

ROTHERHAM MBC
MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Foreword

Welcome to Rotherham's Member Development Strategy.

All councillors, whether newly elected, or with many years of experience have a duty to their communities, the Council and themselves to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to carry out their wide ranging and fast changing roles as effectively as possible.

Our commitment to equipping Members with the skills to contribute to the development of our borough is directly reflected in the priorities set out in the Council Plan.

Rotherham's recent history has been turbulent following the publication of the Jay and Casey Reports and the subsequent intervention by central Government through the appointment of Commissioners in February 2015. The return of powers to local democratic control has been at the core of the Council's improvement journey since that time and we have prioritised reforming our services, practices and culture.

Following an intake of 24 new Members to the Council in 2016 and a further two in by-elections in February 2017, we are focused on ensuring all of our Members have the knowledge and skills to fulfil their roles and provide effective leadership for our communities.

All Members have had the opportunity to contribute to the development of this strategy and I believe that this document now provides a strong basis for the authority to conduct learning and development until the next whole Council election in May 2020.

***Councillor Taiba Yasseen
Chair of the Member Development Panel and
Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Working and Cultural Services***

Statement of Principles

Equality of Opportunity

Rotherham MBC is committed to the principle of equality in their learning and development programmes for all Members – irrespective of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, marital status or working pattern.

Access to Learning and Development

All Members will be given access to development opportunities that enhance the skills and knowledge that they need both now and in the future. They will be offered support to facilitate their continual personal development, to enable them to contribute effectively to the achievement of the Council's priorities and respond to the changing needs of the borough's diverse communities.

Care will be taken to identify and remove disadvantages or barriers that Members feel prevent their taking advantage of these opportunities. In practice this means making sure that there are no physical, social, religious or cultural barriers. Where possible the Council will support Members to develop skills and knowledge that will be useful to them in preparation for enhanced roles.

Enabling Members to attend events and undertake learning and development activities is a key priority. In order to facilitate this:

- formal sessions will be programmed in advance to try to ensure that they do not clash with the committee cycle and other major events
- activities will be programmed at different times of the day to accommodate individual commitments where possible
- Electronic learning materials and other new technology will be used where appropriate

The Member Development Panel will regularly review the dates, times and location of all events and make recommendations for change if required.

Introduction

Priorities

“Rotherham is our home, where we come together as a community, where we seek to draw on our proud history to build a future we can all share. We value decency and dignity and seek to build a town where opportunity is extended to everyone, where people can grow, flourish and prosper, and where no one is left behind. To achieve this as a council we must work in a modern, efficient way, to deliver sustainable services in partnership with our local neighbourhoods, looking outwards, yet focussed relentlessly on the needs of our residents.”

We have set four ambitious priorities that will help focus our activities:

- Every child making the best start in life
- Every adult secure, responsible and empowered
- A strong community in a clean safe environment
- Extending opportunity, prosperity and planning for the future

In addition to this, we are committed to running a modern and efficient council.

Elected Members have a critical role in delivering these priorities by demonstrating their understanding of the complex challenges faced by modern local government and supporting their communities. We will endeavour to ensure that our learning and development programmes are linked to these priorities.

We define ‘Member Development’ as any development activities or training programmes specifically designed to improve the knowledge, skills and abilities of elected members in their individual or collective roles in meeting the Council's priorities and as agreed via individual development plans

Context

From February 2015, the Government appointed Commissioners to oversee the improvement of the Council following the failings identified in the Corporate Governance Inspection by Dame Louise Casey. As part of the intervention package, the Local Government Association (LGA) provided a high level of support to the Council in developing Members. In the period since the intervention commenced, there has been a considerable change in the membership of the Council, with 38 out of 63 councillors having been elected since May 2015. The support from the LGA has therefore focused on induction and providing key information to new Members.

The development package provided by the LGA has been instrumental in giving Members the skills, knowledge and behaviours required to enable Commissioners to evidence to the Secretary of State that decision making powers should be returned to local democratic control.

