job the supporting councillors framework: a best practice guide for councils

## Foreword

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Councillors are crucial to both local government and to local democracy. As representatives of their communities they are advocates arguing for council resources to address local issues and championing individual cases. They are also community leaders giving a vision and direction for their communities as a whole.

Councillors also have an important role in promoting participative democracy. They act as enablers and facilitators mobilising the local community to help itself, encouraging people to get involved.

Finally councillors are part of the decision-making process of the council itself. Most often this is through scrutiny arrangements but is also done through the Planning and Licensing committees that address the council's statutory duties. Councillors also often represent the Council on external bodies and as such are a key link in ensuring that they all work together to address the needs of the community as a whole.

While the need for effective member training and development has been generally recognised, the issue of member support arrangements has not been addressed as systematically. As the empowerment agenda rolls out the role of the councillor will become more important and the demands placed on them will increase and their effectiveness will depend upon the quality of the support they receive.

It is the Council's responsibility to give councillors the tools they need to do this job.

'Councillors are the people who should be running councils. To do this, councillors at all levels need their officers to be enablers of councillor activity, not blockers of it. Councils all too often make the mistake of thinking elected members are little more than a board of governorship when councillors are the only sovereign community leaders with any form of mandate to do their work. For this reason, I hope officers and councillors will take this opportunity to make a commitment to give members the support they need.'

Councillor David Shakespeare OBE  
Leader of the LGA Conservative Group

'The growing role of councillors as leaders of their communities requires ever more support from officers. Too often, keen and enthusiastic councillors are simply unable to carry out their work as effectively as they would like to because of a lack of member support. If we truly want to empower those who are elected, the very least councils can do is to ensure that the support they give fits in with modern lifestyles and allow every minute that councillors spend on working for their community to be as effective as possible.'

Councillor Sir Jeremy Beecham  
Leader of the LGA Labour Group

'The Local Government Act 2007, the Government's response to the Councillors Commission and the move by all politicians to embrace localism means that now is an ideal time for councillors and their councils to move to the heart of policy making and service delivery in their area. We can only do that properly when our councils support us in all the roles that the law and good practice provide for us. It is now vital that councillors receive the support that they need and deserve and if they don't we need to campaign together to ensure that they do.'

Councillor Richard Kemp  
Deputy Chair and Leader of the Liberal Democrat

'Independent Group councillors and councillors not affiliated to the three largest parties endorse the need to embrace localism as fully and effectively as possible. Councils need to continue to gain new powers and autonomy to meet the needs of their communities and fulfil their responsibilities as enablers for their communities. Councillors need to be at the driving edge of greater localism, working within their authorities, their residents and other partners to ensure public service planning and delivery meets the ambitions and aspirations of local people.'

Councillor Keith Ross  
Leader of the LGA Independent Group,  
West Somerset District Council

# Giving councillors the tools for the job the supporting councillors framework: a best practice guide for councils

## Introduction

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'If I am going to be effective as a community leader I need to have the tools for the job. At the moment I spend too much time doing basic admin and sorting out my IT.'

Unnamed ward councillor  
Southern Region

Councillors, and the way they fulfil their roles as community leaders and advocates, are key to the success of local democracy. Local communities face a wide range of challenges. The ward councillor has a crucial role in channelling these into the council's priorities and plans and empowering local groups to take appropriate action.

Councillors also have a key role in encouraging participation. Councillors are the leaders of our communities. They encourage and support local initiatives and through this make local democracy more relevant and accessible to people.

For councillors to fulfil their important role, they need the support of the council.

'Our member induction programme is integral to our 'one team' approach. A well thought out and planned induction helps newly elected colleagues get the most out of a busy first few weeks after election.

All members bring with them different experiences, skills and knowledge from their everyday lives.

That's why we like to spend time getting to know each one, so we can provide the support that they need and help them understand, and be able to navigate around, our organisation.

Putting faces to names is just the start, and having a planned approach is the key to getting it right.'

Councillor Iain Malcolm  
Leader, South Tyneside Council

The Government White Paper 'Communities in control: real people, real power' (July 2008) talks about the need to give more effective support to councillors. This focus stems from the need to ensure that councillors are given the appropriate tools and facilities to enable them to fulfil their roles, and use their time, effectively. In particular there is the need to support councillors in their roles as community leaders, representatives and advocates, especially within their wards. It mentions specifically the way council business is organised and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enable councillors to participate in meetings remotely. However there is a number of ways in which councillors can be better supported, some requiring little investment (other than some officer time) to draw the information together.

# Giving councillors the tools for the job the supporting councillors framework: a best practice guide for councils

## Who is the framework for?

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This framework has been developed to help councillors and councils review their support arrangements. It has been supported and informed at all stages by a reference group of councillors, officers and others (see appendix iv for a full list of participants).

