MEMBERS' TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL

Venue: **Town Hall, Moorgate Street, Rotherham.**

Date: **Thursday, 25 June 2009**

Time: **3.00 p.m.**

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for Absence.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 16th April, 2009 (herewith) (Pages 1 - 5)

3. Development Programme and Update (report herewith) (Page 6)

4. Update on RIEP Bid (report herewith) (Pages 7 - 8)

5. Member Champion Training (report herewith) (Pages 9 - 13)

6. Equalities Training - Copy of Proposal from Institute of Community Cohesion (ICOCO) (herewith) (Pages 14 - 25)

7. Equalities and Councillors Workbook – Local Leadership Academy, IDEA (report herewith) (Pages 26 - 52)

8. Employee Suggestion (report herewith) (Pages 53 - 55)

9. Requests for Conferences (Head of Scrutiny and Member Support to report)

10. Emergency Planning (Head of Scrutiny and Member Support to report)

11. Date and Time of Next Meeting - Thursday, 23rd July, 2009 at 2.30 p.m.

MEMBERS' TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL
THURSDAY, 16TH APRIL, 2009

Present:- Councillor Sharman (in the Chair); Councillors Austen, Barron, Gosling, McNeely, Sangster, Turner and Parish Councillor C. Cockayne.

Apologies for Absence were received from The Mayor (Councillor G. A. Russell), Councillors Hughes, Lakin, Pickering, Smith, Whelbourn and Whysall.

39. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 26TH FEBRUARY, 2009

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 26th February, 2009, were agreed as a correct record.

With regard to Minute No. 32 (Elected Member – Future Working Arrangements) it was reported that a report and presentation of proposals for discussion was being prepared and these would be presented to Elected Members in the near future.

40. CHARTER PLUS

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Head of Scrutiny and Member Support, relating to Charter Plus and explaining that this was an optional higher level of the Member Development Charter intended for Councils that had already been awarded the Charter and wanted an additional challenge to improve further their Member development and support.

It was pointed out that the cost of assessment was £500 plus expenses.

It was suggested that Charter Plus should be sought in the Autumn which would give time to prepare the portfolio of evidence/documents rather than being re-assessed for the current Member Development Charter. It was noted that part of the process would involve a self-assessment to identify gaps.

Areas where the Charter Plus differed from the Charter were detailed in the submitted report, together with examples of evidence requirements for Charter Plus.

It was suggested that based on the good working relationship with other South Yorkshire local authorities on member development this could be done across the Sub-region with Rotherham taking the lead.

Members present generally supported the suggestions made.

Agreed:- That the Head of Scrutiny and Members Services arranges an exploratory meeting with the Sub-regional local authorities and submits a

further report to the June meeting of this Panel.

41.   SOUTH YORKSHIRE IMPROVEMENT PLAN - UPDATE

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Services presented a report setting out the background to, and the aims of, the South Yorkshire Improvement Programme, and which detailed the following:-

- grant allocated to the 4 South Yorkshire Local Authorities to maximise the effectiveness of improvement activity
- learning outcomes
- impact of the Capacity Building Fund
- project Link with Regional Priorities, including the holding of a sub-regional conference and workshops
- a breakdown of funding activities
- a breakdown of funding per South Yorkshire Local Authority

Members present commented on:-

- the changing priorities for Councillors
- the scope of Councillors' work
- the need for training in communication skills and media handling
- individual needs of Councillors

Agreed:- That the contents of the report be noted.

42.   REGIONAL IMPROVEMENT AND EFFICIENCY PROGRAMME BID

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Services presented a report updating the Panel on the progress of a bid to RIEP following a meeting of the South Yorkshire Chief Executive's on 6th April, 2009.

It was explained that the outcome was positive, although there would be a need to revisit the funding allocation as the total currently exceeded £500k. This work would need to be done before the Corporate Improvement and Value for Money Board met on 29th April.

Actions which needed to be addressed included:-

- Social marketing bid
- CAA/use of resources
- Financial inclusion
- Reputation project

It was pointed out however that although there was no reference to Member development there was reference to Leadership.

It was explained that RIEP money would be used to access other funding for Member development through draw-down.

Members present noted:-

- the good progress to date
- the need to use plain English and explain acronyms
- the need to drive Member development and training higher up the agenda

Agreed:-   That the Panel notes the content of the report and awaits confirmation following the meeting of the CIVM Board on 29th April.

43.   E-CASEWORK

Richard Copley, ICT Strategy and Client Co-ordinator, and Bronwen Moss, Scrutiny Officer, reported on the outcome of the e-casework pilot which had been carried out involving 11 Members.

It was explained that the trail involved using an alternative the Siebel Surgery reporting system developed for Lambeth Council by ESD Tookit.

It was reported that 40 cases had been put through the system, coving issues across all Directorates. The feedback from the IT planning officer was that more cases needed to be reported in order to see how useful the system might be.

Members of the Panel were therefore asked to consider:-

(i)   extending the trial to more Members to generate more cases through the system
(ii)   more training
(iii)   the need for a customer charter re: resolve by date

Members of the Panel discussed:-

- definition of a "case"
- getting more Members to use any surgery reporting system
- resistance to using IT and basic IT skills needed e.g. typing
- Councillors' personal interface with the electorate
- cost and value for money
- the need for a glossary of services
- speed of, and ease of access to, the system
- how would the system help Councillors and how would it make their customers happier
- individual needs of Councillors and the differing geographical areas of the Borough
- choice to use, or not to use, e-systems
- impact on Councillor/officer relationship
- the need for Councillors to have a multi skilled approach

Agreed:- (1) That the trial be extended to other Members, and training be

arranged jointly for Members and Officers.

(2) That the E-casework system be purchased.

(3) That Member support for councillor surgeries to be included in the Council's Customer Charter, as being revised by Councillor Wyatt, be confirmed.

44.   **EMERGENCY PLANNING TRAINING**

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Services submitted a report relating to planned training for Members on Emergency Management being held by the Council's Emergency Planning Team on 14th May, 2009 at the Town Hall.

Members present discussed:-

- possible training via the Area Assemblies, with Police, Fire and Health Services re; the flu pandemic
- more advice to Councillors in their advocacy role, noting the Councillors' role in their communities
- format of the training; manner of delivery and the facilitators used
- previous poor attendance by Members

Agreed:- (1) That all Members be advised of the training planned for 14th May and that they be encouraged to attend.

(2) That the suggestion of possible training via the Area Assemblies, with Police, Fire and Health Services re; the flu pandemic be discussed with the PCT and with the Emergency and Safety Manager.

45.   **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The following items were raised:-

(i)   Community Call for Action – re: anticipated training needs

(ii)   Use of Council Seminars and other effective ways of getting information to Members

Agreed: That the Head of Scrutiny and Member Services brings a report to a future meeting of this Panel.

(iii)   Induction package for new Members of the Council

Agreed: That the Head of Scrutiny and Member Services brings a report to the June meeting of the Panel.

(iv)   Qualifications for Elected Members

Reference was made to the post graduate training currently being undertaken by a couple of Members, and also to the full programme of development activities and initiatives offered by IDeA for Elected Members.

(v)   Appeals Panels – members

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Services reported that 6 responses for appeals panel training had been received. A half day's training had been organised for 3rd June.

46.   DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- That the next meeting of the Panel take place on Thursday, 25th June, 2009 at 2.00 p.m. at the Town Hall, Moorgate Street, Rotherham.

Agenda Item 3

Member Development
Work Programme 2009

Month	Programme
Feb	Skills for Life E-Casework
Mar	PSOC Away Day/Self Assessment Safeguarding Adults
May	Emergency Planning E-Casework
June	Appeals Local Govt Finance & Budget Mgt Corporate Area Assessment Changes to Constitution/Standing Orders
July	Local Government Finance Community Engagement Awareness Changes to Constitution/Standing Orders Risk Management
Sept	Planning Licensing Being a Better Client(covers partnerships and project client mgt)
Oct	Presentation Skills Media Skills Internal Audit and Financial Regulations
Nov	Good Conduct and Prevention and Detection of Fraud & Corruption
Dec	

CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT & VALUE FOR MONEY BOARD

AGREED ACTIONS LIST – 29 APRIL 2009

Who

1   Introduction

- It was agreed that a proper business case for the Digital Knowledge Exchange technology needed to be created to be taken to the Partnership Delivery Group, stating the clear benefits to local authorities.

CT/MG

2   CIVFM Overview of Projects and Commitments to date/ Forward Plan – Year Two Funding

- It was agreed to look at finding a more effective way of bringing detail back to the board on smaller funded projects.

CT

- It was agreed that the board would do some work around pulling together local authority capital and revenue bids to keep 'on the shelf' as it was likely that CLG funding would be available in future years.

All/EK

- It was agreed that technical meetings needed to be set up by middle of May and needed to involve two people from each functional sub region.

TR

3   Update from RIEP Director – *Chris Taylor*

- Members asked that the YoHr Space Annual Report be circulated.