This new strategy builds on the work and support provided by the LGA in identifying a long-term approach to member development which consolidates learning and

reflects the ambition of Members to continue to grow their knowledge and skills to embed high standards of decision making and conduct. Whilst support will continue to be available from the LGA in the medium term, this strategy confirms that our will focus be on the in-house provision of member development activity and externally sourcing learning and development where necessary.

Objectives

Access to strong and effective Member development is therefore essential to help Members fulfil their role and will strengthen the process for good decision making. The objectives of this strategy are to help Members develop and strengthen their awareness, knowledge and understanding of:

- local and national challenges and opportunities for the Borough
- complex issues facing local government with changes to legislation; changing governance structures in associated bodies a very different funding environment
- the skills and competencies needed by elected Members in the modern world, including effective communications, community leadership and ICT competencies.

To deliver these objectives the Council will demonstrate its commitment to Member development by

- fostering and supporting a Member led approach
- taking a planned and strategic approach to Member Development
- developing and delivering, with Member involvement, an effective Learning & Development Programme.
- assisting Members to develop their capacity to fulfil their role
- supporting all Members in their development
- providing additional officer support for portfolio holders and chairs of committees.
- facilitating regular assessment of training needs and working with Members to continually evaluate the learning and development programme
- evaluation and reporting of the effectiveness of the strategy through the Council's Corporate Priorities and Performance Framework
- providing a budget and facilities for training and development
- establishing an effective Member Development Panel
- continuing to work with the Local Government Association to enable Members to access opportunities to network with Members from other councils and share examples of good practice in development activity and to support their roles

The Member Development Panel

The Member Development Panel is a cross party working group that meets regularly throughout the year, with further meetings for specific sub groups. The Panel's terms of reference are included as Appendix B to this strategy.

Members have considered and guided the development of this Strategy, provided guidance and feedback on Member communications and provided valuable insight into the development of the Personal Development Plan process that will provide the foundation for Member training over the course of the term of the Council.

Members of the Panel

Councillor Taiba Yasseen (Chair)

Councillor Sarah Allen

Councillor Maggi Clark

Councillor Allen Cowles

Councillor Brian Steele

Councillor Gordon Watson

Councillor John Williams

Member Development Charter

The ambition of Rotherham MBC is to meet the requirements of the Yorkshire and Humber Member Development Charter. An important role for the Member Development Panel is to ensure that Rotherham MBC meets the standards required for Chartered status.

Members' responsibilities and commitments

All elected Members need to recognise the requirements to develop and maintain their skills and competencies and will be expected to meet their responsibilities in the following ways:

- newly elected Members and returning members will participate in the full induction programme
- all Members will attend training or briefings on a range of relevant local and national issues to ensure their skills and knowledge are up to date and keep pace with local and national changes
- all Members will participate in training on the Council's Code of Conduct
- all Members will attend training in respect of corporate parenting and safeguarding
- Members will participate in specific training and development sessions related to their roles – this is applicable in particular to Licensing and Planning, where compliance is a requirement before Members can exercise decision making powers on those bodies
- supporting each other through mentoring and advice
- sharing learning (through the Members Bulletin, cascading information through training sessions and as part of the regular Member Development updates to council)
- completing pre and post training evaluation of courses and where useful providing feedback on briefings.

Members demonstrate leadership and uphold the values and behaviours of the Council in undertaking development activity. Development will be viewed as an opportunity to improve and enhance the capacity of membership of the Council to

deliver against the Council Plan and for the people of Rotherham. The principles of the annex to the Code of Conduct apply to all Members when undertaking training, learning and development activity:-

Be respectful

1. Always remember the importance of those individuals and communities who need the council's services.
2. Ensure our words and actions are free from prejudice and improper discrimination.
3. Get the basics right and be courteous and reliable in all our dealings with the public.
4. Understand the legal requirements on the Council.