### **It is for councillors:**

Using this framework will enable councillors, individually and collectively, to consider their support needs in the context of their roles within their own local authority. It will support them to consider how best the authority can provide a range of support for their various roles and personal circumstances.

### **It is for officers:**

Using this framework will enable officers to evaluate the support they provide to their elected members against what may be considered good practice. It will help officers review support against the different roles which councillors play and ensure that the right level of support is given to enable councillors to effectively carry out their duties and deliver on their community responsibilities.

'In Kirklees, we have valued the support for council members and sought to enhance the opportunities for personal development through appropriate training and 360 degree reviews for cabinet members. In the modern world, proper support is vital for members to enable them to play a full role in council activities.'

Councillor Robert Light  
Leader, Kirklees Council

# Giving councillors the tools for the job the supporting councillors framework: a best practice guide for councils

## Councillor support requirements

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All councillors need to have appropriate support in relation to:

- their community representative and leadership roles
- their roles in the leadership, management and scrutiny of the council
- representing the council on partnerships and external bodies.

These support needs will also vary according to:

- their personal circumstances
- the nature of the communities and special interest groups they represent
- their experience as councillors and as individuals
- the way the council organises and conducts its business.

The support needs of individual councillors are also likely to change over time, as circumstances, communities and contexts change and their experience develops.

The scrutiny role of councillors will also require more specialist support, particularly where it involves the scrutiny of external bodies such as Crime and Disorder Partnerships, Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) or Primary Care Trusts (PCTs).

Similar levels of support should be extended to statutory and non-statutory co-opted members of committees, particularly with regard to parent governors and diocesan representatives on overview and scrutiny committees. While they are not councillors they have been invited in as a community representative to do a task and they need to be given an appropriate level of support to enable them to do it.

The IDeA has worked closely with the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) to promote better scrutiny (see 'Materials and sources of further information').

While this framework sets out the areas and ways in which councillors need to be supported, it does not specify how this support should be provided. It is recognised that this will vary according to the size and structure of the council and the resources available. Reasonable adjustments will also need to be made by the authority to provide support for councillors who have a disability, and specific support may need to be given to councillors with particular communication needs.

'A good political assistant can provide many of the bullets for councillors to fire. They have the time and the contacts to provide the research and background information that enables councillors to make better, more informed decisions.'

Councillor Tony Woods  
Leader, Northampton Borough Council

# Giving councillors the tools for the job the supporting councillors framework: a best practice guide for councils

## The framework

Support area	Detailed support requirement	Notes
1. Expectations	Role profiles/descriptions	<p>Clear statements of what is expected of councillors in their different roles, particularly as community leaders and with scrutiny.</p> <p>Role descriptions will help councillors to understand what is expected of them and can also help to identify any personal development needs for both new and experienced councillors taking on new roles within the council.</p>
2. Administrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Member control over how meetings are diarised</li> <li>Diary management</li> <li>Making travel arrangements</li> <li>Casework management</li> <li>Arranging and publicising ward surgeries</li> <li>Ward walks/arrangements for site visits for local ward issues</li> <li>Correspondence</li> <li>Support for post and communications</li> <li>Making room bookings for member meetings</li> <li>Research support</li> <li>IT support and training</li> </ul>	<p>Councillors with special interests or those who develop links with special interest groups across the authority may have additional administrative support needs.</p> <p>Councillors with additional responsibilities (for example, group leaders, portfolio-holders, and chairs of scrutiny) may require additional administrative support.</p> <p>Correspondence would include ward newsletters where these are part of the council's strategy of communicating and engaging with local communities.</p>
3. Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear processes for accessing support and for making information requests</li> <li>Clear channels/processes for feeding cases and local issues into the council and for logging and tracking these</li> <li>Clear processes for accessing support and for feeding back reports for councillors appointed to outside bodies</li> </ul>	<p>Councillors and council officers should be aware that the council serves all members.</p> <p>The council's decision-making processes can be complex. All councillors should receive information and advice on how decisions are made and the opportunities open to them to influence these decisions.</p>