CT

- Members raised the issue of support for the procurement workstream and it was agreed to pull something together for the next Partnership Delivery Group (PDG) meeting outlining recommendations on how this should look.

CT

- Members asked that membership lists for both the RPPG and PDG be circulated.

EK

4   Project Proposals/Network Updates

- It was suggested that it would be useful to bring a summary of all bids to future meetings with feedback from the YoHr Space Hub about any possible duplications of work.

KF/EK

- It was suggested that a Communities of Practice platform could be set up to share information such as work with the third sector and non-RIEP funded projects which might be of value.

DA

- It was suggested that all bids related to Business Transformation should be forwarded to Tony Riding for comment.

ALL

- It was agreed that all authorities should send a list of their top ten transformation projects to Tony Riding for him to pull together a short directory to showcase work and highlight any gaps. This should involve information on where each authority is with the work and how YoHr Space can help with the work. Members asked that a template be worked up and circulated for how this should look.   Reports should be returned by end of May.

ALL

- It was agreed that the amount proposed for the Member development bid appeared high. It was agreed the proposed programme should be referred to the YoHr Space Member Board for feedback.

SW/EK

5   Sector Led Improvement

- It was agreed that this proposal will be taken to the PDG and the Regional Chief Executives Meeting.

CT

6   CAA – The Regional Perspective – David Alston, IDeA

- It was suggested that a regional workshop be held in June. It was agreed to raise this at the PDG meeting.

CT/EK

7   Performance Management Arrangements – to note

- Performance Management information to be copied to sub regional leads.
- It was agreed to circulate details of 'MieTool' a toolkit that will help with this work and to look at this at the next meeting.

KF
RB

8   Final Evaluation Capacity Building Report – To Note

- It was agreed that this will be put on the YoHr Space website.
- It was agreed to pull out areas of improvement from this document.

SB
KF

9   Any Other Business

- It was agreed that the minutes of the next PDG would be circulated to members of this board and be put on the COP.
- Members also asked for a list of the role and responsibilities of the PDG to be circulated.

EK

EK

		ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	**Member Development Training Panel**
2.	Date:	**25 June 2009**
3.	Title:	**Elected Members as Champions**
4.	Directorate:	**Chief Executive's**

5. Summary

Rotherham MBC has had Elected Members who are designated Champions on a particular issue for a number of years, however their role and purpose has in the past been unclear. The intention of this report is to clarify the current situation in Rotherham, look at good practice in other Authorities, and provoke a discussion about whether it would be of benefit and interest to strengthen and promote the concept of Member Champions in Rotherham.

6. Recommendations

Members are asked to:-

1. **Clarify the role and responsibilities of Member Champions**
2. **Consider options for supporting Member Champions through development**

1

7. Proposals and Details

The idea of Elected Members becoming "Champions" on a specific area of work is that they become an advocate for that issue and strive to promote it amongst other councillors and networks they are involved in. They would usually champion an issue that they have a personal interest in. The concept of Member Champions first emerged in 2001 when the National Service Framework for Older People recommended appointing a Member to promote the views of older people. Since then the idea has been adopted by many local authorities and other organisations and expanded to cover a wide range of issues.

The table below shows the list of designated Member Champions in Rotherham:

Issue	Elected Member
Children	Councillor S. Wright
Older People	Councillor Walker
Physical Disabilities and Sensory Impairment	Councillor Hodgkiss
Carers	Councillor R.S. Russell
Vulnerable Adults	Councillor P. A. Russell
Public Health	to be confirmed.
E-Government	Councillor Wyatt
Design	Councillor Smith
Historic Environment	Councillor Boyes
Planning Aid Community Champion	Councillor Pickering
Better Regulation	Councillor McNeely
Cycling	Councillor Barron

The appointment of the above Member Champions has taken place on a fairly ad hoc basis. On some occasions requests have been made by national organisations to appoint a Champion, for example from the *Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment* for a Design Champion and from *Cycle England* for a Cycling Champion.

Some of the Champions in Rotherham are also the Cabinet portfolio holders on that issue; for example Cllr Shaun Wright for Children and Young People. It could be argued that championing an interest is already part of the portfolio holder's core responsibilities and questioned whether being nominated a "Champion" as well brings any additional value. Although the list of official Delegations for RMBC Cabinet Members set out in the Council's constitution contains no specific mention of acting as a Champion for their area of work, clearly this is part and parcel of the Cabinet Member role. For example the Cabinet Member would already keep up-to-date with knowledge on the subject area, be invited to relevant events and training, and also have access to key officers

The role of Member Champions has not been clarified in Rotherham and this has undoubtedly limited their impact to date. In order for the Champions to operate effectively there would need to be a wider understanding of their function and what

they are expected to achieve. Other Councils have developed terms of reference in varying detail setting out the role and key tasks of their Member Champions.

Bath and North East Somerset Council has produced a guidance document for Member Champions and supporting officers which includes as an appendix a template for a Executive and Non-Executive Champion job description. This could be used as a reference if Rotherham wishes to develop something similar.

Clarifying the role of the Member Champions would also help to establish whether the issues listed in the table above are indeed the most appropriate areas of work to be championed in Rotherham. In one local authority Member Champion roles have been aligned to the delivery of the Corporate Plan by assigning each Champion to an objective within the Plan. The aim of this move is to demonstrate the Council's intent to see elected Members as pivotal to the delivery of its priorities. Although not necessarily something Rotherham might wish to do, it shows innovative thinking in the use of the Champion role.

If the main role of the Champions is to promote an issue then it could be argued that they would be most effective working on more specific, less high-profile issues that might not otherwise be kept on the Council's radar (e.g. cycling). Wider areas of work that are covered by a Cabinet Portfolio already have guaranteed coverage on Council agendas.

In addition to having a clearly defined role, the effectiveness of Member Champions would also depend on their position being taken seriously. Although they would not have decision-making powers, their value as a source of information and advice, as a potential spokesperson and as a catalyst for change and improvement ought to be recognised by other Elected Members and officers. In order to be taken seriously, the Champions system may need to be formalised. There are different ways in which other Local Authorities have achieved this, including: announcing the appointment of Champions at the Annual Council Meeting, having written job descriptions for Champions, providing appropriate training and introducing a reporting mechanism for Champions to officially feedback on their activity.

The process of appointing Elected Members to Champion roles needs to be carefully managed. To date it has often happened fairly organically, with Champion status being given to Members who had a personal interest in a particular subject. This has the advantage of recognising the genuine enthusiasm and knowledge of Members and allows the Council to tap into that knowledge in a more formal way. However it does mean that the list of issues being championed may not be reflective of the Council's priorities and also that if the Member Champion leaves the Council the issue may not necessarily be taken forward by another Member. If a more strategic approach is taken and issues to be championed are first identified and then assigned to Members, for example Coucillor Shaun Wright at his delegated powers meeting designated seven Children's Locality Safeguarding Champions, with the role needing to be more clearly defined. These were:-

- Rotherham North   Councillor Barron
- Rotherham South   Councillor McNeely
- Rother Valley South   Councillor Havenhand

- Rother Valley West   Councillor Austen
- Wentworth North   Councillor Doyle
- Wentworth South   Councillor G. A. Russell
- Wentworth Valley   Councillor Rushforth

For Elected Members, the benefits of being Champions are that they would be able to promote more formally a subject which they are interested in and through attendance at events, meetings, research and training, be able to further their knowledge in the field.

In addition to Member Champions there are also many RMBC Officers who are designated as 'Champions' in various forms. For example the Chief Executive's Equalities team has appointed RMBC Directors as Equality Champions and provided a clearly defined role description and appropriate training. There is an informal network of International Champions across the borough, including partners from external organisations, who share information on European funding opportunities and international work. 2010 Rotherham Ltd have Neighbourhood Champions working to involve customers in housing and neighbourhood management issues at a local level as well as Housing Income Champions who have specialist knowledge on balancing household finances and offer advice to tenants struggling to pay their rent.

8. Finance

Some Local Authorities pay a special allowance to their Member Champions but this is not common practice. It is not anticipated that there would be any direct financial costs associated with reinvigorating the Member Champion status in Rotherham. There may be some future costs linked to training if it were agreed that Champion Members were to attend appropriate events relevant to their subject of interest. However in some cases it is likely that they would be attending these events anyway as part of their other role(s) within the Council.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

There is a risk that without better support and a more formal structure in place, the Member Champions network will continue to be of limited benefit in Rotherham. Clarification of their roles and responsibilities is needed to allow Champions to act more effectively and ensure a better understanding of their purpose.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The work of the Champions should help to meet the Council's corporate objectives and priorities as set out in the Community Strategy and Corporate Plan.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Our Future Group 1

"Member Champions: Guidance and Advice" produced by Bath & North East Somerset Council in partnership with South West Provincial Employers.