5. Always be mindful that we are responsible for other people's money.
6. Be clear with the staff of the council about our ambitions and expectations whilst treating them with respect.
7. Act, dress and carry ourselves in a way that invites others to respect our efforts.

Be imaginative

8. Be energetic and be ambitious; looking ahead to what needs to change.
9. Encourage others to take an interest in the Council.
10. Use evidence of what works elsewhere to improve our decision-making.
11. Advocate for those individuals and communities who need our help.
12. Widen the circle of those contributing to local life.
13. Never be complacent and try to learn from others and be open to new ideas.

Be open-minded

14. Accept if we have got things wrong and try to put things right
15. Commit to personal development to improve our understanding, skills and confidence.
16. Challenge those who fall below the high standards we believe in.
17. Avoid giving personal criticism, whilst being willing to vigorously debate ideas and principles
18. Resist taking offence too easily, recognising that politics requires resilience.
19. Understand our personal accountability and engage with the press and others to explain our work
20. Escalate any individual concerns responsibly, using agreed systems of the Council

The Learning & Development Programme

Four Year Cycle

The Learning & Development Programme is based on a four year cycle that is in line with Rotherham's election cycle. This approach also has the flexibility to meet the needs of new Members joining the Council (through by-elections) and the considerable experience of Members with long service. The Programme will be monitored and evaluated throughout the cycle to ensure it keeps pace with new priorities and initiatives.

Personal Development Plans

The foundation of the Learning & Development Programme is a robust evaluation of training needs which are matched to council priorities and are clearly based on role profiles for elected Members and the Member Skills Framework.

Every two years Members will be invited to attend a Personal Development Plan discussion with a support officer from Democratic Services. These sessions provide the opportunity for an open dialogue to identify training and development needs and a discussion on Members' interests and ambitions relative to their Council roles. These sessions also provide an opportunity to match Members for peer to peer mentoring. A copy of the PDP form and Member Skills Framework are appended to this strategy.

Timings

An election year is considered to be year one in the cycle and, PDP interviews will normally be completed between November and February in that Council year. This enables the completion of the Induction Programme and is timely to plan for the Programme of Learning for years 2 and 3,

A second PDP interview will follow during year 3, again between November and February. This will involve a review of the learning undertaken to date as well as an opportunity to identify further training needs and assistance to Group leaders for identification of successors to key roles.

The completed Training Needs Assessment Summary will be shared with the Member Development Panel, who will guide the development of a Learning & Development Programme

This programme will be agreed with the Panel

The Plan will then be delivered and regularly evaluated by the Member Development Panel.

The continuous cycle of appraisal, establishing training needs, development, delivery and evaluation is illustrated below



Key Themes

The majority of learning and development themes are relevant to all Members, for example:

- new or changing legislation
- core skills such as community leadership
- major policy or service delivery changes by the Council.

Other opportunities will be relevant to specific roles (for example Cabinet Members, Committee Chair or Scrutiny). Members will also have their own individual learning needs.

The Programme will be delivered through three key themes (Core knowledge and skills, Service Specific opportunities and Council & Committee issues). Each 'theme' is reflected to varying degrees in the four year approach:

- year one (2016/17) focused on induction to provide Members with the skills and knowledge needed to understand and fulfil their role.
- years two - three (2017 – 19) will focus on enhancing Members' competencies and knowledge.
- year four (2018/19) Identifying skills and development needs for succession planning and preparation for induction and mentoring of new Members.

Core knowledge and skills

This includes:

- Democracy and governance i.e. how Council decision-making works and organisational awareness
- The legal/constitutional framework
- Diversity and equality
- IT skills, media and communications
- Managing case work/ward work
- Code of conduct and probity
- Safeguarding
- Dealing with complaints
- Local government finance and financial responsibilities
- Data Protection and Freedom of Information
- Risk and resilience planning
- Partnership working and structures
- Corporate plans

Service specific opportunities

This includes briefings and seminars on the work of individual departments and emerging issues that affect specific service delivery.