# Giving councillors the tools for the job the supporting councillors framework: a best practice guide for councils

## The framework

Support area	Detailed support requirement	Notes
4. Information	<p>Access to meeting papers, core council documents, performance information and correspondence</p> <p>Ward profiles and comparisons</p> <p>Access to commissioning for surveys and consultation and engagement support to enable councillors to consult local residents effectively</p> <p>Expenses available along with clear 'how to claim' information, including advice on tax implications and benefits entitlement</p> <p>Development opportunities</p> <p>Signposting to other sources of relevant information (both internal and external)</p> <p>Reasonable access to officers, including key office holders</p> <p>Key contacts (both internal and external) across the tiers of local government (parish/district/county) where appropriate</p>	<p>Councillors with special interests or who develop links with special interest groups across the authority will have additional information needs.</p> <p>Councils need to be aware of how much information they send to councillors to prevent information overload, by ensuring the information they receive is timely, relevant and with the right level of detail.</p> <p>Protocols regarding the sending of information to, and consulting with, councillors on issues relevant to their wards will help to ensure councillors receive the information they need.</p> <p>Ward bulletins and electronic access to information may be provided.</p>
5. Staff	<p>Administrative support staff</p> <p>Nominated Ward Support Officer</p> <p>Dedicated ICT contact</p> <p>Political group support staff (if supported by the authority)</p> <p>Scrutiny support officers</p> <p>Media and communications officers</p> <p>Appropriate legal advice</p>	<p>All council staff, but particularly service managers, should be aware of and sensitive to the roles of councillors and their resource requirements.</p> <p>Larger authorities may be able to provide dedicated support staff. Other councils may need to have nominated contacts.</p> <p>'Out of hours' support may be available in certain circumstances, for example media/ICT/legal.</p>

# Giving councillors the tools for the job the supporting councillors framework: a best practice guide for councils

## The framework

Support area	Detailed support requirement	Notes
6. Facilities	<p>Accommodation for ward surgeries and meetings with constituents</p> <p>Office/workspace when on council premises</p> <p>Meeting rooms available for members use to discuss council business</p> <p>Access to catering facilities</p> <p>Access to a photocopier</p>	<p>Surgeries, case work and other ward meetings are a key element of councillors' work as representatives of their communities and should be supported as such.</p> <p>Confidential meeting rooms may be required to conduct interviews with constituents.</p> <p>Larger meeting rooms may also be required for a group of members to discuss issues in private.</p>
7. Finance	<p>Identify the budgets that fund councillor support and development</p> <p>Cover costs of surgeries, including appropriate publicity</p> <p>Clear and transparent members allowances scheme</p> <p>Clear and transparent travel allowances, schemes that promote using public transport, green travel schemes, cycling, etc</p> <p>Dedicated budget to support scrutiny research, meetings outside town hall, consultation events, etc</p> <p>Delegated budget for improvements within the ward</p>	<p>Budgets that support councillors should be clearly identified and there should be agreement between the groups that the amounts set are appropriate and necessary.</p> <p>Councillors should be able to claim for costs incurred in their council work (including their community representative work as councillors).</p> <p>Guidance to the Local Government Act 2000 specifies that dedicated support and a discrete budget should be available for those in a scrutiny role ('New council constitutions: guidance to English Authorities', paras. 3.54-3.46).</p> <p>If councillors have delegated budgets then appropriate support needs to be provided to enable them to manage these effectively and record them accurately.</p>

# Giving councillors the tools for the job the supporting councillors framework: a best practice guide for councils

## The framework

Support area	Detailed support requirement	Notes
8. ICT	<p>Access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• computer</li> <li>• broadband</li> <li>• email</li> <li>• intranet</li> <li>• telephone</li> <li>• digital camera</li> <li>• personal website</li> <li>• pages/blogs</li> </ul> <p>Technology to reduce the amount of travel time required (especially in rural areas)</p> <p>Access to dedicated ICT support</p>	<p>How this is provided should be appropriate to the needs to the individual. Can be done by providing the facilities or grants/allowances for use of own.</p> <p>An additional telephone line, personal digital assistant (PDA) and mobile phone are useful tools. Some members use digital cameras to highlight issues in their ward.</p> <p>Using technology to reduce travelling can support members in making the best use of their time.</p> <p>See staffing</p>
9. General	<p>Signed-up to the Member Development Charter and working towards achieving the Charter award</p> <p>All support is appropriate to the role and personal circumstances of individual councillors</p> <p>Clarity of what support and development opportunities are shared across local government tiers (parish/district/county)</p>	<p>The Member Development Charter award provides an external challenge, collating evidence that proves a council is supporting its councillors, particularly in terms of their development.</p> <p>This may require the council to have a menu of support arrangements in place (including, for example, child care) that can be 'activated' as the need arises.</p> <p>Where possible member development opportunities should be shared across the tiers, partly as a way of fostering better relations between Parish/Town, District and County councillors.</p>
10. Equipment	<p>Stationery</p> <p>Filing cabinets for use at home</p> <p>Computer equipment</p>	<p>Headed notepaper, envelopes, stamps, and business cards.</p> <p>See ICT</p>
11. Exit interviews	<p>Interviews with councillors who are standing down, retiring, or resigning their seats, particularly those standing down mid-term (ie outside of election time)</p>	<p>To identify whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the reasons for standing down are linked to the level of support provided</li> <li>• the council could have done more, or done things differently, to support the councillor.</li> </ul>