Contact Name : Cath Saltis, Head of Scrutiny Services and Member Development Ext 2779

iCoCo

Institute of Community Cohesion

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council – equalities and community cohesion

Member Development Programme

Proposal from the Institute of Community Cohesion (iCoCo)

May 2009

Institute of Community Cohesion
Futures Institute
10 Coventry Innovation Village
Coventry University Technology Park
Cheetah Road
Coventry CV1 2TL

![iCoCo - Institute of Community Cohesion]

Outline Proposal for Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council Equalities and Cohesion Member Development – May 2009

Introduction

This proposal follows a meeting between Cath Saltis, Head of Scrutiny and Carol Adamson at Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) with Vanessa Walker from the Institute of Community Cohesion (iCoCo) on Thursday 30th April 2009.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a potential elected member development programme covering the broad aspects of equalities and community cohesion.

Context

RMBC has a well established member development programme. It is driven and supported by a member development panel that is chaired by the Deputy Leader of the Council. Member development programmes are well attended in general and a very high percentage of councillors have attended equalities and diversity training and are considered to have a good understanding of the equalities standard. Member training is also supported by each member having their own personal development plan.

RMBC enjoys a sound reputation for leading aspects of member development at a sub regional level and is instrumental in helping to maintain good sub regional working arrangements such as involving other authorities in scrutiny. RMBC is active in a sub regional network to address the 'Prevent' agenda and is included within a South Yorkshire bid to the RIEP for member development.

The Council is conscious of the significant local government agenda that needs to be understood by all councillors whether operating as front line councillors or those holding a particular office. It was discussed at the meeting that a community cohesion member development programme requires a wide brief covering aspects of:
- Equalities and cohesion
- PREVENT
- Neighbourhood management
- Community engagement and empowerment

- Local partnership working
- Comprehensive Area Assessment
- Building confidence with voluntary sector organisations
- Working within diverse communities such as those with high populations of BME, different faith groups, working class white communities etc.

The Council has recently launched a community cohesion initiative entitled 'One Town – One Community'. The council has also undertaken a mapping exercise to discover 'communities of interest', analysing different community profiles. This was in response to needing to understand the different sources and needs of new migrants coming to Rotherham and surrounding areas.

Our approach and principles

## Empowerment, partnership and community leadership

Our approach to member development emphasises and supports the role of elected members as key partners with the wherewithal to creatively engage with their communities. They have the potential capacity to gather very meaningful knowledge about their communities to contribute to community cohesion as well as the delivery of services, but we believe this capacity requires significant development across the country as well as regionally and locally.

We also believe that other community partners, such as the voluntary sector, could adopt far greater leadership roles, but that confidence and capacity needs to be developed to enable them to step up into such roles – even when they are less able to match the resources of say bigger or statutory partners. The governance of local strategic partnerships, and the critically important role of elected members, places an obligation and duty through the empowerment and community cohesion agenda to ensure that council and LSP governance arrangements truly allow for:

- Shared local community engagement
- Partners working together on a shared vision for the local area
- Partners having clearly defined roles and functions demonstrating high standards and adherence to shared values
- Understanding the risks as well as the benefits of planning and regeneration decisions for cohesive communities – that should be open to scrutiny
- Commitment to continuous development of capacity and capability of partners to be effective at sustaining cohesive communities

We believe these principles and behaviours of good partnership governance align with the community leadership skills required by elected members directly involved in the delivery of sustainable and cohesive communities.

sustainable communities = cohesive communities

cohesive communities = sustainable communities
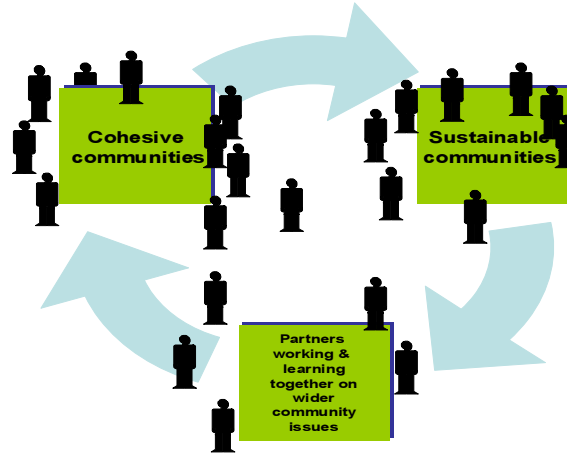
Member development programme

At the 30th April meeting the discussion emphasised the need to tailor the member development programme within the local context of Rotherham. However, it was also considered important that, where possible, core elements of the programme could be adapted and shared with other neighbouring authorities within the sub or even wider region.

A further feature of the training will be to ensure that we build on strengths and include and involve local input in delivery of the programme. For example this might include a recent project with school governors, or involvement of LSP representation through its Chair, Brian Chapel.

We would also aim to encourage more robust evaluation of the programme than simple reference to participant satisfaction data.

The training aims to attract as many elected members from Rotherham MBC as possible. Therefore there is a commitment to ensure that the training meets recognised need. In order to achieve this we propose to allocate one half day to undertake an on-site scoping exercise to discover:

- The key stakeholders likely to positively influence community cohesion
- The broad issues relating to community cohesion within Rotherham and where applicable the immediate surrounding area
- A base line understanding of what councillors understand already about the broader aspects of diversity and cohesion
- What is already being achieved within the area to tackle problems or issues associated with community cohesion, e.g. hot-spots where community tension arises

To undertake this we would hold brief meetings with identified key stakeholders or meet with them as a group. Our programme will thus be designed to tackle local issues as well as to consider:

- National trends and statistics relating to community cohesion
- The broader aspects of community cohesion that extend beyond race, faith, ethnic origins etc. to include for example aspects of intergenerational community cohesion
- The role of elected members as community leaders
- Neighbourhood management
- Community engagement and empowerment
- Local partnership working

The style of training/facilitation will take a steer from the scoping exercise and will also likely be based on a range of methods emphasising participant involvement that might include:

- Contextual presentation from experts and/or peers
- Working in small groups to consider key cohesion issues
- Learning from exploring case studies or scenarios
- Exploring real issues associated with Rotherham
- Receiving relevant material – handouts and/or workbooks

Our proposed activities outlined below are based on our discussion on 30th April which suggested delivery of a short one day workshop to be run three times in order to maximise councillor attendance. If necessary we would include a late afternoon to evening workshop to accommodate councillors who are usually at work during the day. It is anticipated that delivery of the training would take place in the early autumn of this year – 2009.

Activities and estimated input would include:

TASK	INPUT days	COST £'s
Detailed scoping of the member development programme which might include one to one interviews or a group meeting with identified key stakeholders influencing community cohesion	0.5	400
Programme design and preparation	0.5	400
Delivery of the member development programme	2 facilitators X 3 days = 6 days	4,800
Project management, administration and	1	400

evaluation	discounted @£400 per day	
TOTAL DAYS AND ESTIMATED COST	**8**	**£6,000**

Our costs

iCoCo charges a standard public sector consultancy daily rate @ £800. We have estimated one day at a discounted rate of £400 to cover project management and administration costs.

iCoCo will invoice RMBC at completion of the programme. Any additional work above the proposed input days would be subject to discussion and an agreed variation of the contract.

The total cost is exclusive of VAT if chargeable and receipted actual expenses.

It is assumed that RMBC will issue workshop invitations, undertake administration and meet venue costs.

Our principles and intentions to evaluate the development and support programme

We see effective evaluation on 4 levels – within the scope of this proposal we would deliver 1 and 2, and discuss levels 3 and 4 with RMBC.

1. **Progress reporting –** Vanessa Walker will liaise frequently with Cath Saltis during the scoping and design of the programme – and receive feedback on performance and delivery.

2. **Customer satisfaction –** whenever iCoCo facilitates or delivers a workshop, customer satisfaction information will be collected and analysed. This will be through an iCoCo evaluation form (or a tailored form to meet the needs of the programme) and will be actively used as a performance management and improvement mechanism.

3. **Evaluation of learning –** mechanisms should be built into the member development programme to test out learning as an outcome of activities. This might include post learning action planning, the development of action learning groups, post-workshop exploration to discover if actions or behaviour has changed as a result of learning.

4. **Evaluation of outcomes and Impact assessment –** the iCoCo team will encourage and discuss with RMBC ways to develop methodologies to undertake longer-term qualitative evaluation along with partners to explore sustainable improvement in local areas in tackling equalities and community cohesion.

Our people

The events and workshops would be generally facilitated by two people depending on the numbers attending, Vanessa Walker with a colleague from iCoCo (TBA). Vanessa will take the lead role in terms of overall programme delivery relying on appropriate support from iCoCo colleagues. Overall project sponsorship will be provided by Ted Cantle (iCoCo).

Next steps and our expectations of you

We recommend a follow-up telephone conversation to discuss this proposal in greater detail if necessary, including logistics, and setting up the scoping meetings.