Council and Committee issues

There will be a number of issues relevant to Councillors as members of specific committees. These include:

- Planning matters
- Licensing matters
- Audit responsibilities
- Scrutiny skills
- Sitting on staffing disciplinary and dismissal appeals
- Recruitment and interviewing skills
- Evaluating reports and framing questions
- Specific training for the Cabinet (Portfolio holders) and chairs of committees

Learning Priorities

A significant level of support has been provided to Rotherham MBC by the Local Government Association as part of the package following government intervention. Whilst the LGA has delivered some of the content directly or indirectly, the Council has retained input and oversight of the delivery of the programme of support for councillors. The priorities for 2016-17 were:-

- Induction Programme
- Financial Training
- ICT skills
- Scrutiny (questioning skills, use of performance data, chairing skills etc.)
- Emergency Planning
- Safeguarding

- Equality and Diversity
- Committee training
 - Planning
 - Licensing

Delivering the Programme

The Panel recognises that learning and development must be delivered in ways that encourage Member involvement and generate strong Member participation. Opportunities will, where possible, be tailored to reflect different personal and domestic circumstances and preferred learning styles – for example:

- briefing notes and learning guides
- e-learning packages
- external conferences, seminars and network meetings
- in house briefings presented by senior managers and specialist officers
- peer coaching and mentoring
- visits to other authorities
- joint Member and officer sessions
- training with partner organisations and neighbouring authorities
- shadowing other councillors in Rotherham or in other authorities
- information from a variety of sources, including the LGA [work books](#), Local Government Information Unit [blogs](#) (LGIU) and the Institute of Local Government Studies [blog](#) (INLOGOV).

Recognising that technologies are constantly evolving, time is limited and differing preferences for learning, the Council will look to be innovative in delivering its learning and development programme for Members. This may require input from other organisations and use of the Member development budget, but this should not detract from the aspiration to enable all Members to access learning and development through innovative methods.

Promotion of Learning and Development Opportunities

Opportunities for learning & development will be included in the Members Bulletin and shared with the group whips for group meetings. Members will also be encouraged to feedback on each learning opportunity undertaken and an update on courses undertaken and forthcoming opportunities will be given on a quarterly basis to full council to provide a formal opportunity to share learning.

In promoting courses, officers will ensure that the benefits of attending each session are clearly highlighted to Members as it is important that the link between a session and Members' own interests are identified.

ICT

In today's world Members will struggle to fulfil their role unless they take on board the opportunities provided through ICT – information communications technology. A

number of options are now available to Members including access to an iPad and online papers for use during meetings.

Training on ICT will focus on ensuring Members have the skills to:

- use email to communicate with constituents, officers, and other bodies
- be able to use social media effectively and know when and what it is best used for Social media
- access and use on line documents
- conduct electronic research
- use apps such as Modern.Gov
- support for new Members

In addition to the formal induction events and core skills sessions, new Members will be assigned a Member buddy who will act as their mentors to provide signposting and guidance.

Democratic Services will also take a proactive role in ensuring general issues on logistics, such as room layout, expenses etc are covered and that new Members feel 'connected'.

By-elections

When Members join the Council as a result of a by-election, Democratic Services will arrange tailored induction courses that introduce the varied elements of the year 1 programme and ensure adequate mentoring support is available to ensure new Members do not feel 'adrift'. Opportunities to observe committees and other operations will form part of this induction.

Enhanced programme for Members of the Cabinet, Opposition leaders and Committee Chairs

It is essential that targeted development opportunities are provided for senior Members who may be currently part of the Cabinet – or have the potential and ambition to join the Cabinet. This small team of Members provide the direction and leadership of the Council and their skills needs to be enhanced and refreshed to ensure they can deliver and embrace the challenges faced by local government. Succession planning is essential to the smooth running of the council and to facilitate part of this, portfolio holders, opposition members and chairs of other key committees will be involved in learning opportunities for Members who wish to develop their role at Rotherham.