# Giving councillors the tools for the job the supporting councillors framework: a best practice guide for councils

## The framework

Support area	Detailed support requirement	Notes
12. Training and development	<p>Personal development plan (PDP): short, medium and long-term development needs identified</p> <p>Development programme to meet identified needs</p> <p>Transferability of skills</p> <p>Range of learning methods available</p>	<p>Training and development opportunities should address the personal needs of each councillor.</p> <p>Development approaches should take account of the different learning styles and preferences of councillors.</p> <p>The IDeA Political Skills Framework Toolkit identifies the range of skills councillors need and includes guidance and examples of how it can be used to help develop PDPs.</p>
12(a) Induction	<p>A properly designed induction programme</p> <p>Information pack</p> <p>Officer and Member 'buddies' and/or mentors</p> <p>Introduction to key officers</p>	<p>Induction needs to link through to on-going development.</p> <p>Information and introductions need to include the key officers for their specific ward, as well as in the council as a whole.</p> <p>The IDeA 'Councillors Guide' provides general information about local government and some of the things that councillors can expect once they have been elected.</p>
12(b) General	<p>Personal development planning to identify individual development needs</p> <p>Mentoring – internal or external as appropriate</p> <p>Distance learning materials available</p> <p>Networking opportunities (sub-regional; regional; national)</p> <p>Skills development</p> <p>Briefings on current and emerging issues</p>	<p>The PDP may carry through from the induction programme.</p> <p>General development opportunities should be matched both to the individual needs of each councillor (as set out in their PDP) and to their different roles (as described in the role profiles/descriptions).</p> <p>Development opportunities should cover a range of styles and approaches to match the learning preferences of individual councillors.</p>
12(c) Specialist	<p>Regulatory (inc. licensing)</p> <p>Scrutiny</p> <p>Planning</p>	<p>Appropriate training for all councillors serving on specialist committees, but particularly for chairs and vice-chairs.</p>
12(d) Individual	<p>Group leader</p> <p>Leader of council</p> <p>Leader of opposition</p> <p>Scrutiny chair</p>	<p>The development needs of councillors taking on specific roles within the council need to be considered and appropriate opportunities and support provided.</p>

# Giving councillors the tools for the job the supporting councillors framework: a best practice guide for councils

## Support arrangements for roles

A useful way of considering whether appropriate support arrangements are in place is to evaluate each of the support areas in relation to the roles councillors play. The spreadsheet below lists the main roles councillors may take on and allows you to review your support arrangements in relation to these.

Role	Outline	Support arrangements							
		Expectations	Admin	Info	Staff	Facilities	Budget	ICT	Training and development
Community leader	Providing direction for their areas; mediating between and helping to reconcile competing views and interests; encouraging and aiding people and communities to resolve local problems; fostering relationships with all sectors (including the third sector); monitoring public services; acting as advocates for their area.								
Place shaping	<p>The use of powers and influence to promote the general wellbeing of a community and its citizens.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building and shaping local identity</li> <li>• Representing the community</li> <li>• Maintaining the cohesiveness of the community and supporting debate within it</li> <li>• Helping to resolve disagreements</li> <li>• Working to make the local economy more successful</li> <li>• Understanding local needs and preferences and making sure that the right services are provided to local people</li> </ul>								
Special interests advocate	Councillors taking on or becoming associated with specific groups or areas of special interest (eg disabilities) or being delegated such a role.								

Giving councillors the tools for the job  
the supporting councillors framework:  
a best practice guide for councils

## Support arrangements for roles

Role	Outline	Support arrangements							
		Expectations	Admin	Info	Staff	Facilities	Budget	ICT	Training and development
External rep.	Representing the council on external partnership bodies.								
Member or chair of scrutiny panel or committee	Providing effective overview, scrutiny and challenge to council services and policies.								
Member or chair of regulatory committee (inc. planning and licensing)	Apply or use delegated powers in relation to the regulatory role of the council; conduct business in accordance with agreed protocols, standards of behaviour, etc; act as spokesperson for the council on issues within remit.								
Member or chair of other committees	Apply or use any delegated powers within remit of the committee; conduct business in accordance with agreed protocols, standards of behaviour, etc; act as spokesperson for the council on issues within remit.								
Group leader	Lead group and manage work of members within the group; representing group views at council meetings.								
Leader of council	Provide leadership and vision to council and the community as a whole; prepare and direct overall strategy; represent the council and act as its spokesperson locally, regionally and nationally.								

# Giving councillors the tools for the job the supporting councillors framework: a best practice guide for councils

## Materials and sources of further information

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### **The IDeA website**

[www.idea.gov.uk](http://www.idea.gov.uk)

The Councillor Development resource on the IDeA's website has a range of materials and information relevant to councillor support and development. From the IDeA home page select the 'Knowledge' tab and then select 'Councillor Development' (listed under Leadership).