The detail and organisation of the programme should be discussed after provisional 'sign-up' to this proposal and to discuss and agree other logistical issues and expectations such as:
- A named individual to help organise the training events
- Other administration support such as sending out invitations, copying materials, organising refreshments, car parking etc.
- Agreement about venue booking for training events

Contact and Further Information

Contact details:	
Vanessa Walker – Governance and Partnerships Lead	Telephone: 07780687383 Email: vanessa.walker@idea.gov.uk
Ted Cantle – iCoCo Executive Chair	Telephone: 07766 115197 Email: ted.cantle@idea.gov.uk

Trevor Montague – Executive Director	Telephone: 024 7679 5765 E-mail: t.montague@coventry.ac.uk
iCoCo Head Office: *The Institute of Community Cohesion* *Futures Institute* *10 Coventry Innovation Village* *Coventry University Technology Park* *Cheetah Road* *Coventry* *CV1 2TL* *www.cohesioninstitute.org.uk*	Telephone: 024 7679 5757

Core Team Profiles

Vanessa Walker – Governance and Partnership Lead

Vanessa Walker has joined iCoCo on secondment from the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) with a particular remit to provide tailored development or support to local authorities and partnerships to help tackle issues related to equalities and community cohesion.   At the IDeA she led performance improvement programmes within local authorities, continues to lead on ethical governance and developed a governance and partnership benchmark and review tool specifically designed to test out culture, behaviour and relationship indicators within cross sector partnerships – positive relationships are a vital ingredient for partners working together to improve cohesion within neighbourhoods.

Vanessa is currently working with the IDeA healthy communities team and Department of Health to explore the relationship between community cohesion and tackling health inequalities in communities. This is essentially about equipping health practitioners with the skills to promote community cohesion in the areas where they work and with partners with whom they are associated.

Vanessa has a previous background in organisational development and training and her MBA specialised in training and development.

Another iCoCo team member or associate – TBA

Ted Cantle

In over 30 years in public service, Ted has held a wide range of senior positions at a local level and has served on a number of national bodies focussing, in particular, on urban regeneration and key social and economic problems. He has been responsible for many action research projects, a wide range of development programmes and has helped to establish a number of new policy frameworks. He regularly contributes to several journals and publications and speaks at seminars and conferences.

Mr. Cantle was the Chief Executive of Nottingham City Council between 1990 and 2001.He was Director of Housing in Leicester City Council (1988 to 1990) and in Wakefield MDC (1979 to 1983) and was Under Secretary at the AMA (1983 to 1988) and has also worked for Manchester City Council.

In August 2001, Ted Cantle was appointed by the Home Secretary to Chair the Community Cohesion Review Team and to lead the review the causes of the summer disturbances in a number of northern towns and cities. The Report – known as 'the Cantle Report' was produced in December 2001 and made around 70 recommendations. The concept of 'community cohesion' was subsequently adopted by the Government and Mr. Cantle was asked to chair the Panel which advised Ministers on implementation.

Ted Cantle is presently Associate Director at the IDeA. He is also a member of the Board of the Environment Agency for England and Wales.

He established the Community Cohesion Institute, iCoCo in 2005 which is supported by four Midlands Universities and a range of other partners, and is presently conducting research in this area, sponsored by governmental and non-governmental departments and agencies.

Ted has contributed over 200 articles and publications on a wide range of subjects including, 'social capital', 'housing defects' race and housing' 'sustainable development' 'leadership' and 'community cohesion' – which is the subject of his book: Community Cohesion: A New Framework for Race and Diversity .

He graduated in sociology (1972) and has been a member and Fellow of the CIoH for 30 years. He is a visiting professor at Nottingham Trent University and Professor and Chair of the Institute of Community Cohesion, supported by Warwick, Coventry, Leicester and Leicester de Montfort Universities.

He was awarded the CBE in 2004.

iCoCo: relevant experience and capability

The Institute of Community Cohesion (established 2005) undertakes research and consultancy to address race, diversity and multiculturalism, with a focus on building positive and harmonious community relations.

The Institute is a unique combination of academic, statutory and non-governmental bodies that combines experience and expertise of four Universities - Coventry, Warwick, De Montfort and Leicester, with practitioners from a range of diverse backgrounds and professions.   We have developed a broad expertise to provide practical advice and guidance, applied research, training and development and in-depth reviews and policy initiatives. More than 25 reviews of community cohesion have been undertaken on behalf of local authorities, many facing challenges in terms of diversity, recent inward migration and the impact on social and economic change.

We constantly review and develop recommendations, in respect of:

- Overall vision, strategic planning and leadership
- The role of partnerships across the voluntary and statutory sector, faith and representative bodies, the business community
- The effectiveness of the plans and proposals of the professionals and practitioners in local authorities and partner agencies
- The everyday views and experiences of people from the local communities and what shapes their attitudes and values, including the extent of support for extremist views
- Prepare and support action plans, and ensure a proper performance framework for measuring and monitoring success against a baseline position.

iCoCo is able to demonstrate direct and highly effective experience in both the development and management of learning networks and, in city-wide reviews and base-lining of community cohesion. This latter work has been based on establishing a reliable evidence base, deploying analyses of strategic policy documents, relevant national, regional and local data sets and through perception mapping.

iCoCo Practitioner Network

A community cohesion practitioner network was established in 2007 with the aim of providing a national forum for cohesion practitioners to exchange good practice and support professional development. In less than 18 months the Practitioner Network has:

- Achieved a membership in excess of 300 practitioners

- Extended its reach from local authorities to include other partners including PCTs, Police, education, community and third sector organisations, central government departments
- Published quarterly e-bulletins to all members
- Run regular Practitioner Network events (one day workshops) based on a mix of iCoCo-led and practitioner-led sessions, incorporating national, regional and local developments and case studies

iCoCo Practitioner Portal

In October 2007 the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government designated iCoCo as the national one-stop-shop for cohesion. This has resulted in the reconfiguration of the iCoCo website to support the needs of cohesion practitioners. The Portal provides for:

- A central repository of publications, toolkits, learning resources and some 200 good practice examples
- An advanced search function to enable practitioners to identify specific resources drawn from across the UK
- Designated Practitioner area including archived e-bulletins, news and events, interactive notice board
- Second phase developments include moderated discussion areas and the Cohesion Delivery Framework.

Work with Local Authorities and LSPs

We have been commissioned to carry out research, review current practice, develop national toolkits and implement conference and training programmes, by a wide range of organisations. At the national level these include Sport England, the British Council, the Home Office, DCLG, DCSF LGA, IDeA, NHS, NESTA and the Barrow Cadbury Trust. Locally we have completed comprehensive benchmarking reviews for:

- Oldham MBC
- Sandwell MBC
- LB Hounslow
- LB Waltham Forest
- Sunderland City Council
- Kirklees Council
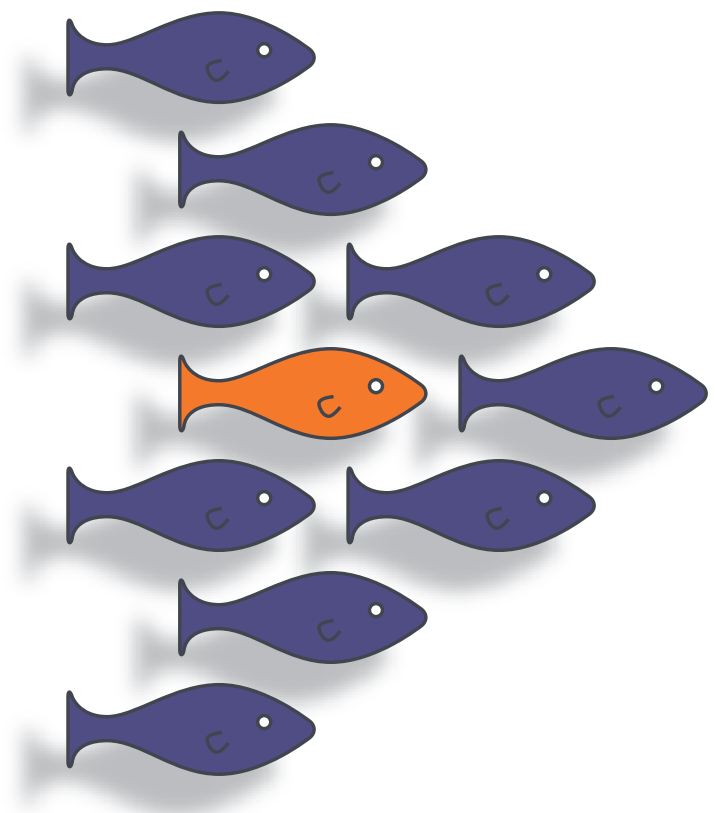- Bolton MBC
- City of London
- Wolverhampton LSP

This evaluation combines qualitative and quantitative approaches and links these to measures of cohesion (a mix of hard and soft indicators). Analysis on national, regional and local data sources is complemented by key informant interviews and focus groups; findings are discussed with steering group members (LSP or Council Leader/Chief Executive), good practice is identified alongside recommended areas for development. Recommendations are shared and explored through stakeholder conferences/workshops to support commitment and implementation.