Enhanced programmes will include:

- community leadership
- community engagement
- the impact of new legislation
- vision – local and national
- political understanding

- people strategy

As part of this work, senior Members will be encouraged to contribute to the learning experiences for newer Members and where appropriate share their skills and experience at a regional and national level. Suitable opportunities will be sought through the Local Government Association's Leadership Academy and courses by local universities and other Yorkshire and Humber councils.

Evaluation & Review and Resources

Training will be systematically evaluated and the Member Development Panel will be directly involved in encouraging feedback and considering evaluation from training opportunities. Their views will shape and determine the content of the Learning & Development Programme.

To enable full evaluation of the effectiveness of the approach to Member learning and development, we will use:

- pre and post training questionnaires – Members have a responsibility to complete these
- a short self-assessment of key skills and knowledge (Member Skills Framework).
- annual Member survey will include a section on training – seeking views on courses delivered in the year and quality of content and delivery.
- statistics on Member participation in training will form part of the annual Member Development report to Council.
- in addition, the overall strategy will be reviewed as part of the Corporate Priorities and the Performance Framework

Resources

The Council provides both financial and officer resources to support Member learning and development. The budget covers funding for training and allowances for travel and subsistence.

The budget will be discussed at each meeting of the Member Development Panel and when preparing the budget advice will be sought from the Panel on funding needs.

Political group leaders or whips will be advised of all training opportunities and will be kept informed about the attendance and non-attendance of Members on courses, along with the potential cost implications associated with not attending events which the Council has paid for.

Authorisation to attend any learning or development opportunities (which incur a cost) will need to be granted in accordance with the protocol for Member Attendance conferences, seminars, overseas travel and external training events (enclosed at Appendix A

PROTOCOL FOR THE APPROVAL OF COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE AT CONFERENCES, SEMINARS, OVERSEAS TRAVEL AND EXTERNAL TRAINING EVENTS

As part of Rotherham MBC's improvement journey we have committed to ensuring that councillors have access to appropriate learning and development to ensure that Members are able to best represent the people of the borough and effectively discharge their decision making responsibilities. The Council, through its Member Development Panel, will formulate a strategy and programme for Member Development covering each term of office between elections to the authority. The programme of activity will predominantly focus on the internal delivery of learning and development to Members through a variety of approaches. However, it is recognised that attendance at conferences, seminars, fact-finding visits, external training events can be useful sources of learning and this protocol details how the Council will consider and approve councillor attendance at such events.

For the sake of clarity, attendance at party political conferences are specifically excluded from this protocol and all expenses associated with attendance at these events will be met by the relevant group or the individual concerned, not the local authority.

Applying to attend

Any Member wishing to attend an external conference or course must complete an application form and return it to the Member Support Team in Democratic Services. The application must detail the reasons for attending the course or conference and how it will help them in their role as an elected member. An example application form is annexed to this protocol.

All applications by Members for external courses or conferences must be agreed and supported by the Cabinet Member responsible for the appropriate portfolio, or where appropriate by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board. Where a Cabinet Member makes an application this will need to be agreed and supported by the Leader.

The application will then be considered by the Member Development Panel for approval guided by the following principles:

- The course/conference must either:
 - a) have been identified within a Member's Personal Development Plan or
 - b) be judged by the Member Development Panel to be a reasonable learning and development opportunity for a role they hold within the council, or
 - c) be judged by the Member Development Panel to be a reasonable event to attend as a representative of the council in line with the member's other council responsibilities
- The event must be of reasonable cost according to the budget set aside for training and development for members. The cost of the course should directly link to the priorities for council expressed either within the Council's Corporate Plan or any other strategic plan.

