

National Elected Member Development Strategy for Scottish Local Government

Findings of National Survey on Elected Member Development





1. Background

The governance of Scotland has changed significantly in recent years, with the signing of the Concordat and the introduction of Single Outcome Agreements increasing the focus on local governance of public services. The introduction of the Single Transferable Vote (STV) and multi member wards at the 2007 local elections resulted in 45.9% of members being newly elected into an increasingly challenging environment. These changes mean that supporting elected members to effectively carry out their governance responsibilities on behalf of their local communities has become essential.

In response to these challenges, the Improvement Service has developed a National Elected Member Development Strategy in consultation with local authorities and other key stakeholders, which aims to provide elected members with more focused and more structured support. A National Elected Member Development Officer Working Group has been established to work with the IS to further develop and implement this strategy.

In order to establish the current level of support and development opportunities available to elected members and the requirements for future support from the strategy, the Improvement Service invited all 32 Scottish councils to participate in a survey on elected member development. Representatives from 13 councils submitted responses which are summarised below.

2. Key Findings

Overall, the range of learning and development opportunities available to elected members varies widely between councils:

- 69% of councils have a budget for Elected Member Development, ranging from £6,000 to £15,000 in the current financial year. Most resources are allocated based on the needs of councils and elected members, with 12% being allocated to elected members on a first come first served basis.
- 62% of councils said that they expect the investment in Elected Member Development to stay the same in the next three years, while 25% expect investment to increase and 13% expect investment will decrease.
- Both Training Needs Analysis and Personal Development Planning (PDPs) are tools used by 77% of councils to identify Elected Member Development needs.
- 38% of councils use the Scottish Local Authority Remuneration Committee (SLARC) competencies.
- Existing support for elected members varies widely between councils - all offer training and development in Governance, Planning, Resource Management and Performance Management/Scrutiny, while 62.5% offer no training and development on Negotiating and Influencing skills, 57% offer none on Team Working and one-half offer none in Leading Change.
- The majority of training and development available to elected members is delivered in-house by councils, with 54% providing online learning opportunities. 85% of respondents provide their elected members with access to external training courses and workshops.
- Only 8% of respondents said that their elected members undertake accredited development specific to their role, although the remaining 92% would welcome some form of accredited leadership programme.
- All survey respondents agreed that in principle, they would be willing to share materials they currently use for elected member development, such as workshop materials, briefings and online learning materials, with other councils and the Improvement Service.

3. Detailed Findings

Responsibility for Elected Member Development

Several services were identified as having responsibility for Elected Member development. In the majority of councils, a single department/service has responsibility for elected member development - for 23% of councils it is Members Services, while 15% said Organisational Development and 8% said Human Resources. Other departments/services that were identified as having sole responsibility for elected member development include Administration Services, Corporate Planning, Committee Services and the Chief Executive's Service.

In the remaining councils, the responsibility for elected member development is shared between two departments, typically Human Resources and Organisational Development, Human Resources and Members Services, and Committee Services and Employee Development.

Training and Development Budgets

69% of councils have a training and development budget for Elected Member Development, with varying amounts being invested in elected member development during the current financial year, from around £6,000 to £15,000, with an average figure of £10,500 emerging from the six respondents who were able to give figures.

Total investment in elected member development over the last three years was often not known by respondents, however from the three who did respond to the question, figures varied between £12,000 and £45,000, with an average of £25,000.

Predicting the trends of future investment, 62% of councils said that they expect the investment in elected member development to stay the same in the next three years, while 25% expect investment to increase and 13% expect investment will decrease.

A variety of responses were given on the methods for allocation of the budget for Elected Member Development. The majority of councils allocated resources based on the priorities and needs of both councils and elected members. 12% of respondents said that their budget is allocated to elected members on a first come, first served basis.

Identifying Development Needs

Councils use a range of methods to identify Elected Members' development needs. Both Training Needs Analysis and Personal Development Planning (PDP) meetings are tools utilised by 77% of councils. Council priorities and other policy or procedure changes are identified as a trigger for the remaining 23% of councils to arrange additional training for their Elected Members.

15% of respondents are piloting the Improvement Service's Continual Professional Development (CPD) Framework for Elected Members. 38% of respondents said that their councils use the Scottish Local Authority Remuneration Committee (SLARC) competencies.