- We have completed/embarked upon comprehensive cohesion impact assessments: LB Lambeth - Integration and Cohesion Impact Assessment of Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement

- Bristol City Council - Major review of population change in Bristol and the implications for Education services

- Yorkshire Forward – Review of community cohesion and economic change. The purpose of this work is to support the delivery of appropriate policy intervention, determine project direction and development via Yorkshire Forward's project development process, and monitor and measure the impact of community cohesion on economic development and the interaction between these two variables.
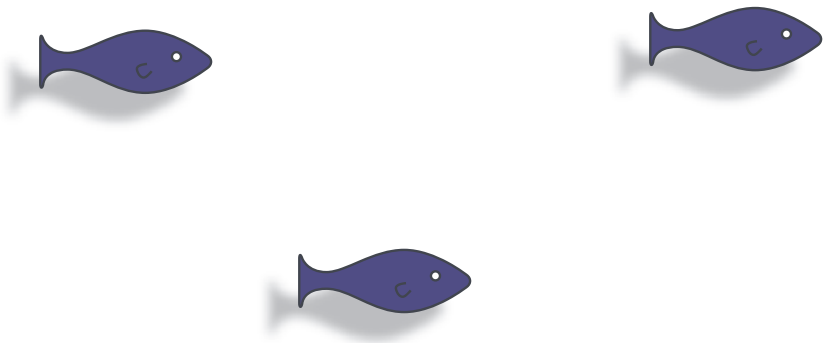
I&DeA

improvement and development agency

local leadership academy

equalities and councillors

member workbook

part of the **LGA group**

contents

1. introduction

This workbook has been designed as a learning aid for elected members. It makes no judgement about whether you have been a member for some time, or whether you have been elected more recently. If you fall into the former category the workbook should serve as a useful reminder of the key features of ethical governance in local authorities.

Most local councillors stand because they want to make a difference, and have a real commitment to fairness and opportunity. This workbook explains how most Councils are trying to deliver equality and fairness, the terms they use, the legal obligations and how an understanding of equality can help to deliver better services. The workbook will provide you with an understanding of the principles of equality and the importance of this for you and your council. Aspects of the guidance may also be of interest to members in specialist roles, such as those who sit on a standards committee or officers who have a member training responsibility.

The document should be read in conjunction with your council's own guidance on equalities and diversity, and complements the Equalities Framework, the successor to the Equality Standard for Local Government.

The workbook offers some basic principles for ward members as it is recognised that each individual must decide how best to approach their role as representative of many communities of interest and geography. This will be influenced by the type of ward you represent, any specialist roles you have taken on and the nature of the governance arrangements in your council. There is no presumption about 'typical wards' or 'typical members' and the workbook should serve more as a direction marker rather than a road map. This affects every ward, in every council, in different ways, whether you are from a rural or urban council, a district or a unitary authority. Our society is increasingly diverse, and everyone experiences life in different ways, for many different reasons. Prosperity and cohesion of all communities are affected by differences in identity. Social mobility, migration and other socio-economic factors affect all councils. This workbook will help you think about how those issues relate to your work as a local councillor, representing everyone in your ward.

In practical terms, the document will take between three to four hours to work through. You do not need to complete it all in one session and may prefer to work through the material at your own pace. The key requirement is to think about the issues presented and how the material relates to your local situation, the people you serve and the council you represent.

In working through the material contained in this workbook you will encounter a number of features designed to help you think about the nature of ethical governance. These features are represented by the symbols shown below:

guidance – this is used to indicate guidance, research, quotations, explanations and definitions that you may find helpful.

challenges – these are questions or queries raised in the text which ask you to reflect on your role or approach – in essence, they are designed to be thought-provokers.

case studies – these are 'pen pictures' of approaches used by councils elsewhere.

hints and tips – these represent a selection of good practices which you may find useful.

useful links – these are signposts to sources of further information, outside of the workbook, which may help with principles, processes, methods and approaches. A full list of useful additional information is also set out in Appendix A of the workbook.

2. what is equality?

Equality is about ensuring that all people are treated equally. This does not mean treating everyone the same, but means recognising the differences in life situation in experience and ensuring that there is equality of opportunity for all people, taking their needs into account.

This definition recognises that:

• equality is an issue for all

• we don't all start from the same position and to create a fair society we must recognise different needs.

It also encompasses some of the most vulnerable groups in society (e.g. looked after children and ex-offenders). Other groups, such as people with learning disabilities and Gypsies and Travellers, are already protected by our equality legislation, but some authorities still fail to see these groups as part of the equality picture.

This generic definition of equality aims to encourage authorities to consider the full range of equality issues, for example, addressing educational attainment of white working class boys as well as poorly performing boys from African-Caribbean communities.

The prosperity and cohesion of communities are affected by the impact of different needs and identities: age, gender, disability and sexual orientation all affect individuals' experiences in life. Socio-economic status, poverty and migration all affect people's experiences of life. Addressing inequality will help to support all people in our communities.

Local government also has legal obligations with regards to both employment and providing goods, facilities and services. This will be explored in more detail later.

"An equal society protects and promotes equal, real freedom and substantive opportunity to live in the ways people value and would choose, so that everyone can flourish.

An equal society recognises people's different needs, situations and goals, and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and can be."

From The Equalities Review, published 2007

exercise 1 - is this about equalities?

A wheelchair user having difficulty getting up the steps into the council's reception

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A middle-aged man wanting to negotiate the time he leaves the office to pick up his children.

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Street lighting in one particular are of town.

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A bus stop moving temporarily.

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Parks being poorly maintained with broken glass and damaged lighting.

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Letters from the council informing residents of refuse and recycling collection dates.

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Equality issues need to be taken into account in all of these cases. The first two examples are probably fairly obvious. What about the others? Poor street lighting increases a fear of crime, particularly among older or deaf people, and makes them less likely to go out and play an active part in society. Locations of bus stops have a major impact on everyone who uses them, mostly women and older people. Parks are used by a variety of people, but children particularly use them and will be reluctant to play there if they are poorly maintained. Letters from the council go to everyone, and therefore different methods of communication may need to be thought about – large print, different languages, audio, etc.

3. equality and local government

Local government, through the services it provides, and the people it employs, has specific responsibilities. The Equality Framework for Local Government (2009) is a performance management tool designed specifically for local government. Working through it will help local authorities to provide responsive accessible services. It also helps authorities meet the wider needs of authorities – such as Community Area Assessment (including individual authority inspections), Local Area Agreement targets and addressing the *Every Child Matters* agenda. It replaces the Equality Standard for Local Government.

There are different areas to focus on in the Equality Framework:

- Knowing your communities

- Leadership and place shaping

- Community engagement and satisfaction

- Responsive services and customer care

- A modern and diverse workforce.

There are also legal obligations – through the public sector equality duties and employment responsibilities.

Some of the roles of councillors have a big impact on the equality of opportunity that residents experience. These include communicating with residents, meting their needs, and the scrutiny of council decisions and services.

understanding the issues
Equality is not about pandering to extreme or unrealistic expectations or demands of minority groups. It's much wider than that. It's about ensuring that everything we do in local government is accessible to everyone, no matter what their life experience or situation is.

Understanding the issues means accepting that different people experience the same situation differently. For example, your Area Forum meeting may be attended by thirty people, but because there is no sign language interpreter, you never hear the views of deaf people in your area.

What equality isn't (or shouldn't be):

- Treating everybody the same

- An extra burden on service delivery

- Promoting Black or Disabled people because they are Black or Disabled

- Giving minority communities more rights than other people

What equality is (or should be):

- Treating people with dignity and respect

- Accepting people as individuals and addressing the needs of individuals or groups

- Knowing who uses (or should use) different services and designing them round what is needed

- Enabling all people to apply for, and get, jobs based on merit

Knowing your communities

As a ward councillor, you represent a number of different communities. As well as the geographic boundaries of your ward, the individual citizens you represent have diverse identities.

These include:

• Men

• Women

• Children & young people

• Older people

• Transgender people

• Disabled people

• Gay men or lesbians

• People from different faith or religious organisations,

• People with different political or social outlooks

There are likely to be many more besides. These groups of people are sometimes known as "communities of interest". Their boundaries are likely to be different from your ward boundaries (e.g. parish boundaries or social care boundaries cutting across the whole council or wider) but you still represent them. In addition, most people fall into more than one of these categories, such as Black disabled women, or young gay men.

In order for you to represent the diverse people in your ward, you need to know who they are. The Equality Framework refers to "equality mapping", literally mapping the diverse identities, experiences, life situations and other demographic information of the people in your area.

"Do [you] realise that, in many areas of the country, disabled people make up 20 per cent of their potential voters? Projects that have involved members listening to and working with local disabled people have demonstrated improved satisfaction levels with council services."

Beyond Good Intentions A resource for local authorities implementing the Disability Duty, Disability Rights Commission, 2006

exercise 2 – knowing your communities

Who do you represent?

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What might be some of their diverse life experiences? For example, being deaf, high unemployment, large Sikh population, a number of university students.

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How do you find out what they need from the council?

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place shaping and leadership

Councils are often the largest employer locally, and by their nature are well-known and challenged by the general public. The council can lead the way by demonstrating good practice and helping other organisations to get things right. This could be by showing how well it listens to local people, and acts on their suggestions.