- **Role descriptions**  
A number of sample councillor role descriptions developed by local authorities.
- **Personal development planning**  
The IDeA's Political Skills Framework Toolkit includes guidance on developing personal development plans.
- **'Councillors Guide'**  
This guide provides a good general introduction for all new councillors and is updated annually to reflect changing legislation and current thinking. Hard copies can be purchased from the IDeA or it can be downloaded free of charge.
- **The Member Development Charter**  
The Charter for Member Development helps councils build their elected member capacity. The charter and the underpinning good practice guidelines were developed by the IDeA and the nine Regional Employers Organisations. All of the regions now have their own charters. It includes good practice guidelines and a self-assessment template.
- **'Make a difference'**  
This is a good place to start when planning how to get people in your local community involved in the council and to consider standing as a councillor. Documents can be downloaded and tailored to your local area before being used in one-stop-shops, council offices and on websites.

Also on the 'Knowledge' page, select 'Community empowerment and engagement' under 'People and communities.' This will give you details of the IDeA's work to support councils on this important issue.

### **Beacon Councils**

[www.beacons.idea.gov.uk](http://www.beacons.idea.gov.uk)

The Beacon Scheme includes a number of themes addressing community empowerment. These provide useful good practice case studies of the role of the councillor. For more information go to The Beacon Scheme's web pages and then to 'Communities' under 'Quick find by theme'.

### **Centre for Public Scrutiny**

[www.cfps.org.uk](http://www.cfps.org.uk)

The Centre for Public Scrutiny has been created to promote the value of scrutiny in modern and effective government – not only to hold executives to account but also to create a constructive dialogue between the public and its elected representatives – to improve the quality of public services.

# Giving councillors the tools for the job the supporting councillors framework: a best practice guide for councils

## Appendix i

### Example of councillor administrative support arrangements (Kirklees Council)

Extract from a document detailing support arrangements issued to councillors

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#### **Administrative, secretarial and research support**

##### **Support to political groups**

There are currently three group support offices – Liberal Democrat, Labour and Conservative – and each office provides research, secretarial and administrative support to the leadership, group business managers and councillors of the group. This includes research on matters of specific and general interest to individual councillors, and research on policy development for the political group. Also the preparation and drafting of correspondence, documents and reports, and provision of general advice on casework, the typing and distribution of the group's meeting agendas, as well as the attending the meetings and taking minutes.

Dedicated research, secretarial and administration support is provided to large political groups through a Group Support Office. The definition of a large political group is a group that has more than 10 per cent of the council (ie seven councillors).

##### **Councillor support**

The Councillor Support Team provides secretarial and administrative support to the Green Group, other small groups and any independent councillors. The team also provides additional secretarial support to the Group Support Offices during absences or busy periods.

The team provides administrative support, including the provision and distribution of office equipment, ICT equipment, stationery, keys, and assistance with the arrangements of councillors' surgeries, provision of business cards, posters/leaflets and payment of invoices, etc.

The team provides a reception service, dealing with enquiries (face-to-face and telephone) and messages from members of the public, external organisations and officers of the Council, and is often the first point of contact on behalf of councillors.

For small political groups, consisting of less than seven councillors, or any independent councillors, the Councillor Support Team based at Crown Court Buildings will provide secretarial and admin. support. The team also administers surgeries.

Requests for support and advice can be made by contacting the appropriate staff via telephone, email, by sending in work using the stamped addressed envelope facility or by calling into Crown Court Buildings.

Documents to be typed can be hand-written or, preferably, recorded using a pocket memo, and will normally be processed in a maximum of two working days from receipt.

Where appropriate, staff will type letters on the council's letterhead paper using one of the approved councillors' letter templates.

Assistance with the arrangements of static surgeries can be provided. Please note that:

- Static surgeries can be advertised in the local newspaper and a minimum of ten working days notice is required for the Councillor Support Team to place an advert. For cancellation purposes, five working days notice is required prior to the publication of the advert.
- The council will pay the reasonable cost of venues and advertisements.
- Both static and mobile surgeries are advertised on the Kirklees Council website.
- Posters and leaflets can be provided for both static and mobile surgeries. A file of the different samples is available for information and guidance; please contact the Councillor Support Team for more information.

# Giving councillors the tools for the job the supporting councillors framework: a best practice guide for councils

## Appendix i

If you require further advice or information please contact xxxxxxxx, Admin Team Leader, on 0----- 2-----.

