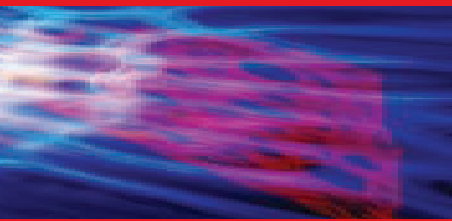


Consultation on draft
National Elected
Member Development
Strategy for Scottish
Local Government

Summary of findings -
July 2009



1. Background

During January and February 2009, the IS consulted with all Scottish local authorities and other relevant national organisations on a Draft National Elected Member Development Strategy for Scottish Local Government. 22 responses were received, 19 of which were from local authorities.

Overall, respondents were overwhelmingly positive about the vision, aims, benefits and deliverables of the draft strategy, and the majority acknowledged that a key factor in securing the implementation of the draft strategy would be the identification of full and stable sources of resourcing. Local authorities in particular were highly supportive of the need to work collaboratively with each other, the IS and other partners to ensure the availability of high quality and cost effective development programmes and opportunities for elected members.

This report summarises the key findings of the consultation exercise in relation to:

- the vision, aims and benefits of the draft strategy;
- the deliverables;
- self-evaluation of Elected Members' Skills Development Programmes; and
- resourcing the implementation of the draft strategy.

The IS would like to thank those organisations who responded to the consultation exercise.

2. Key findings

Not all respondents answered each of the consultation questions. The findings that are reported for each consultation question are based on the number of respondents who replied to that question, with those who did not answer the question excluded from the findings.

Vision, aims and benefits

72% of those who responded felt that the strategy's vision was appropriate to support the development needs of elected members in Scottish local government. A number of respondents felt that the vision could be strengthened beyond encouraging a collaborative approach to development programmes and opportunities that support elected members in developing their skills, to actually establishing such an approach.

72% of those who responded agreed that the strategic aims set out in the strategy were sufficient to meet the development needs of elected members.

82% of respondents felt that the benefits underpinning the strategy were clear and comprehensive. Several respondents felt that the benefits of collaboration should extend beyond councils working together to achieve innovation in identifying and supporting the development needs of elected members, and should include councils working with each other, the IS and other partners. It was also suggested that the benefits should include a clear statement of how local communities will benefit from greater investment in Elected Member development.

Deliverables

89% of those that responded felt that the development of a skills-based CPD Framework for Elected Members in Scottish Local Government should be undertaken on a collaborative basis, noting the importance of the statement in the draft strategy that such a framework should remain flexible enough to accommodate the different levels of experience and seniority of members and to allow for implementation to be adapted to the local circumstances that prevail within individual councils. 88% felt that it would be desirable for a CPD Framework to offer 360 degree feedback to those who wished to receive it, with respondents highlighting the need for clear guidance to be provided to both members and those individuals providing 360 degree feedback.

88% of respondents were in favour of developing national and regional co-ordinated development programmes on a collaborative basis to support elected members' development needs, and four-fifths supported the delivery of such development programmes on a cross-council basis where appropriate. Respondents noted that such programmes would not only be an excellent resource from a cost-effectiveness perspective, but they would also provide members with the opportunity to network with members from other local authorities.

89% of respondents felt that it would be desirable for councils to offer a local development programme to their elected members, which would provide access to relevant national and regional programmes, with many noting that this was already in place within their council. Four-fifths of respondents felt that it would be desirable for all local authorities to share the development of materials, knowledge and learning with respect to elected member development with each other, the IS and other relevant national bodies, and it was suggested that it would be useful if this sharing was co-ordinated through a central online resource library.

83% of respondents felt that it would be desirable for the IS to continue to offer the Political Leadership Programme and other programmes to senior Elected Members and that this should be recognised as an element of their CPD. Some respondents suggested that the format of the Political Leadership Programme could be reviewed, as some members are unable to attend due to the residential element of the programme. 94% of respondents were keen to continue to work with the IS to explore and establish other relevant development opportunities for senior Elected Members.

The area of the strategy where there was least agreement on was in relation to the desirability of accredited leadership programmes for elected members. 59% of respondents were in favour of exploring opportunities between local government and the university sector for accreditation. Of the remainder, 29% did not think accreditation should be sought and 12% were unsure.

Self-evaluation of Elected Members' Skills Development Programmes

94% of respondents felt that it was desirable that the IS and councils should develop a national standard for Elected Member development, to enable councils to evaluate their approach to Elected Member development against an agreed national standard. It was suggested that a starting point could be to consider and build on the Member Development Charter developed by the IDEA.

Resourcing

The majority of respondents agreed that a key factor in progressing the development and implementation of the draft National Elected Member Development Strategy for Scottish Local Government would be the identification of full and stable sources of resourcing from both local and national government.

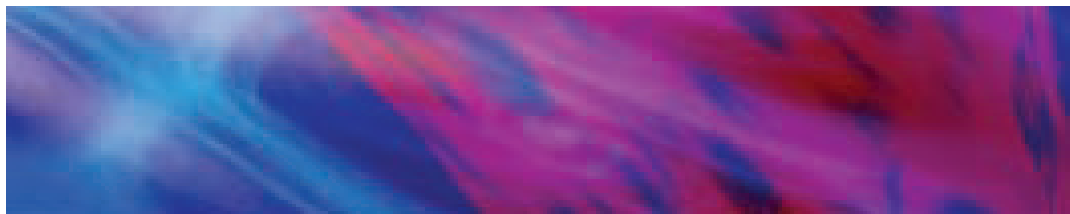
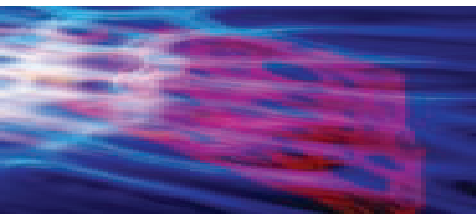
3. Next Steps

The IS will revise the draft strategy to reflect some of the feedback received as part of the consultation exercise.

The COSLA Convention on 26 June 2009 agreed to establish:

- a national Elected Member Development working group, consisting of between 6 and 8 councils. This will be facilitated by the IS and its role will be to further develop and support the implementation of the national Elected Member development strategy. Membership of the working group will be both representative of Scottish local government and consist of councils who have the capacity to take the strategy forward. An early action for this working group will be to map current activity in relation to Elected Member development across Scotland.
- a political reference group within COSLA to oversee and direct the work of the national Elected member Development working group, to ensure that the strategy remains relevant to the needs of Elected Members. The successful development and implementation of the strategy is contingent upon political commitment and drive.

The IS and COSLA will establish these groups during summer 2009. The national Elected Member Development working group will keep all stakeholders informed of the progress being made through updates on the IS website and in the IS newsletter. If you do not already subscribe to the IS newsletter, you can sign up via this link - <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/users/create-an-account/>



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