- The event must be offered by an accredited training body, such as the Centre for Public Scrutiny, Local Government Association or Local Government Information Unit and, as a general point of principle, must not be organised by any political group. Any exceptions to this principle will be agreed on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Assistant Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of the Member Development Panel.
- A maximum of one place should be offered on any course unless specifically authorised by the Assistant Chief Executive following consultation with the Chair of the Member Development Panel. If any external event attracts more than one application for attendance, places are likely to be prioritised in order of relevance to the role of the applicant, date of submitting the application and the number of previous courses attended.

Travel

Travel will be by private car (costs reclaimable in line with the council's staff policy) or by standard class public transport.

Overseas Travel

Overseas travel funded by the council should only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

The process and guiding principles are as identified within this document but the approval for any overseas visits will be authorised by the Leader and endorsed by the Chief Executive.

The criterion for the Leader to use is whether the benefits are "functional", that is, whether they are likely to help achieve the work of the Cabinet Member/Cabinet and/or the priorities of the Council.

Post Attendance

After attending a conference, seminar and external training event, Members will be required to provide a short briefing on the event to other members on their committee or political group to cascade the learning.

Following the event, members must complete a feedback form and return it to Democratic Services, the data of which will be reported to the Member Development Panel on a quarterly basis.

**APPLICATION FOR COUNCILLORS TO ATTEND
CONFERENCES, SEMINARS AND EXTERNAL
TRAINING EVENTS**

Name of Councillor:-

**Conference/Seminar/Course
Title:-**

**Subject Matter:-
(Briefly list and attach event
outline)**

Benefits of Conference/Seminar/Course to Elected Member

Benefits of Conference/Seminar/Course to Committee/Council

Cabinet Member/OSMB Chair Recommendation

Date from:-

**Date
to:-**

Venue and Address:-

Method of Travel:-

Train

Car

Sharing Car

Other (please specify).....

Total Cost:

Elected Member Signature:

Print Name

OFFICE USE ONLY

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|--|---|
| Authorised by ACX? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> (Tick as appropriate) | Chair of Member Development Panel in agreement? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> (Tick as appropriate) |
| Date of booking on:- | | Travel arrangement & cost:- | |
| Order Number:- | | Invoice Number:- | |

Member Development Panel: Terms of reference (TOR)

The following TOR have been compiled to reflect the changing role of elected members; the greater diversity in political representation; to ensure greater alignment of activity to Council priorities and reiterate members' role in evaluating and monitoring activities effectively to ensure best use of resources.

- To develop and implement a learning and development programme to equip councillors with the skills, knowledge and confidence to represent their communities effectively relating to their Council role;
- To disseminate learning and development information to councillors within each political group and /or non-aligned councillors;
- To ensure each member receives a personal development planning interview;
- To ensure that learning programmes are prioritised effectively, reflecting the Council's improvement agenda and regional and national objectives;
- To develop and implement a comprehensive induction programme for newly elected members;
- To monitor and evaluate member learning and development activities and outcomes;
- To ensure that members are fully engaged in member learning and development activities (including mandatory programmes);
- To monitor the member learning and development budget and ensure that resources are allocated effectively;
- To formulate future policies and strategies for member development.

| PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN | |
|--|--------------|
| Name: | Ward: |
| Year elected to Council: | |
| Position(s) currently held as a Councillor: | |
| <i>Have you received training to support you in these roles?</i> | |
| My main achievements in my Ward/Community in the previous 12 months (or since elected): | |
| My main achievements in my wider Council role in the previous 12 months (or since elected): | |
| Training and development attended in the previous 12 months which is relevant to your role (including independent study): | |

Looking forward – what do you want to achieve in your role as a councillor?

Community:

Council:

Based on your self-assessment do you need any skills development or training to help you be more effective in your role as a ward councillor?(e.g. undertaking casework, organising community meetings, mediation)

Do you need any skills development or training to help you perform your other Council roles/responsibilities more effectively?