### Executive support

Services for councillors provided by the Executive Support Team include:

- administrative, clerical, secretarial and research support to cabinet members
- organisation and facilitation of cabinet, cabinet briefing and executive management
- group meetings including, maintenance of agenda plans, production of agendas, minutes, decision summaries and other related work
- maintenance of the council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions on behalf of the leader.

For more information about the support provided by Executive Support please contact xxxxxxxx, Executive Support Manager on 0----- 2-----.

### **Additional support to group leaders and group business managers**

Additional facilities and equipment are provided to leaders, deputy leaders and group business managers of the political groups. These include additional secretarial support, research support, an office within the group space in Crown Court Buildings, a PC based in the relevant office and a mobile telephone.

Mobile telephones are issued to leaders, group business managers and cabinet members and should only be used for council business. Any non-council business calls will need to be logged, identified and reimbursed to the council. For those who do not want to use a council mobile, it is possible for them to use their own private mobile phone and claim from the council for the line rental and relevant council business calls.

The leaders of each of the political groups also receive a hospitality budget.

The leaders of the large groups can be supplied with a key to Crown Court Buildings in order for them to have access out of normal hours. You need to contact xxxxxxxx, Executive Support Manager, 0----- 2-----, regarding this and to complete the necessary paperwork.

The leaders of the three largest groups are automatically nominated as trustees to the Mayor's charity.

### **Office equipment, stationery and mail**

Office equipment and stationery is provided to help you organise your council work. The equipment is available to you on loan during the period you are serving as a Kirklees councillor and must be returned on the termination of your term of office.

For tax purposes this equipment must be used for the purpose of council business and have no, or limited, private use. You will need to sign and return a receipt for all the equipment you receive. You may wish to use some or all of the following equipment and stationery available to you:

- filing cabinet, for use at home
- pocket memo
- telephone answering machine
- files (eg lever arch)
- recycle bin
- stamped addressed envelopes
- envelopes
- stationery, ie pens, pencils, ruler, rubber, hole puncher, stapler, etc.

Business cards and ID cards are provided to all councillors. Photographs are taken and used on the website, councillors' charts, ID cards, business cards and leaflets, etc.

Personalised stationery, including letterhead sheets and compliments slips can be provided for all your council correspondence.

# Giving councillors the tools for the job the supporting councillors framework: a best practice guide for councils

## Appendix i

Other stationery provided includes leaflets and postcards for advertising both static and mobile surgeries, ward councillor leaflets, etc.

Council mail dispatched from Crown Court Buildings will be paid for by the Policy and Governance Service. Mail will normally be sent second class. Please read the rules on councillors' postage

The Central Mailing Service (which is part of Document Solutions) provides a mail delivery service to all councillors' homes. Deliveries are made each morning Tuesday to Friday and an extra delivery Friday evening.

The council has a policy on recycling paper and as part of this scheme councillors are provided with a recycling bin for use at home. When this is half full, you should contact Document Solutions on 0---- 2-----, or email: [document.solutions@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:document.solutions@kirklees.gov.uk), who will collect it, arrange for the contents to be shredded and return the empty bin to you.

### Information and communication technology (ICT) facilities

Computer equipment and furniture is also available on loan under the same conditions as specified above. The equipment available to you includes:

- personal computer
- all-in-one printer/scanner/copier/fax
- PDA (personal digital assistant), also known as a 'Palmtop'
- computer table and chair
- computer consumables (ie paper, USB memory sticks, cartridges).

Access to the internet and the council's intranet, as well as email facilities (Groupwise), are provided. Councillors should ensure that the council's protocols on the use of email and internet access are followed; these are available at <http://intranet/business/documents/PDFFiles/electronic.pdf>

The format of your email address will be `firstname.surname@kirklees.gov.uk`. It is possible for you to access your emails via the internet from your own computer at home. To do this, simply type [www.kirklees.gov.uk/email](http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/email) into the address field of a web page and click on the 'Go' button. You will then need to type in your name and password when prompted.

You will be briefed on the basics of how to use the computer. The software packages it comes with include:

- Microsoft Word, for word processing
- Microsoft Excel, for creating spreadsheets
- Microsoft Access, for creating databases
- Microsoft PowerPoint, for creating presentations.

Access to the Kirklees server is provided by broadband and is arranged and paid for by the council.

Technical support is provided by xxxxx, Senior Officer within InTech. Problems relating to the computer need to be reported to the InTech Helpdesk (telephone 0--- 2-----). Most problems will be fixed within 12 working hours of it being reported, unless it is more complex. Support is only provided for the software provided by Kirklees Council. In the event of any repairs, the computer will be returned to its original state, so it is important that you undertake regular back-ups of your data.

There is also an 'out of hours' IT support service provided for councillors. This is available by ringing 0---- 6---- during the following times:

- Monday to Friday, 5.00 pm – 11.00 pm
- Saturday, 8.00 am – 8.00 pm
- Sunday, 10.00 am – 10.00 pm.