Respondents were asked to identify the steps undertaken in their council in relation to identifying and addressing Elected Members' development needs:

- 92% provide Elected Members with a range of learning opportunities
- 69% hold PDP meetings with Elected Members
- 69% said Elected Members complete a PDP
- 54% hold review meetings with Elected Members at least annually to discuss their progress with the implementation of their PDP
- 38% said Elected Members record learning undertaken and the impact of this learning
- 31% said Elected Members rate their skills, behaviours and competencies

- 15% provide Elected Members with the opportunity to participate in 360 degree feedback (These are the councils piloting the CPD Framework for Elected Members)

54% of respondents said that between 90 and 100% of their Elected Members have a live PDP, 31% said that around half of their Elected Members (between 40 and 60%) have a live PDP, and 15% of respondents said that none of their Elected Members have a live PDP.

Existing Development Opportunities

Councils who responded to the survey currently offer several development opportunities to differing extents to Elected Members:

- 100% offer in-house training courses/workshops
- 100% offer conferences or seminars
- 85% offer external training courses/workshops
- 85% offer reading materials
- 77% offer one to one support from Officers
- 54% offer online learning
- 23% offer on the job shadowing opportunities
- 23% offer coaching or mentoring

Respondents were asked if training or workshops are provided to Elected Members in specific development areas, and if so, whether they are provided in-house, externally or both. The results are provided in the table below.

Development Area	In-house	Externally	Not at all
Leading change	42%	33%	50%
Working in partnership	75%	25%	25%
Communication	45.5%	55%	18%
Decision-making	55%	27%	27%
Negotiation and influencing	12.5%	25%	62.5%
Governance	83%	58%	0%
Leadership/Community leadership	55%	36%	27%
Planning	85%	77%	0%
Media handling	62%	69%	8%
Resource management	92%	17%	0%
Performance management/scrutiny	69%	62%	0%
Team/group working	43%	14%	57%

These results illustrate the variance between councils in the provision of training and development opportunities to elected members. The areas where all respondents offer development opportunities are in relation to resource management, planning, governance, and performance management/scrutiny. Media handling is also provided in some form by 92% of councils, whilst 82% offer training or workshops on communication. Three-quarters of councils offer development opportunities on working in partnership, decision making and leadership/community leadership.

In contrast, the areas where training and development opportunities are least likely to be provided are in relation to negotiation and influencing, team/group working and leading change.

Councils utilise both internal and external training and development opportunities to some extent. With the exception of communication, negotiation and influencing and media handling, the other development areas are predominantly covered by in-house workshops and training.

Respondents also identified a wide range of other training and development opportunities which they offer to Elected Members, including:

- Risk assessment
- ICT
- Freedom of Information
- Responsibilities of a Company Director
- Effective Meetings Management
- Equalities and Diversity
- Time Management
- Stress Awareness
- Best Value
- PSIF and Self Assessment
- Licensing
- Recruitment and Selection.

A range of external training and workshop providers were also identified including the Improvement Service, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), specialist providers such as law firms on legal issues and specialist trainers for business issues (such as performance management).

Joint training and workshops are held for Elected Members and Council Officers in 77% of councils. The areas covered by joint training and workshops are as follows:

- Governance (70%)
- Working in Partnership (50%)
- Communication (50%)
- Planning (50%)
- Media handling (40%)
- Leadership/community leadership (40%)
- Decision Making (20%)
- Resource Management (20%)
- Negotiation and Influencing (10%)
- Team/group working (10%)

Other issues jointly dealt with are audit and scrutiny and specific policy briefings. One respondent noted that “With very few exceptions, all our training sessions are open to all members and officers can also attend”.

Future Development Opportunities

Councils were asked about their preferences on whether a range of development opportunities should be provided nationally, regionally or locally (or a mixture), if at all. The table below summarises all responses:

Development Method	National	Regional	Local	Not at all
Training courses/workshops	62%	92%	92%	0%
Conferences/seminars	92%	75%	75%	0%
Online learning	85%	31%	62%	0%
Case studies	75%	50%	75%	8%
Workbooks/reading materials	91%	27%	55%	0%
Coaching/mentoring	27%	45%	82%	9%
Accredited leadership programmes	77%	46%	23%	8%

From these responses, there is clearly a strong demand for the full range of development opportunities to be provided in a blended learning approach. For some development opportunities, there is a much stronger preference towards national provision (online learning, workbooks/reading materials and an accredited leadership programme), while for other opportunities there is a preference towards local or regional provision (training courses/workshops and coaching/mentoring). For conferences/seminars and case studies, there is a demand for these to be provided nationally, regionally and locally. One respondent commented that their council would like national conferences, seminars, meetings and workshops to be made available through video conferencing to allow cost effective access to Elected Members in remote areas.

Council representatives were also asked if they would prefer a range of topic specific development opportunities for Elected Members to be provided at a national, regional or local level, if at all. The responses are summarised in the table below.

