

Report of the Capacity Building Working Group

Internal RPA Group

26 March 2009

“The public expect to see modern, efficient services, including those transferred from central to local government, in place as soon as possible...”

Sammy Wilson MP MLA, Minister of the Environment

The purpose of this report is to set out a strategy for meeting the capacity building challenge arising from the RPA and implementation of the local government reform programme in a way that is affordable, deliverable and sustainable.

1. Context

1.1 The future shape of local government seeks to realise a vision of:

“a strong, dynamic local government that creates vibrant, healthy, prosperous, safe and sustainable communities that have the needs of all citizens at their core”, Minister Foster, 31 March 2008.

1.2 Local government after May 2011 will look very different. There will be:

- 11 larger councils serving new geographic communities
- A 25% increase in the local government budget
- A 12% increase in local government staffing
- The transfer of significant functions
- A statutory duty on councils to engage with local communities and for other public bodies to participate in and support community planning
- A new power of well being
- New governance arrangements and a reduction in the number of councillors
- The development of new forms of service delivery

1.3 In addition to delivering a wider range of services, local government will be expected to improve and “shape” local areas in partnership with communities and other statutory and non-statutory providers within the context of the community planning duty to be conferred on councils. The roles and skills required are complex; as well as generic management and project management skills, local government needs to demonstrate leadership; partnership working; strategic planning; financial planning; performance management and improvement. These challenges are set within a constantly changing environment as a result of legislative or political changes and in response to community need.

1.4 The current unstable financial situation will place an added strain on both the transition and the challenge for leaders in the new councils.

- 1.5 In realising this vision local government will need the capacity to negotiate, build, implement and effectively manage:

Effective leadership and governance;

- Ambition
- Prioritisation
- Decision making and scrutiny

Customer focus and community engagement;

- Customer focus
- Communication and community empowerment
- Partnerships

Resources and performance management;

- Performance management
- Resource management
- Change and project management

Organisation and people;

- Organisation design and development
- Managing people and diversity.

(source: Improvement and Development Agency, Corporate Peer Review Benchmark 2005).

- 1.6 Political and managerial leaders will be key to shaping this vision for their communities and leading the changes that will be required to succeed. The change will require all councils to integrate existing services and people within new boundaries. All councils will also need to integrate new people and new services.

- 1.7 To lead this process of change and transition the Strategic Leadership Board (SLB) has charged Policy Development Panel C with developing the policy and implementation proposals in relation to six structural reform work strands. These embrace Human Resources, Capacity Building, Finance, Estates and Transfer of Functions and Service Delivery on a Regional/Sub Regional basis. At the inaugural meeting of the Panel, on 31st July 2008, four working groups were established to take forward the following work strands:

- Transfer of Functions and Regional/Sub Regional Service Delivery
- Human Resources
- Finance/Estates
- Capacity Building

- 1.8 It is vital that the work of the capacity building working group both informs and is informed by the work of panels considering issues such as governance, performance management, human resources, transition (particularly the issue of change management), organisational structures, customer focus and community planning.

2. The Capacity Building Challenge

2.1 This following definition of capacity was adopted by the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister:

“Capacity is the right organisation, systems, partnerships, people and processes to deliver against a particular agenda or plan.”

2.2 At the heart of this definition are people and accordingly, this report focuses on the people and skills necessary to put in place the requisite systems, plans and processes and having the ability to lead and deliver the change necessary for success.

2.3 Within the context of the local government reform, the Capacity Building Challenge needs to be addressed at a number of different levels

- Having the capacity to lead and support the transition process between now and May 2011
- Having the capacity to put in place the most effective sector wide and local infrastructure to support the new councils post May 2011
- Having the capacity in the new councils to realise the vision for post 2011 local government
- Having the capacity to ensure that services continue to be delivered to meet community and user needs throughout the transition period.

2.4 Across each of these levels will be the need for:

- Leadership capacity – focusing on elected member and officer capacity both individually and collectively
- Corporate capacity – for example peer support, performance support, and transfer of knowledge and learning
- Workforce capacity – focusing on issues of recruitment and retention, strategic HR, and people management
- Generic skills capacity – for example procurement, performance management, and financial and project management.
- Function specific capacity- for example, planning decision-making for elected members and officers and the role of elected members (who are not on planning committee) in the planning process (relevant to transition and post transfer).

2.5 Added to this will be the need to work across the sector, with the Statutory Transition Committees and existing councils (as virtual clusters) pre transition and across the sector and with new councils, post transition. Scarce resources will have to be balanced between urgent capacity building needs essential for the change management process and the longer term capacity necessary to ensure the sustained success of the new councils.