For those who prefer to use their own computers, please note that the council cannot install its software onto your PC. However, paper for printer, printer cartridges, etc, can be provided.

# Giving councillors the tools for the job the supporting councillors framework: a best practice guide for councils

## Appendix ii

Things we do well: councillor support in  
Newark and Sherwood District Council

Extract from a workshop presentation

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### Pre-election support

- Candidate packs; guides to candidates on nomination papers

### Post-election support

- Guidance but not advice

### Induction

- Listened to 'how it felt' for councillors last time round
- Recognised demands on councillors time so prioritised training: planning, licensing, and ethics first, then rolled out wider issues
- Each member receives an induction pack
- Created 'officer buddies'
- Encouraged existing councillors to mentor new councillors – good and bad!

### Ongoing member training and development

- Programme developed through member working party
- Links to council's aim and priorities
- Recognises need for 'softer skills' as well as statutory must dos
- Big emphasis on IT skills for members including one-to-one support
- Support for IDeA Leadership Academy

### Officer/member relations

- Culture of openness and accessibility
- Constructive relationships with cabinet and backbench members
- Willingness to provide help/support and advice with ward/parish issues
- Team approach officer/member/community 'walkabouts'

### Balancing demands on councillor time

- Meetings normally early morning/early evening
- Communication with leader by text where urgent, deputy leader by email and mobile phone
- Advice given if councillors have difficulty with employers in getting time off
- Flexibility in arranging working parties, etc, to accommodate members employment/other duties including 'granny/grandpa duties'

### Resources and facilities

- IT equipment for cabinet members and chairs of committee. All members can use IT facilities in members room to access emails, etc
- Council facilities available for member surgeries
- All political groups have meeting room within the council building

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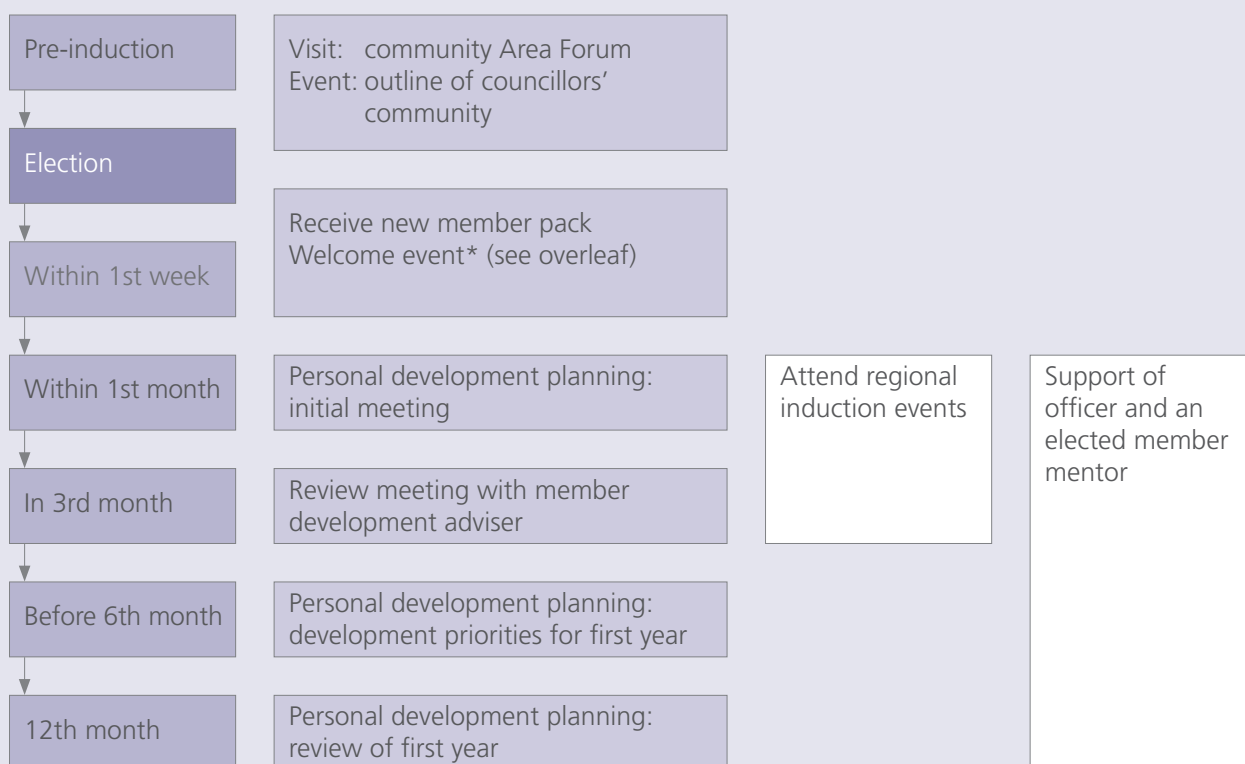
## Appendix iii

### Sample induction programme (South Tyneside Council)

The induction programme for new councillors is to outline the support available and develop an understanding of:

- how the Council operates
- the councillor's roles and responsibilities
- how this fits in to what the council is trying to achieve
- issues facing the council
- the 'Terms and Conditions' which apply to elected members
- the member support available.

