

Councillor Development Framework

Supporting Councillor Excellence in Kirklees

DRAFT

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Introduction

We recognise Councillors bring with them a diverse range of skills and experience and we are committed to ensuring that each of our Councillors receive the support they need to enhance their skills and enable them to fulfil their elected role in serving their communities and be consistent with the principles of good governance.

This Framework, put in place for Councillor Development, provides a robust programme to enable Councillors and ensure they have the appropriate skills to respond to future challenges and legislative changes which will help the Council deliver on its ambition and strategic priorities.

It has been developed in consultation with Councillors to ensure that their development is relevant, appropriate to their needs and provides Councillors with the necessary ‘tools for the job.’ This is a flexible Framework for Councillors to access the learning, support and development they need as well as setting out the support officers will provide and which will evolve as required to reflect changing priorities and circumstances.

In this Framework, ‘Councillor Development’ is any activity or training that is intended to help support their communities, enhance/further develop the knowledge and skills of Councillors both in their individual roles and in their collective roles so as to meet the Council’s priorities and any individual aims of benefit in their role.

Our Vision and Ambition

The vision is for all elected Councillors to have the necessary skills outlined in Role Profiles and knowledge to perform successfully in their current or future roles within the Council.

This vision is shaped by the principles of “Our Council” and demonstrates Kirklees Council’s commitment to the development of all its elected Councillors (including the Mayor) as a key to success in delivering high quality and valued services to the public. The Council believes that Councillors play a pivotal role in supporting our communities.

The Council supports the Group selection, recruitment and retention of high-quality individuals from all sectors of the community across Kirklees into local government as Councillors and believes that a robust and inclusive development programme will be the foundation to successful leadership succession planning and meeting the needs of their communities.

The Councillor Framework aims to:

- Support elected Councillors to fulfil their roles
- Ensure that a long-term view is taken of Councillor Development that also affords flexibility to reflect changing priorities.
- Ensure each Councillor has appropriate skills and access to training which will enable them to be successful in their roles, so that they can better serve their constituents and communities.
- Continue to develop a clear structured Councillor Development Framework that responds to Councillor and organisational needs.
- Enable the sharing of learning and good practice within Groups.
- Ensure Councillors have a full understanding of, and are confident in, their different roles, for example: decision-making; scrutiny; community leadership; representation on outside organisations.
- Ensure that all newly elected Councillors are properly inducted into the Council and their role and provide updated training for existing and returning Members.

Our Vision Principles

To help achieve this vision, the following principles will apply:

- Training and development is available to all Councillors, and its take-up will be encouraged for all Councillors and the Mayor irrespective of seniority, length of service or political affiliation and will be provided in accordance with the Council's commitment to inclusive opportunities for all.
- Groups will be asked to identify a Member Champion or Group Business Manager who will be consulted on Councillor training and development on behalf of the Council including strategies and programmes for Councillors and the Councillor Induction Programme and, who will encourage and promote a culture of learning and continuous improvement.
- Kirklees Council is committed to the principle of inclusivity for its residents and for Councillors irrespective of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or marital status. Additionally, the working commitments of Councillors should not be a barrier to learning and development.
- Development activities will be based upon agreed training needs as identified through 121s and Personal Development Reviews (PDRs) undertaken within Groups.
- Councillor Development will be delivered through methods which ensure inclusive access and taking into account different learning styles.
- The Council will recognise that Councillors may have transferable skills which can be utilised in the Council to help them perform their Council role.
- Where appropriate and possible, officers and Councillors will be trained together, to help build trust, mutual understanding, co-operation and more sustainable relationships.

Ownership

The effectiveness of this framework is dependent upon the commitment of both officers and Councillors. Officers will be expected to identify appropriate learning opportunities and support Councillors to access those opportunities, support Councillors who choose to do so to and collate and record feedback on training and provide support to the Member Champions.

Councillors are asked to make a commitment to their own individual learning and development and engage in activities that are offered to them.

The Council has a responsibility to demonstrate compliance with its legal obligations and to provide training to Councillors that enables them to fulfil their role safe from undue criticism. To help the Council in doing this, Councillors are required to participate in activities that are identified as being:

- **Essential Training**

Appeals Panel

Standards and Code of Conduct

Corporate Governance and Audit Committee

Licensing Panel

Planning Committee

Failure to undertake Essential Training would preclude Councillors from taking a decision in relation to the remit of the relevant Committee and/or may constitute a breach of the Code of Conduct which all Councillors are required to adhere to.

Councillors are also encouraged to participate in activities that are identified as being:

- **Compliance Training**

Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding

Chairing skills

Councillors are asked to provide honest feedback using the feedback mechanisms provided at the end of each activity so that officers can review and evaluate the effectiveness of the learning and development programme.

The Council will:

- Encourage and support all Councillors to develop their roles using those in the agreed Councillor Role Profile.
- Plan formal events or training sessions in advance as possible to avoid clashes and the committee cycle.
- Make all Councillors aware of development opportunities available through all means possible, including email, Group Business Manager meetings and Member Champions.
- Ensure Councillors are equipped with the necessary skills to make maximum use of all sources of learning, including internet and social media sources.
- Use a variety of delivery methods including face to face training, remote means such as Microsoft Teams, and e-learning.
- We will work, kindly and flexibly, and assist those with special needs, family or work commitments to carry out their role as a Councillor.
- Development activities will be considered to ensure value for money and events will be reviewed to ensure quality and effectiveness.
- Where possible, events will be carried out on a partnership basis within the Region and other partner organisations.
- Regularly evaluate the Councillor Development Framework, with input from Councillors.

