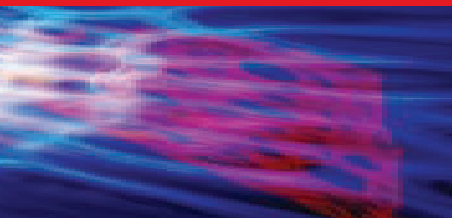


The Improvement Service

Continuous Professional
Development Framework
Pilot Project Phase 2
Evaluation

June 2010





1. Background

In response to the increasingly challenging environment in which Elected Members operate, a National Elected Member Development Strategy for Scottish Local Government has been developed by the Improvement Service following consultation with local authorities and other key stakeholders. The Strategy aims to provide Elected Members with more focused and structured support in order to assist them in effectively carrying out their governance responsibilities on behalf of their local communities.

A key feature of the National Elected Member Development Strategy is the development of a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Framework for Elected Members. A draft Framework was developed in 2008 in consultation with senior Elected Members and Officers, which was based on 14 political skills, grouped into the following six clusters - Promoting Change and Improvement, Political Understanding, Working Collaboratively, Effective Communicator, Effective Decision Maker and Effective Leader. Each political skill was underpinned by a range of behaviours, which it would be reasonable to expect Elected Members to display to varying degrees, depending on their seniority, role and experience. There were 80 behaviours in total.

Six councils (East Lothian, Falkirk, Fife, Scottish Borders, South Ayrshire and West Dunbartonshire) volunteered to work with the IS to pilot the CPD Framework from late 2008 on a phased basis:

- **Phase 1**
Elected Members identified their strengths and development needs by completing an online development profile, with the option of doing this on either a self-assessment or a 360 degree feedback basis.
- **Phase 2**
Elected Members participated in a personal development planning (PDP) meeting and agreed a personal development plan with an officer from their council.
- **Phase 3**
Elected Members piloted blended learning opportunities available through the CPD Framework Development Programme.

65% of Elected Members across the six pilot councils opted to participate in the CPD Framework pilot, with one-third of these participating in the 360 degree feedback option.

Following phase 2 of the pilot, an online survey was issued to 78 of the 81 Elected Members who went on to participate in the second phase. 19 responses were received - a response rate of 22%. Feedback was also received from the officers conducting the personal development planning meetings.

2. Summary of Key Feedback

- 95% of Elected Members felt that the guidance they were given in advance of their PDP meetings was sufficient in helping them prepare for the meeting.
- All respondents were satisfied that the duration of their meeting (around an hour) was about right.
- All Elected Members felt comfortable discussing their strengths and areas for development with an officer from their council.
- 89% felt that their PDP meeting was useful, however a potential lack of training opportunities to address development needs and a lack of time to complete training were issues raised by Elected Members.
- Following the PDP meeting, 74% of Elected Members completed a Personal Development Plan (PDP).
- Of those who did not complete a PDP, 25% intend to complete their PDP in the future and 50% said that they did not identify any personal development needs.
- Feedback on the format of the PDP was positive, with 93% of Elected Members agreeing that they felt that the format and layout of the PDP made it straightforward to complete.
- 79% of Elected Members said that they are confident that they will get the support that they need from the council to carry out their development activities, with 14% saying that they are not confident and the remainder being unsure.

3. Summary of Detailed Feedback

Personal Development Planning Meetings

A workshop was held by the Improvement Service in January 2009 for the officers conducting the PDP meetings in the pilot councils, on preparing for and facilitating the PDP meetings. It was attended by representatives from Falkirk, Scottish Borders, South Ayrshire and West Dunbartonshire councils. All pilot councils were also provided with a written checklist with guidance on conducting PDP Meetings and Elected Members were also emailed guidance on preparing for the PDP Meeting.

The PDP Meeting involved the officer facilitating a discussion with the Elected Member around the Elected Member's perceived strengths and development areas, as highlighted in the Development Profile Report, with Elected Members considering examples which demonstrated these strengths and development areas. The outcome of the PDP Meeting was the development of a Personal Development Plan, which outlined how the identified development areas would be addressed.