Do you have any comments about other topics that should be included in the member development programme (e.g. health reforms, devolution etc?)

| | |
|---|--------------|
| How do you prefer to learn? | |
| | |
| Small group sessions | |
| E-learning/ self-directed learning | |
| Coaching/ one-to-one | |
| Seminars | |
| Outside events or conferences | |
| Other (please specify) | |
| | |
| Signature: | Date: |
| | |
| Interviewer's Signature: | Date: |
| | |

Member Personal Development Plan Skills Framework

Details

Name _____

Ward _____

Which Council positions do you currently hold? (tick all that apply)

| | tick |
|--|------|
| Cabinet Member | |
| Chair/Vice-Chair of a Council Committee | |
| Overview and scrutiny member | |
| Member of Planning Board | |
| Member of Licensing Board | |
| Audit Committee Member | |
| Standards and Ethics Committee Member | |
| Council Representative on an outside body | |
| Member on appeal, staffing or appointment panel | |
| Member of Corporate Parenting Panel, adoption or fostering panel | |

Have you received training and support to assist you in your role?

| Yes | No | Unsure |
|-----|----|--------|
| | | |
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| | | |

Other (please specify)

How to fill in this form:

You are asked to complete a short self-assessment (which has been designed by members and based on the LGA Political Skills Framework). This will prompt you to self-evaluate your skills/knowledge in key areas and identify your learning and development requirements. It will be used as a basis of your Personal Development Plan discussion. You are also asked for your thoughts on how we can address the areas that you've identified for further development.

Your response will not be shared with other councillors, although your suggestions, comments and general issues raised will be used to inform the wider member development programme.

| 1. Local Leadership | |
|--|--|
| Ratings 1 = Very confident, 2 = Confident, 3 = Average, 4 = Unsure/ Area for Development | |
| How do I see myself as a ward member? Councillors engage with members of their community in order to learn about areas of concern for the local area and help to build a vision for the locality. This involves encouraging trust and respect between individuals and groups, mediating fairly and constructively between different organisations and community sectors. | |
| How up to date am I on local issues? | |
| How easy is it for constituents, partners and local groups to contact me? | |
| How confident am I in handling casework and advocating for individuals who need my help? | |
| How effectively do I work and communicate with my ward colleagues (including those in other parties)? | |
| How aware am I of my personal safety and the safety of others (public meetings, surgeries etc) | |
| Please can you comment further on the issues that you are unsure of or have identified for further development. How can we support you to become more confident in these areas? | |
| | |

| 2. Partnership Working | |
|---|--|
| Ratings 1 = Very confident, 2 = Confident, 3 = Average, 4 = Unsure/ Area for Development | |
| How do I see myself at partnership working? Councillors build good relationships with others by identifying and working collaboratively to achieve shared goals. Recognising and valuing different contributions, delegate or provide support as required and take a long term view in developing partnerships. | |
| How well do I know the different networks and community groups in my area (e.g. parish councils, luncheon clubs or faith groups) | |
| How well can I demonstrate that my work has made a difference in my area? | |
| How effectively do I include people from different backgrounds and communities? | |
| How well do I resolve conflict or deadlock? | |
| How well do I maintain good relationships with colleagues, officers and community groups? | |
| How confident am I to develop and implement my ward plan? | |
| Please can you comment further on the issues that you are unsure of or have identified for further development. How can we support you to become more confident in these areas? | |
| | |

| 3. Communication Skills | |
|--|--|
| Ratings 1 = Very confident, 2 = Confident, 3 = Average, 4 = Unsure/ Area for Development | |
| How do I communicate with others? Councillors demonstrate excellent communication skills across many different settings, including the ability to listen sensitively and use appropriate language. Communicating regularly and effectively with all parts of the community is an essential part of the role. | |
| How well do I speak and write, using clear and appropriate language? | |
| How well do I deliver difficult messages that people may not want to hear? | |
| How confident am I when speaking in public? | |
| How confident am I when speaking to the media (including when speaking on difficult issues)? | |
| How confident am I to communicate using social media (Facebook, twitter, Instagram) or email etc? | |
| Please can you comment further on the issues that you are unsure of or have identified for further development. How can we support you to become more confident in these areas? | |
| | |

