

CPD Framework for Elected Members in Scottish Local Government

What is the CPD Framework for Elected Members in Scottish Local Government?

The Continuous Professional Development Framework for Elected Members in Scottish Local Government has been developed by the Improvement Service in consultation with local authorities. Whilst a CPD Framework could be developed within a single council, by supporting collaboration between councils the benefits of a CPD Framework may be gained with costs being reduced and learning shared.

The Framework is based on 14 political skills which are underpinned by 73 behaviours. It is 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. The Framework focuses on behaviours (by this we mean the way in which Elected Members display and practice the skills that they have) as they can be learned or acquired, by virtue of increasing experience, gaining knowledge and participating in development opportunities.

The CPD Framework has been designed to give Elected Members feedback about their performance and to provide them with professional and personal development opportunities that will enable them to further enhance their effectiveness as an Elected Member. The CPD Framework will:

- deliver enhanced, more focused and more structured support arrangements for Elected Members as they lead local government through a period of considerable change.
- help develop Elected Members in their existing roles, prepare them for greater responsibilities, help them become more creative in tackling new challenges and provide them with transferable skills which can be utilised in other roles in the event that they choose not to stand for re-election or lose their seat.
- help Elected Members fulfil their governance roles more effectively, thereby improving local governance and accountability of public services to local communities.
- complement existing Elected Member development and support frameworks already in place in Councils.
- provide Elected Members with access to the online Development Programme 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with the learning resources being available to them '*just in case, just in time*'. In other words, Elected Members can access the learning resources as and when they need support to deal with an issue or challenge.

It is not a compulsory framework. It will be up to individual Councils whether they choose to adopt the framework and if a Council does sign up, it will be up to individual Elected Members to decide whether they wish to participate.

The Framework has been successfully tested through a pilot project involving two-thirds of Elected Members across six councils - East Lothian, Falkirk, Fife, Scottish Borders, South Ayrshire and West Dunbartonshire.

What is involved in the CPD Framework?

The CPD Framework involves an Elected Member completing an online skills development profile either on a self-assessment or 360 degree basis, which sees an individual being assessed by people they have regular dealings with in their role. Participation in 360 degree feedback is entirely voluntary.

Following this, the Elected Member will receive a Development Profile report, outlining their perceived strengths and development areas. They will then participate in a Personal Development Planning meeting which will be facilitated by a Council Officer, to discuss their report, to identify their development needs and to agree a Personal Development Plan.

The Elected Member will then be able to access a range of blended learning opportunities through the CPD Framework Development programme, including notebooks, e-learning, case studies, online resources, briefing notes and masterclasses.

Between six to twelve months after the Personal Development Plan has been agreed, the Elected Member will participate in a review meeting with the Council Officer to discuss how they are progressing with the implementation of their Personal Development Plan and any additional support they require.

Between twelve to eighteen months after the Elected Member has completed their Development Profile, they will be invited to complete it again, either on a personal or 360 degree basis. This will enable the Elected Member to track their progress and any improvements in their skills and behaviours.

What are the benefits to Elected Members of taking part in the CPD Framework?

The benefits of participating in the CPD Framework are likely to vary from Elected Member to Elected Member, depending on their experience, seniority and role. The CPD Framework may:

- improve an Elected Member's understanding of their strengths, weaknesses and developmental needs.
- provide them with a better understanding of their role and responsibilities.
- develop them in their existing role.
- prepare them for greater responsibilities.
- provide them with transferable skills which can be utilised in other roles in the event that they choose not to stand for re-election or lose their seat.
- enable them to set priorities for the year ahead.
- identify areas where problems may be occurring and to identify strategies to resolve these.
- identify areas where they feel they have skills which are not being utilised to their full extent, and identify how these can be better exploited.
- provide them with professional and personal development opportunities that will enable them to further enhance their effectiveness as an Elected Member.
- enable them to take responsibility for their own development.
- enable them to track improvements that they make and identify new priorities for development on a 12 to 18 month period.

How much does the CPD Framework cost?

The IS and pilot councils have jointly invested financial resources in the development of the CPD Framework. Each pilot council invested £2K to support the creation of the Development Programme.

Councils signing up to the CPD Framework will be asked to make a one-off financial contribution of £2K to reflect the resources invested by the pilot councils. This will provide a small fund for the ongoing development of the learning resources to ensure that they continue to respond to and reflect the challenges facing Elected Members. The IS will also contribute to this development fund by match funding each £2K contributed by Councils.

The IS will establish and facilitate a Steering Group of participating councils to work with SOLACE and other relevant bodies. This Group will identify and agree the additional learning resources that are to be developed.

The CPD Framework is being delivered through the Brightwave platform. Councils who already use the Brightwave platform will receive access to the National Elected Member Portal available through the Brightwave platform at no cost. For Councils who do not currently use Brightwave, there is an annual charge of £2k made payable to Brightwave to access their platform and through that the National Elected Member Portal.

A further option for councils with alternative online 360 degree assessment tools and learning management systems is for the IS to provide these Councils with the Development Profile and learning resources and the Councils would require to import the Development Profile into their own 360 degree tools and the learning resources into their learning management system and respond to any integration/development costs.

How do we sign up to participate in the CPD Framework?

If a Council wishes to adopt the CPD Framework, the IS will require the Chief Executive and Council Leader to jointly confirm by email to sarah.gadsden@improvementservice.org.uk that the Council wishes to implement the CPD Framework.

Who do I contact for further information?

If you would like to find out more about the CPD Framework for Elected Members in Scottish Local Government, or you are interested in adopting the Framework, please contact Sarah Gadsden on 01506 775570 or sarah.gadsden@improvementservice.org.uk