Development Opportunity	National	Regional	Local	Not at all
Leading Change	69%	69%	69%	0%
Working in partnership	38%	77%	85%	0%
Communication	33%	42%	75%	0%
Decision making	38%	38%	92%	0%
Negotiating and influencing	33%	33%	92%	0%
Governance	69%	46%	92%	0%
Leadership/community leadership	62%	77%	93%	0%
Planning	46%	46%	92%	0%
Media handling	38%	38%	92%	0%
Resource management	38%	31%	92%	0%
Performance management/scrutiny	50%	33%	92%	0%

For all of the development opportunities listed above, there is overwhelming support for some form of provision. With the exception of team/group working, respondents would like to see opportunities developed in the areas where some of them are currently not providing training or workshops - leading change, working in partnership, communication, decision making, negotiation and influencing, leadership/community leadership and media handling,

With the exception of leading change, which was equally split across national, regional and local level, local delivery was deemed to be the favoured approach for development opportunities in each of the areas. However, regional delivery was also deemed to be particularly favourable for training in working in partnership and leadership/community leadership whilst national delivery was more favourable for development opportunities in governance and performance management/scrutiny.

With the exception of team/group working, there is evidence of a demand for national and regional provision for the topics listed above, and therefore potential opportunities for more collaborative working amongst councils and the IS.

Development Priorities

As the previous evidence illustrates, there is clearly a demand for all types of development opportunities for elected members. Council representatives were asked to rate the extent to which the topic specific development areas in the above table are a priority for Elected Members. Most of these areas were identified by respondents as a medium to high priority, with working in partnership, governance, leadership/community leadership and performance management/scrutiny emerging as particularly high

priorities for most members. In contrast, team/group working appears to be a mixture of high and low priority, depending on the council.

Accredited Development

92% of respondents said that Elected Members within their council do not currently undertake any accredited development specific to their role as an elected member. As mentioned above, 92% would like to see some form of accredited leadership programme made available to Elected Members and 77% would prefer this to be delivered nationally, 46% regionally and 23% locally.

Potential Collaboration

All survey respondents agreed that in principle, they would be willing to share materials they currently use for Elected Member development, such as workshop materials, briefings and online learning materials, with other councils and the Improvement Service, which provides a positive basis for potential collaboration.

4. Next Steps

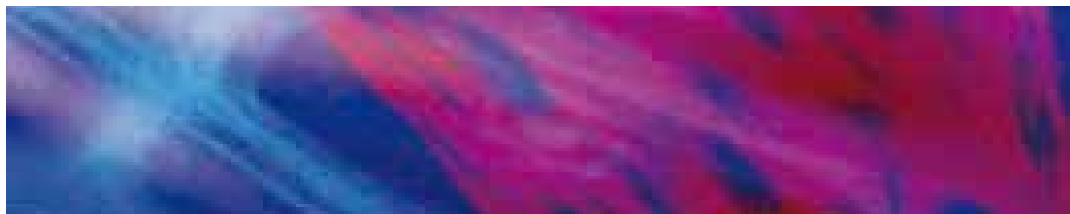
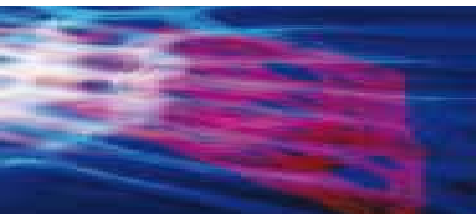
The National Elected Member Development Officer Working Group (comprised of representatives of the following councils - Aberdeenshire, Glasgow City, Scottish Borders, South Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire, West Lothian) has been given the remit of further developing and supporting the implementation of the national Elected Member Development Strategy for Scottish Local Government. The IS will work with this group to progress the findings of this survey, in terms of:

- assisting with the development of national and regional co-ordinated development programmes on a collaborative and cross-council basis, where appropriate.
- reviewing the content of existing Elected Member development materials with a view to identifying or developing good practice materials.
- reviewing the feasibility of developing an accredited leadership programme for Elected Members.
- making recommendations to COSLA on the implementation of the strategy, including the resources required from both local and national government to support the implementation of the strategy.

A key part of the implementation of the national strategy will be the autumn launch and subsequent roll out of the CPD Framework for Elected Members to all councils who wish to participate. We are developing a national Elected Member portal, which will provide elected members with access to self-assessment and 360 degree online development profile tools, development profile reports, personal development plans and a development programme.

As part of the development programme, notebooks are being developed in the key areas covered by the framework, which are also areas identified in the survey as having the potential for developing national development opportunities - promoting change and improvement, working collaboratively, effective communicator, effective decision maker, effective leader and personal effectiveness. Work has also commenced on developing interactive e-learning materials, the long-term aim being to develop e-learning materials in each of these areas, to ensure that elected members have a range of learning opportunities to choose from to meet their different learning styles.





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