| 4. Political Understanding | |
|--|--|
| Ratings 1 = Very confident, 2 = Confident, 3 = Average, 4 = Unsure/ Area for Development | |
| How do I view my political understanding? Councillors need to develop a range of political skills in order to communicate their values, promote a political vision and encourage democratic processes and public engagement. | |
| • How well do I work to build confidence in the Council and the role of Councillors? | |
| • How effectively do I work in other political environments (e.g. outside council)? | |
| • How well developed is my political awareness (e.g. local and national developments and how they affect my area/the Council)? | |
| • How well do I encourage others to take an interest in the Council? | |
| • How well do I understand the current context in Rotherham and the steps that are being taken to improve the way the Council works? | |
| Please can you comment further on the issues that you are unsure of or have identified for further development. How can we support you to become more confident in these areas? | |
| | |

| 5. Scrutiny, Monitoring and Challenge | |
|--|--|
| Ratings 1 = Very confident, 2 = Confident, 3 = Average, 4 = Unsure/ Area for Development | |
| How do I view my approach to scrutiny and challenge? Councillors need to act as a critical friend by identifying opportunities for scrutiny both inside and outside the Council and by providing constructive challenge and feedback to others | |
| • How effectively do I raise issues of local concern and engage the public through the scrutiny process? | |
| • How well do I quickly understand and analyse complex information? | |
| • Are my questions and contributions always concise, meaningful and easily understood? | |
| • How well do I hold decision makers to account? | |
| • Are my judgements based on evidence? | |
| • How well do I contribute to the identification and mitigation of risk? | |
| Please can you comment further on the issues that you are unsure of or have identified for further development. How can we support you to become more confident in these areas? | |
| | |

| 6. Legal responsibilities, standards and ethics | |
|---|--|
| Ratings 1 = Very confident, 2 = Confident, 3 = Average, 4 = Unsure/ Area for Development | |
| How do I view my approach to my legal responsibilities, standards and ethics? Councillors are required to understand their legal responsibilities and follow protocol when evaluating arguments and making decisions. | |
| • How well do I understand the Council's Codes of Conduct and how these apply to my role? | |
| • How well do I understand the relevant equalities legislation and how these relate to my role? | |
| • How well do I understand and act on my different statutory roles? (e.g. licensing, planning or emergency planning) | |
| • How well do I understand my role as a Corporate Parent to looked after children and care leavers? | |
| • How well do I understand the Council's safeguarding responsibilities to vulnerable children? | |
| • How well do I understand the Council's safeguarding responsibilities to vulnerable adults? | |
| • How well do I understand my role on appeal panels? | |
| • How well do I understand my role as a representative on an outside body? | |
| • How well do I understand my responsibilities in data protection and keeping information safe and secure | |

Please can you comment further on the issues that you are unsure of or have identified for further development. How can we support you to become more confident in these areas?

7. Understanding how the Council Works?

Ratings 1 = Very confident, 2 = Confident, 3 = Average, 4 = Unsure/ Area for Development

| | |
|---|--|
| • How well do I understand the legal requirements and responsibilities of the Council | |
| • How well do I understand the way that Council meetings are run? | |
| • How well do I understand the rules of debate and speaking at Council meetings? | |
| • How well do I understand how decisions are made by Council and its committees? | |
| • How well do I understand the different roles and responsibilities of Council Committees | |

Please can you comment further on the issues that you are unsure of or have identified for further development. How can we support you to become more confident in these areas?

8. Are you confident using IT in your council role? Yes or No

What would help you to become more confident

9. When do prefer sessions to be held?

| | tick |
|------------------------------|------|
| Morning (e.g, 9.30-11.30am) | |
| Afternoon (e.g. 1.00-3.00pm) | |
| Early evening (6.00-8.00pm) | |
| No preference | |

Any other comments about session timings?

10. Any other comments about your learning and development needs?