Political Groups will:

- Help Councillors identify development needs and consider this at least annually by a combination of organisational, statutory and individual requirements.
- Group Leaders, Group Business Managers, Cabinet Members and Member Champions will promote the opportunities available through the Councillor Development Framework to their respective Councillors and encourage participation.
- Councillors will be encouraged and supported to consider their developmental needs through a 121 or other tool and to assist them in identifying their learning and skills.
- Create the right environment where learning is encouraged and supported.

Councillor Development Framework

It is proposed that the Councillor Development Framework will be delivered through the following themes:

Councillor Induction

All new Councillors will be required to undertake the Councillor Induction in the first few months following election. This will cover the basic areas of knowledge necessary and will allow Councillors to participate within a supportive environment.

The Induction will be delivered in person or in part as e-learning and each Councillor will receive an Induction Pack containing helpful and practical information to assist them in their new role.

Induction sessions will also be open to existing Councillors.

Council/Committees

The training provided under this category will be aimed at those who may have an additional role such as committee member, or committee chair.

It will include understanding how officers support Councillors at committees and will include both essential and compliance training.

Councillors will be supported to have an awareness of the social, economic, environmental, and legal context in which the Council operates and how the Council works with partners, including local partners, regional partners such as the Combined Authority, and national partners such as government departments or agencies. This includes understanding the impact of external decisions and activity on how the Council operates (e.g. new Government policy, or regional programmes).

Training will be held annually in respect of each of the Council's Committees, including on how the Council conducts its business. The courses will take place at the first meeting of each Committee following the Annual General Meeting and will outline the terms of reference and provide any information needed to participate fully in the work of the Committee.

Mayoral Support

Training and support are provided to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor including a full Civic induction, Council Chamber equipment training and a briefing on Council Procedure Rules (and ongoing support).

Public speaking training will also be provided if required and additional Civic training is organised by the National Association of Civic Officers.

Core Skills

This training will enable Councillors to undertake development that will enable them to fulfil their roles in the best way possible.

Training will be provided in matters such as community leadership, effective negotiating and influencing skills, community engagement, conflict resolution, evaluating reports and framing questions etc. Councillors will also be supported with use of technology to help them work as efficiently as possible.

Ad-hoc training

This will be training identified by officers and Councillors, informed by the learning needs following 121 discussions with GBMs/Member Champions and will be subject to appropriate budget being in place. This will also include training for Councillors identified for leadership roles or specific responsibilities. As part of the approval process Councillors are asked to cascade their learning to Committee or political groups as appropriate. Training will be delivered through a varied programme provided by but not limited to in-house officers, through the Council's Learning Management System, external trainers or LGA resources.

Development sessions will be promoted throughout the year.

Review and Monitoring of the Framework

It is vital that Councillors are well equipped to undertake their work and be effective as local representatives.

We will measure the effectiveness in implementing the Framework:

- An annual questionnaire will be sent to Councillors regarding confidence in role and knowledge of various areas such as decision making, scrutiny, ethics etc.
- An increase in the number of Councillors undertaking development activities – data analysis.
- Review and analysis of feedback forms and attendance statistics where the Council has provided the event.

The Councillor Development Framework will be reviewed regularly by the Member Champions and the Head of Governance.

Councillor Development Programme May 2025 – April 2026 (for illustrative Purposes only)

Table 1: Table of Events for Councillor Induction and Development

Date	Time	Session	Purpose	Facilitator	Delivery	Attendees / Notes
Monday 11 May	10am – 4pm	Welcome to Kirklees Council	To meet the Chief Executive, Executive Directors and key officers who will welcome you to Kirklees and let you know about the support you will receive during your Term of Office	Deborah Nicholson Councillor Support & Liaison Manager	In person Huddersfield Town Hall	All new/returning elected Councillors
Tuesday 12 May	10am – 4pm	IT Equipment and Councillor Support	Receive your IT equipment, spend time with support staff who will go through how to access your e-mails and online agendas. Get your ID badge, car parking permit, have a photo taken for the website	Deborah Nicholson Councillor Support & Liaison Manager	In person Huddersfield Town Hall	All new/returning elected Councillors
REST OF AGREED INDUCTION SESSIONS TO BE ADDED ONCE FINALISED						
Monday 22 June	9.30am - 3.30pm	Chairing Skills	Learn how to chair face-to-face or online meetings, pick up skills and techniques and how you can deal with challenging situations	Person X X Job title X X Local Government Association	In person Dewsbury Town Hall	Open to all Councillors
Tuesday 23 June	10 am – 2.pm	Corporate Parenting	Hear about the role of Corporate Parent and what this means for you as a Councillor.	Officer X X Job title X X	Online via Microsoft Teams	Compliance Training for all Councillors

Date	Time	Session	Purpose	Facilitator	Delivery	Attendees / Notes
Wednesday 24 June	6pm – 8pm	Spotlight on Services	Come along and find out more about the X X service. Meet the team, have a cuppa and put a face to a name	Service X X	In person Civic Centre 1	Open to all Councillors
Saturday 27 June	10am- 12pm	Social Media Training	New to social media or been doing it for years. Come along to this interactive session where you can pick up tips and understand what to avoid	Officers X X	In person Batley Town Hall	Open to all Councillors

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