All councils work in partnership nowadays. This might be the local strategic partnership with voluntary & community organisations as well as the public sector, crime and disorder partnerships with the police, or conducting the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment with the PCT. The *Story of Place* for the recent LAA and the Sustainable Community Strategy are also partnership documents, but focus on improving the area for the people who live, work and play in it.

As you can see, this links really well with equality work – knowing who has an interest, gathering evidence, working together, and recognising different people might need different ways of working. Councillors expressing and demonstrating their commitment to equality will send out strong messages to people living in the area, as well as setting an example to partner and other organisations.
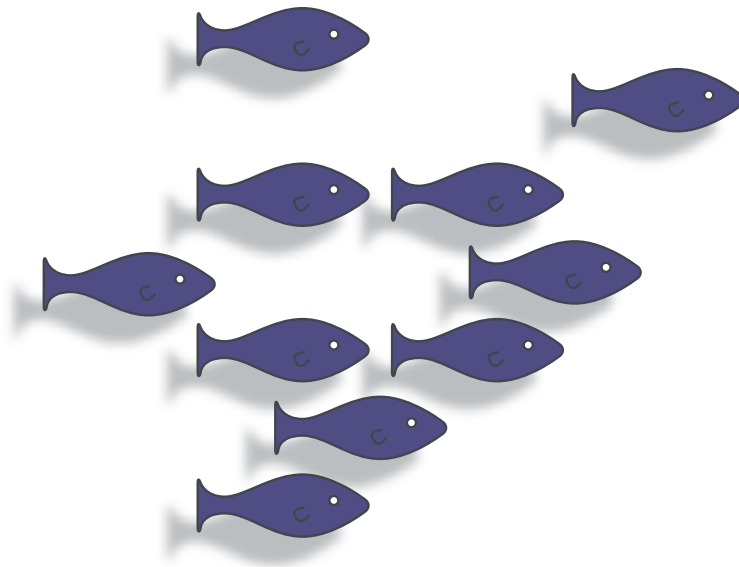
exercise 3 - place shaping and leadership

Who are your local partners?

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Does your local strategic partnership represent the interests of the people who live in your local area?

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Are there any ways you could help to improve this? The duty to involve means looking to involve different groups of people in decision making.

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How does the council demonstrate leadership in meeting the needs of diverse communities?

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community engagement and satisfaction

Engaging with people in the different communities of interest is about building a relationship with them. This will help ensure that you represent their needs. There are a number of officers in your authority who might help you with this, depending on the structures in your council. These might include: equalities team, neighbourhood managers and benefits outreach workers.

There are many forms of engagement, from specific methods such as surveys and focus groups, to different ways of working, such as neighbourhood management and customer-focused services. Area Forums, Neighbourhood Management Boards, service-user advisory groups are all different ways to engage the people you represent.

It's all about communities knowing you, and you knowing them. It's a two-way relationship, about sharing information and taking feedback, learning about their needs and supporting them when they need it.
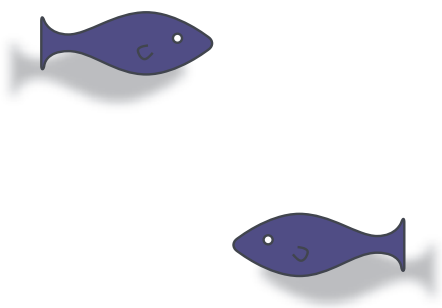
Ten steps for effective community engagement
(from the DoH guidance on Joint Strategic Needs Assessments)

Involve: Identify and involve the people and organisations who have an interest in the issues which are being explored

Support: Identify and overcome any barriers to people's involvement (transport problems, timing etc)

Plan: Gather evidence of necessary and available resources and use these to plan purpose, scope and timescale of engagement and actions

Methods: Agree to and use methods of engagement that are appropriate and fit for purpose

Work together and with others: Agree to and use clear procedures to enable participants to work with each other effectively and efficiently; work effectively with others who have an interest in the engagement process

Share information: Ensure that necessary information is communicated between participants

Improve: Actively develop skills, knowledge and confidence of all participants

Feedback: Feed back results to all those involved and affected

Monitor and evaluate: Work together to monitor and evaluate whether engagement has achieved its purpose

Recognise: people are different, and processes and services should take meaningful account of those differences

Adapted from *National Standards for Community Engagement*, produced by **Communities Scotlan**d

exercise 4 - engagement and satisfaction

Does your authority have any satisfaction surveys? If so, do you know what the most recent one showed?

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What other forms of engagement in your authority? This could be interest groups, area forum meetings, meet & greet sessions, as well as specific consultation exercises.

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As a councillor, how do you engage with the people you represent?

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Another IDeA workbook looks at community engagement more closely: *Community Engagement workbook*

responsive services and customer care

Promoting equality and eliminating discrimination in service provision is about understanding individuals' needs and addressing them. It's not just about counting how many people from a particular group use the service, but about how they experience that service, or the reasons they need the service in the first place. Sometimes it's about finding out what people's needs are before making a decision for example in planning, talking to gypsies or travellers before making planning decisions that might affect them. Or when regenerating a town centre, ensuring that you involve people who live there, addressing the different need of men and women, children and young people, and wheelchair users' access needs.

Councils are increasingly paying another organisation to deliver services, through commissioning or procurement. This does mean that councils need to build consideration of equality outcomes into contracts. For specific guidance on this, see the EHRC website with guidance on procurement. (see "more information at the end of this workbook).

Examples of gender equality issues in service delivery

- Women generally have a lower income than men, and therefore have fewer housing choices than men. Single mothers and women pensioners are particularly likely to be found in low-income groups.

- Women spend more time than men in their neighbourhood but are less likely than men to be involved in planning it

- The British Crime Survey of 2000 records that domestic violence represents two fifths of the violent incidents reported by women and a tenth of the violent incidents reported by men[1].

- Women's greatest fear of crime is of rape and sexual assault, and men's is theft of, or from, vehicles[2].

- Older women have a particularly high fear of crime and this is likely to restrict their daily activities, and hence their wellbeing.

Adapted from the Gender Equality Duty Guidance published by the EOC. Now available on the EHRC website

1. Chris Kershaw, Tracey Budd, Graham Kinshott, Joanna Mattinson, Pat Mayhew & Andy Myhill *The British Crime Survey 2000* London Home Office Statistical Bulletin 18/00

2. *Key indicators of Women's Position in Britain* WEU 2002, p195

⧗ exercise 5

Can you think of any times when disabled people might experience council services differently from non-disabled people? For example, a Deaf person might find it difficult to phone the council's helpline if there is no Mincom (text phone) number

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What about for people with different religious beliefs? For example, some Jewish people may find it hard to make appointments or come to the council on a Friday afternoon in the winter if they are observing the Sabbath.

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When might older people experience services differently? For example, they may struggle with taking wheelie bins to the end of a road for emptying.

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What sort of services do men and women, or boys and girls experience differently? For example, some groups of boys are achieving lower levels of educational attainment than many groups of girls, and women and men tend to be homeless for different reasons and therefore the solutions to re-housing them will need to be different.

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a modern, diverse workforce

One way to help to ensure that your local authority is meeting the needs of local citizens is to have a workforce that reflects the local population. This many mean looking at how the authority encourages people from different communities to apply for work, or about exploring flexible working practices to enable people with a variety of other needs or responsibilities to be able to work at all levels of the organisation. This is mostly your HR department's job, but it helps to recruit the best people for jobs if the workforce reflects and encourages people from all walks of life.

All local authorities need to look at the future as well as the present. There are several useful publications to help you think about workforce issues. This includes:

- local government the place to be, the place to work – delivering the 2007 workforce strategy (LGA Group)

- support for local councils on internal workforce issues Jan-March 2009 (LGA group)

- Tomorrow's People from the Audit Commission (2008).

The EHRC has advice on employment issues too.

It is important not to confuse positive action, which is legal and positive discrimination, which is not.

Positive Action vs Positive Discrimination

Positive Action

Actions taken to attract applications and interest from under-represented groups. Examples of positive action include:

- designing job adverts to reach members of under-represented groups and encourage their applications, e.g. through use of the ethnic minority press.

- using employment agencies and careers offices in areas where under-represented groups are concentrated.

- encouraging employees from under-represented groups to apply for promotion or transfer opportunities.

- providing career development training for employees of under-represented groups who lack particular expertise but show potential.

Positive Discrimination

Making decisions which actively favour an under-represented group, e.g. women, minority ethnic groups, etc. Positive discrimination is illegal as it results in people within majority groups being unfairly disadvantaged.

4. communication and language

The way you relate to people as a councillor has an important effect on their attitudes to the council, the services the authority provides and the place you represent. Your inter-personal, communication and assertiveness skills all come into play. You may have to adapt your personal style when you become aware of the effect you have on other people, but at the same time, be true to yourself. Changing your attitude and behaviour are important, not changing who you are, what you think or believe.

Some of the people you represent may have specific communication needs, for instance:

• They are deaf and need a British Sign Language interpreter to speak you to, or a Mincom number to phone you.

• They have learning difficulties and find reading jargon difficult. They may need documents in plain English or with pictures explaining the words.