#### The programme of induction events



# Giving councillors the tools for the job the supporting councillors framework: a best practice guide for councils

## Appendix iii

### The welcome event

All newly elected councillors are invited to the event which provides:

- an overview of how the council as an organisation operates
- an awareness of the council's vision, values and priorities
- essential information as to what is expected from councillors
- information about what support is available
- an opportunity to meet and establish contact with key officers.

It also includes a 'Member Market Place' where councillors have the opportunity to meet officers and exchange information. It has representation from all directorates and from partner organisations.

### the programme:

09:30	Welcome – the story of how our vision will help transform the lives of South Tyneside's people <b>Chief Executive</b>
10:00	All organisations need some kind of structure – find out about ours and your place in it <b>Assistant Chief Executive – Policy</b>  We have an important part to play – your role <b>Assistant Chief Executive – Performance</b>
10:45	Tour of the building
11:00	Meeting the members of the executive team
12:00	Comfort break
12:15	What you need to know -- code of conduct, risk management and governance <b>BS, Head of Corporate Governance</b> <b>RC, Democratic Services Manager</b> Questions
13:15	Market Place and Lunch
14:15	Close  (Time will be used to take members official photographs).
15:00	Annual Meeting of Council

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a best practice guide for councils

## Appendix iv

### Membership of the councillor support reference group

<b>Councillors</b>		
Cllr Matthew Bradney		Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr Susan Dungworth		Blyth Valley District Council
Cllr Malcolm Grimston		London Borough of Wandsworth
Cllr Marie Jenkins		Teignbridge District Council
Cllr Richard Kemp		Liverpool City Council
Cllr Ann McAllister		Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Bernice Vanier		London Borough of Haringey
Cllr Gerald Vernon Jackson		Portsmouth City Council
Cllr Ron Watson CBE		Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Milner Whiteman		Bridgnorth District Council

<b>Council Officers</b>		
Richard Ashton	Political Assistant to the Leader of the Opposition	Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council
Kirsty Cole	Strategic Director Corporate Services	Newark and Sherwood District Council
Laura Collins	Head of Labour Group Office	Liverpool City Council
Chris Farqhar	Member Training and Development Officer	Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Mark Hynes	Director of Legal and Democratic Services	London Borough of Lambeth
Nic Rattle	Liberal Democrat Office	Bristol City Council
Yuniea Semambo	Head of Local Democracy and Member Services	London Borough of Haringey
Nicola Yates	Deputy Chief Executive Previously Chief Executive	Hull City Council North Shropshire District Council

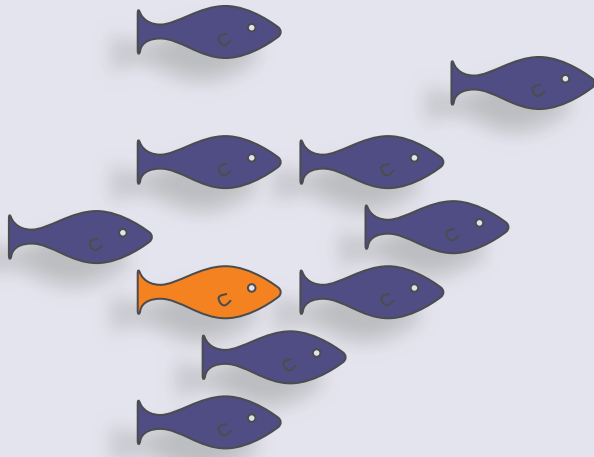
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## Appendix iv

Parish/Town Councils		
John Arthur	Town Clerk	Peterlee Town Council
Cllr Roger Greenwood		Erringdon Parish Council

Other Bodies		
John Coleman	Head of the Participation Inquiry and Rural Advocacy	Commission for Rural Communities
Tracey Gardiner	Policy Analyst	LGIU
Justin Griggs	Head of Development	NALC
Alison Lowton	Formally Director of Law and Administration	London Borough of Camden





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facsimile 020 7296 6666

email [info@idea.gov.uk](mailto:info@idea.gov.uk)

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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*Local Government Association*

The Local Government Association is the national voice for more than 450 local authorities in England and Wales. The LGA group comprises the LGA and five partner organisations which work together to support, promote and improve local government.



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