Overall feedback on the PDP meetings was very positive. 95% of Elected Members felt that the guidance they were given in advance of their PDP meetings was sufficient in helping them prepare for the meeting. All respondents were satisfied that the duration of their meeting (around an hour) was about right.

All Elected Members felt comfortable discussing their strengths and areas for development with an officer from their council. 95% felt that they had the opportunity to discuss everything they wanted to at their PDP meeting.

Overall, 89% felt that their PDP meeting was useful - an Elected Member commented, *'I felt the meeting went well and this was mainly due to the officer involved making me feel relaxed. Every opportunity was given to allow me to express any doubts I had and I felt encouraged to continue with the development plan.'* Another said, *'I feel supported to continue to improve as a councillor.'*

As well as this positive feedback, several issues were raised by respondents. One Elected Member commented, *'The big problem has been getting the time to carry out the training identified. My role as a councillor is defined as part-time, but to do it properly and to do training needs a full-time commitment.'* Another Elected Member also found lack of training opportunities to be an issue for them - *'The PDP meeting was helpful but like many things it has its limitations. Let's say a need is identified - this could be addressed by a course or seminar - enter the lack of funding and progress ends.'*

Personal Development Plan

The intended outcome of the PDP Meeting is the development of a Personal Development Plan, which is agreed by the Elected Member and the officer conducting the PDP meeting. A Guidance Note was issued to Elected Members by the Improvement Service on the purpose of the PDP and how to prepare for it.

Elected Members were asked to consider several areas as part of their PDP:

- Development Areas - those skills and behaviours which the Elected Member wishes to focus their development on.
- Development Activities - the methods by which these development needs will be met, such as through workshops, guided reading materials, e-learning programmes, self-development activities, etc.
- Resources/Support - how will resources/support for completing these development activities be accessed
- Priority - whether the priority of each of the development areas is high, medium or low.
- Target completion date - a realistic timescale for completing development activities over the course of 12 months.
- Measure of success - how the Elected Member will know they have successfully developed their skills and behaviours.

Following the Personal Development Planning Meeting, 74% of Elected Members completed a PDP. Of those who did not complete their PDP, 25% intend to complete their PDP in the future, while 50% said that they did not identify any personal development needs. The remainder had not been able to complete the PDP because of workload pressures.

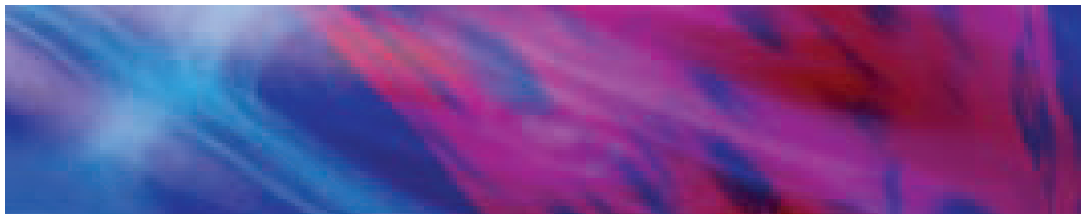
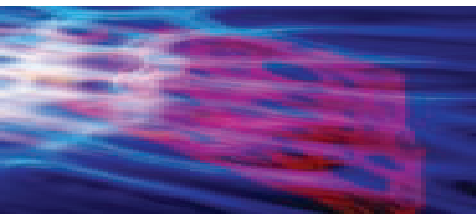
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Feedback on the format of the PDP was positive, with 93% of Elected Members agreeing that they felt that the format and layout of the PDP made it straightforward to complete. 79% of respondents agreed that the format of the PDP enabled them to capture their development needs adequately.

79% of Elected Members said that they are confident that they will get the support that they need from the council to carry out their development activities, with 14% saying that they are not confident and the remainder being unsure. This highlights the importance of improving the support and learning opportunities provided to Elected Members.

4. Action taken in response to the feedback

In preparation for rolling out the CPD Framework to all councils, a number of improvements are being made to address the feedback received from Elected Members. A key improvement is the development of a facility through the national Elected Member portal (which is being developed to support the roll out of the CPD Framework) to enable Elected Members to complete their PDP online and to keep an online record of any personal development undertaken.



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