• They may not read any language, and would need an interpreter in order to understand what you say at the Area Forum.

The language we use is important. It's not about political correctness; it's about ensuring that the words we use don't put up barriers, while using common sense. It is easy to use gender neutral words, such as Chair and Headteacher, and is more inclusive (and less offensive) than the gendered equivalents (Chairman, Headmaster or Headmistress).

In local government, we usually want and need to reach as many people as possible, especially as a councillor representing a diverse range of people.

Our choice and use of language to convey information, opinions, ideas etc, is a direct reflection of our knowledge and understanding of particular issues and concerns. If we choose words that do not respect the views and rights of individuals we run the risk of patronising, offending and stereotyping them.

Language is always evolving; terms and words that were once considered acceptable are now recognised as demeaning or patronising, or racist. None of us get it right all the time, but all of us need to be sensitive and considerate. Sometimes we do say the wrong thing, so we need to accept being challenged on what we say, and try not to make assumptions.

Key skills in communication

Asking the right questions – how do people want to communicate with you, and when? What do you need to know and what do they want to tell you?

Listening skills – listen to their answers and act on them. If someone needs an interpreter (e.g. British Sign Language) find a way to use one.

Feedback – pass relevant information on to the appropriate services.

Relax – and be yourself!

"Any writing habit that builds a barrier between you and half your readers must reduce the impact of your message. Even if you disagree with the view that sexist writing reinforces prejudice and discrimination, it is still wiser to use inclusive language."

Oxford Guide to Plain English, Martin Cutts (1996, revised 2007)

5. supporting improvement

Addressing equalities issues is part of improving the way local government delivers services and employs people. Knowing your communities means that you can tailor services to meet their needs. If you are a portfolio holder for a particular service, you can play an important part in knowing the needs of the people that use that services. If you are not, knowing what the needs of the people you represent means you can feed that information to the portfolio holders.

The drive for improved customer service in local government is supported by addressing inequalities. If you know who your "customers" are, and what they want and need, you can provide for those needs. If you know the best way to communicate and inform people about local government developments, you can improve relations between groups of people.

The Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) will look at local improvement across the whole area. It includes elements of involving service users and other citizens to improve service delivery. Your authority will have targets to work towards. Working through the Equality Framework is one way to improve your evidence of this for the Audit Commission.
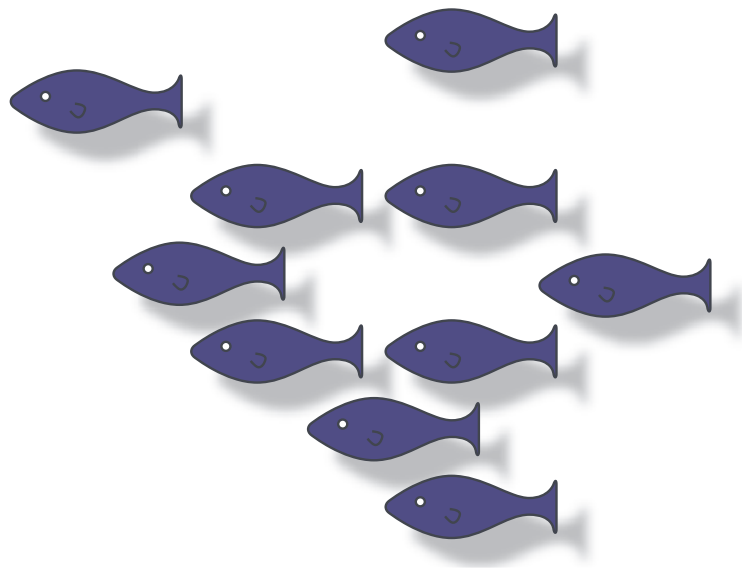
exercise 6 - sector led improvement is a challenge and an opportunity

1. Has your authority used the Equality Standard to help you improve your services? Have you seen the Equality Framework that replaces it? How might this help your council address inequalities in your local area?

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2. Do you actively learn from other councils around you or further afield and share your good practice with others? Is your council part of a local or regional improvement network?

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3. Do you see yourself as an equality champion in your council? How could you more actively challenge performance, use the scrutiny process better or play a role in the improvement networks helping other members see the value and worth of promoting equality and eliminating discrimination?

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4. What support do you need as a councillor to ensure the services provided to your local communities are the best they can be? Do you know where this support might come from?

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5. How does your authority's work on equalities link with your corporate plan?

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6. scrutiny and equalities

Scrutiny is probably one of the most important parts of your role as a councillor. You can make a real difference through scrutiny in all areas of your council's work. Bringing equalities into scrutiny is not about scrutinising equality and diversity polices and practices, but about bringing equalities into all scrutiny work.

All council policies, practices and functions need to promote equality and good relations between people as well as eliminate discrimination and harassment. This includes scrutinising library services, recycling and leisure facilities, as well as the equalities scheme or impact assessments. This means that councillors, as well as officers, need to understand equalities in services provision. They need to feel confident about asking the right questions, or involving the right people.

For example, violence against women (which includes stalking, harassment, abuse and rape as well as domestic violence) is not often recognised as an issue that cuts across different services. It is affected by policies and practices on street lighting, housing, transport, employment, social care to name but a few.

Equal to the Task is a guidance document on bringing equalities into Scrutiny. The Centre for Public Scrutiny published this in 2007 to help councillors improve their scrutiny arrangements.

Equal to the Task is available from the CfPS website http://www.cfps.org.uk/publications/item.php?itemid=72

Techniques for scrutiny committees to use

- One-off, in-depth review of major policy or plan (e.g. Equality Scheme, transport plan, workforce development strategy, or tackling violence against women)

- Ask for evidence of how equality and diversity have been taken into account when scrutinising other policies or practices such as:
  - have single fathers' needs been taken into account when providing support for single parents?
  - Were disabled people involved in developing the transport strategy?
  - are there different groups of boys and girls who perform better or worse at schools and how is this being addressed by different subjects?
  - are the health needs of different communities understood and met?

- Establish regular monitoring of equalities targets using community engagement and questioning key officers.

7. community cohesion

"A cohesive community is one where:

- there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities

- the diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued

- those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities

- strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds and circumstances in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods."

(Home Office / LGA definition of community cohesion)

As a local councillor, you have a duty to promote community cohesion. You need to represent everyone equally.

"An integrated and cohesive community is one where people from various backgrounds and circumstances live and mix in freedom and peace and thrive in every way. It is based on tolerance, trust, respect, civil rights and a celebration of diversity with equal access to local services.

From "Themes Messages and Challenges" a summary of key themes from the commission on cohesion and integration 2007
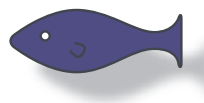
8. equalities and the law

There are regulations that local authorities must adhere to regarding both employment and goods and services:

	Employment	Goods, facilities & services
Gender (including transsexual people)	X	X
Disability	X	X
Race	X	X
Age	X	
Sexual Orientation	X	X
Religion or Belief	X	X

Elected members are legally responsible for the implementation of these laws so it is important that all councillors have a basic understanding of their implications.

There are currently three equalities duties that apply to the public sector – on Race, Disability and Gender equality. There are slightly different responsibilities under each, but all require an equality scheme, impact assessments, action plans and consultation or involvement. These will be replaced by a single equality duty within this Parliament, as a result of the Equality Bill currently being prepared. The single equality duty is expected to be out to public consultation during summer 2009. The law basically requires equal treatment of different groups of people. In addition, the public sector duties on race, gender and disability equality require authorities to take positive steps to both prevent discrimination and to promote equality.

Working with your equality & diversity officers within the authority, you can ensure equality issue are taken into account in all the policies, practices & functions of the authority as they are developed or changed. A useful way of checking this is to build equalities considerations into all scrutiny work, as the duties help to identify customer need, service users' needs and employees' needs. You could also ask service managers for regular briefings to ensure that the duties are built into the service planning process. This includes the procurement process for goods facilities or services.

Acts of Parliament relating to equalities

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Disability Discrimination Act 2005

Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003

Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003

Equality Act 2006

Equal Pay Act 1970

Human Rights Act 1998

Race Relations Act 1976

Sex Discrimination Act 1975

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001

Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms as amended by Protocol No. 11

Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation.

exercise 7 - your council's equality scheme

Does your council have a single equality scheme or does it have separate ones?

_____

_____

Does the scheme (or schemes) have clear objectives with target dates and people assigned to take responsibility for actions?

_____

_____

How might you work with the officers, with your knowledge of your own ward, to help improve the scheme(s)?

_____

_____

"It is unlawful to discriminate in providing goods, facilities or services to the public on the grounds of sex, race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, and religion or belief.

Discrimination in providing services means:
• refusing to provide a service
• providing a lower standard of service or
• offering a service on different terms than you would to other people.

There is no legislation that makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of age when providing services: for example, a pub can choose to refuse service to people under 21.

As a service provider, having good equality practices will help make your services available to the widest possible range of customers. Improvements such as better lighting and clear signs benefit everyone.

Understanding this aim and the consequences of these laws will help protect you from legal action, which can be expensive and damaging to your reputation."

From Equality and Human Rights Commission website: guidance for service providers

9. final word

checklist

Some local authorities found it helpful to develop a checklist of questions you need to ask to ensure that your authority is addressing inequalities and meeting its obligations. Your equality officers might already have one.

The Disability Rights Commission developed a checklist to help ensure that councils thought about the different issues to address disability inequality. The full checklist is available on the EHRC websites.

You might find it useful to help you start to think about the sorts of questions your authority needs to ask in order to address disability inequality. They could also give you ideas of the sorts of questions to ask when addressing any other inequality, such as age, gender, sexual orientation, faith etc.

Example of a checklist for a local authority, taken from the checklist in the Disability Rights Commission's booklet *Beyond Good Intentions*, intended to help public authorities implement the Disability Equality Duty

- Which of your strategic objectives could be better met by ensuring equality for disabled staff and service users, including people with long-term health conditions, mental health issues and from black and minority ethnic communities?

- Have you set targets for employment retention and career progression of your disabled staff?

- Have you set relevant targets (including promoting independent living) for improving the service delivery and outcomes of disabled service users, including those with long-term health conditions, mental health issues and BME disabled people?

- Do you monitor and set targets for appointment of disabled people on your advisory boards, committees etc.?

- Do you have a system in place for capturing improvements made as a result of disability equality impact assessments, of initiatives, policies and practices? Do your committees receive this detailed information for major policies they are considering?

- Have senior members of staff across all areas in your organisation (HR/departmental/IT etc.) received training on disability equality, particularly to ensure that when they set budgets or approve corporate plans they have due regard to promoting disability equality?

⧖ exercise 8 - checklist for your authority

Can you begin to think of the sorts of questions you need to ask in your authority to help to address inequalities? Use the questions above to help you think of the sorts of issues you might look at.

Write down the first five questions.

1_____

2_____

3_____

4_____

5_____

Do you know where to find this information? Which officers would need to use this information?

_____

_____

Look at the complete list for Disability on the EHRC website. How can you adapt this to address all inequalities?

_____

_____

What does a council performing well on equality look like?

- The council has and promotes a culture where everyone who comes into contact with the council in any way is treated with dignity and respect. This includes people who use different goods and services as well as those who are employed by the council.

- Bullying and harassment are addressed in an appropriate and timely manner, including harassment of transgender people, disabled people, gay men, lesbians, older people, younger people and people with different faiths

- Services meet the needs of all citizens appropriately e.g. public transport strategies addressing the differing needs of men and women and disabled people; sport and leisure facilities attracting men and women, people from different cultures and disabled people including people with learning difficulties and mental health needs

- In employment: there is no gender pay gap, disabled people are represented at all levels of the organisation, and the workforce represents the diversity of the local area at all levels of the organisation. Barriers to equality have been identified and actions are being taken to overcome them.

- Resources are targeted effectively to ensure that they are allocated to address all people's needs.

- The local authority engages effectively with others in the private, voluntary and public sectors, making the most effective use of others' expertise of equality issues and service delivery.

- Organisations that are contracted to do work on behalf of the council have equality obligations built into contracts. Their policies and procedures promote equality and eliminate discrimination.

Top tips on equality for elected members

1. Remember that it is your legal responsibility to ensure the implementation of the public sector equalities duties. You should have a revised Race Equality Scheme, a Disability Equality Scheme and a Gender Equality Scheme (or one single equalities scheme covering all these aspects).

2. Ask your Chief Executive what she or he is doing with regards to the equality duties.

3. Look at who is involved in partnerships and joint working. Having diverse people involved is more likely to help you to ensure a diverse range of views can help you make decisions.

4. Remind service managers that it is their responsibility, as well as in their interests, to conduct impact assessments, develop an action plan and have a robust equality scheme, which is then monitored.

5. Ask to see the equality impact assessment of any new or existing policy or practice.

6. Ensure that progress on the equality scheme(s) is included in the Annual Report.

7. Make sure that there is someone, or a small team, who has responsibility within the council for equalities issues.

8. Ask for support when you need it. Your equality or diversity team should be able to provide you with more information, or know where you can get it.

9. When you work with other organisations, or represent the council on partnership bodies, ask what they are doing about the equalities duties. Build it into whatever you are doing.

10. Look at your working practices and the make up of your council. Is the way you work preventing some groups of people standing for council?
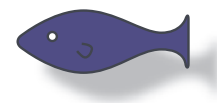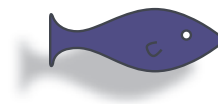
10. appendix - further help and information

Equality Framework for Local Government: IDeA website:
http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=8488097

Equality mapping: IDeA http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=8579514

Government Equalities Office (includes information about the forthcoming Equality Bill)
www.equalities.gov.uk.

Equalities and Human Rights Commission: The main organisation promoting equality and addressing inequality, along with monitoring legal compliance. Information about the current responsibilities for public authorities are on this website, along with guidance for implementation.
http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/Pages/default.aspx

Scrutiny: Centre for Public Scrutiny: Includes the publication "Equal to the Task" published jointly with the former equality commission.
http://www.cfps.org.uk/

Language and Communication:
Oxford Guide to Plain English, Martin Cutts (1996, revised 2007)

The Equalities Review (archived content)
http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/equalitiesreview/

Equality Measurement Framework: The Equality and Human Rights has developed this framework which defines inequality, and sets criteria by which it can be measured. This includes three types of equality: outcome, autonomy and process. More information is available from the EHRC on their website

Workforce Planning – on the IDeA website:
http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=5676708

Tomorrow's People, (2008) Audit Commission

Support for Councils on internal workforce issues, (2008) LGA Group

Local government, the place to be, the place to work (2007), LGA, IDeA & Local Government Employers

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L09-127

For a copy in Braille, Welsh, larger print or audio,
contact iHelp on 020 7296 6880.
We consider any requests on an individual basis.

Local Government Association

The Local Government Association is the national voice
for more than 450 local authorities in England and Wales.
The LGA group comprises the LGA and five partner
organisations which work together to support, promote
and improve local government.

4ps   I&DeA   LACORS   LGE   Leadership Centre for local government

**Employee Suggestion Scheme
Officer Feedback Form**

E✕CHANGE

Change 4 you, Change 4 excellence

Guidance to officers:

Stage 1:   A suggestion must be considered on its own merit.   Is the suggestion a new idea which your service/department has <u>not</u> considered previously?

If you have already considered this and a project has been started/cannot be started please provide brief information as to what is happening/not happening.

Stage 2:   Is the suggestion <u>viable?</u> You must consider the benefits to service users/the Council as to whether the suggestion is suitable to be implemented.

Stage 3:   As the responding officer it is your responsibility to ensure that this can be implemented within 6-12 months, subject to approval by the Panel.

You must consider the <u>costs</u> involved in implementation and <u>how</u> you would implement this suggestion.

Stage 4:   All implemented suggestions are awarded a <u>cash reward of £25 to £500</u> dependent on the financial benefit to the Council. It is suggested that you as officer providing feedback recommend the amount of the award. Please note there is no central budget for suggestion scheme awards therefore you will be required to pay for this award from your directorate budget.

Stage 5:   <u>Do you recommend that this suggestion be implemented?</u> You have been chosen as the expert in this field therefore before the panel can make the final decision they will rely upon the information provided on this form to make that decision.

Stage 6:   Your feedback is presented to the next available monthly panel, usually held in the last week of the month. The panel decision is final.

You will be informed as to whether the panel wish to implement your suggestion at this stage you need to make the necessary provisions to implement the suggestion with 6-12 months, this includes the allocation of resources and inclusion in your service plan.

Employee Suggestion Scheme
Officer Feedback Form

E>CHANGE
Change 4 you, Change 4 excellence

Suggestion Number:	987

Details of suggestion:

On line Member On Line Chats (as you do when actors/famous people/personalities do after a tv show, etc.
Maybe carry it out once a month – or use it as part of member surgeries?

Benefits of implementing the suggestion:

Would enable groups such as young people, elderly, disabled, etc (those who cannot engage easily with the members) to have discussions on line, about their concerns and ask questions, raise issues. It will also be an interesting way of encouraging civil participation and assist in people becoming more politically aware.

Has the suggestion been previously considered either as a suggestion or in discussions within your service/team?

Yes ☐	No ☐

If yes, what was the outcome?

Is the suggestion viable?

Yes ☐	No ☐

If the suggestion is implemented how will this be financed?

If the suggestion is to be implemented, how do you plan to implement this? *Please give a brief overview.*
Do you recommend that the suggestion be implemented? *This is your commitment to implement this suggestion within 6-12 months.*

Yes ☐	No ☐

If no, *please state your reasons*

Please state the award that you would recommend be given between £25 and £500 and provide the cost centre and nominal.

Amount	Cost Centre and Nominal

Do you have any other additional comments that you would like the Panel to consider before making a decision?
This suggestion was taken to the Member Development Panel for feedback who asked that it first be considered by the Employee Suggestion Scheme Panel.