2.6 Councils will be required to deliver services as normal during the transition phase while planning for capacity building and addressing constraints as outlined below:

- One size solutions will not fit all and, whilst sector wide activity can provide an effective framework, success will be heavily dependent upon the efforts of existing councils operating as virtual clusters
- There are current variations in performance – the capacity gap will vary across the sector so diagnosis will need to build up from the level of existing councils
- The resource gap in terms of the capacity and available finance necessary to continue to deliver services whilst investing for the future will need to be bridged
- The proposed clusters will have variations in terms of relations and willingness to come together and different relationships and protocols between members and officers
- The risk of a leadership vacuum emerging as a result of long standing members and experienced officers potentially ending their local government career during transition to the new councils in May 2011.
- The ability of local government to use the transition period to bring through the next generation of political and managerial leaders

3. Strategic Building Blocks for Successful Transition

Diagnosis

3.1 As discussed above, a real constraint is the fact that the existing councils (and, by definition, the new councils) are not all starting from the same position in terms of resources, performance, historical investment in capacity and attitudes and preparedness for change. Each of the clusters will need to undertake an urgent and important capacity mapping exercise. This will need to be aggregated up to provide a sector wide picture of the capacity gap and, in turn, be informed by each of the existing councils.

Recommendations

- A capacity building mapping exercise should be led by the Transition Committee for each cluster.

Transition Committees

3.2 During the transition period the Transition Committees will be the key drivers in relation to planning and implementation of the reform programme. They will also be the major fulcrum for connecting sector wide planning and activity with that happening at a cluster or council level. The role and remit of the Statutory Transition Committees is currently being developed. Work will be required to identify the capacity building requirements of Statutory Transition Committees when roles have been clearly defined.

- 3.3 Further detail is required from Central Government in relation to how transfers and other human resource issues will be dealt with and how the proposed transitional committees/ teams will operate. This information is required in order to assess and develop bespoke programmes to support the transition and RPA change management process. For example, this includes guidance on the use of secondment and the selection of Members and officers to the Transition teams.
- 3.4 Change Management Officers and Transition Management Teams will have unique roles and responsibilities and will require ongoing, tailored training and development. A lead person should be appointed within each council cluster to co-ordinate and facilitate the change process. Each committee/team will be required to develop a transition plan, associated priority action list and associated critical timeline. Capacity mapping and building will be a key feature.

Recommendations

- Ongoing clarification of the full role and remit of the Transition Committees in order to identify and assess appropriate capacity building interventions (further guidance to follow).
- Required competencies and a skill set to be agreed for the Transition Committees / teams and action taken to ensure each committee / team has the necessary competencies. This may include skills to deliver new/transferring functions that will be taken forward as pilots during transition The Improvement & Development Agency's political skills framework which identifies and maps the skills needed by successful elected members is an excellent example. The framework is based around six core skills areas, i.e. community and leadership, regulating and monitoring, scrutiny and challenge, communication skills, working in partnership and political understanding. A copy is attached at appendix 1.
- Identification of a Change Champion within each of the new structures – to lead, direct & facilitate the change process – in conjunction with the Transition Committees

Political Leadership

- 3.5 Supporting and developing elected members is central to successful transition and realising the benefits post 2011. The range and depth of knowledge required of elected members in order to operate effectively within their role is considerable and constantly evolving. In the transition period they may be required to reach decisions which will shape the direction of local government for a considerable period into the future. At the same time, whilst the number

of citizens served by elected members in Northern Ireland continues to grow, the number of members will decrease significantly in 2011.

- 3.6 Members will need to be engaged over the transition period in shaping the purpose, values and organisational arrangements for the new councils. Whilst local activity now will rightly be subject to decisions taken by the new councils, the process of early engagement will be essential in supporting the Transition Committees and achieving sustainable change.
- 3.7 Given the predicted turnover of councillors, there should be a sector wide campaign to encourage talented people to engage in local politics in anticipation of the May 2011 elections. Work will also need to commence on addressing severance issues such as the loss of key knowledge and skills and consideration of members succession planning needs. Simultaneously work will need to commence in terms of the remuneration allowance for elected members. There is also the issue of under-representation of women in politics to be addressed which may be exacerbated by the predicted turnover of councillors.
- 3.8 In preparation for the new councils, greatest sector wide benefit will be had from developing a framework for elected member development which can command the support of all new councils. By doing so, councils can take advantage of economies of scale in investing in shared learning and development activity and procurement. It will also facilitate benchmarking across councils and the sharing of learning and practice. A sector wide structure must be rooted in a 'ground up' process where needs are identified, and primary support given, at the local level. The framework should have three main pillars:
 - A clear and shared understanding of the roles of elected members supported by agreed role descriptions
 - A Northern Ireland skills framework based on a robust analysis of the knowledge, skills and attributes necessary for effectively fulfilling the agreed Elected Member roles
 - An assessment and delivery process to make things happen, for example, building a Northern Ireland Elected Member Development Charter programme.

The idea of an Elected Member Development Charter was developed in the North West region of England by the North Western Local Authorities' Employers' Organisation. The North West Charter for Elected Member Development was launched in 2000 as part of the regional strategy to raise the profile of Elected Member development. The Charter sets out six practice points that an authority has to put in place before the Charter can be awarded. A copy of the charter is attached at appendix 2. Achievement of the Charter involves two stages. The first is for the authority to declare that they are committed to the principles contained within the Charter through a Declaration of Commitment. The second is the task of proving that they meet them. This is done through an independent assessment process.

This mechanism has now been adopted and adapted by regional local government associations and regional employer's bodies across England and by the IDeA. In Wales they have also developed a Charter for Member Support and Development through the Welsh Local Government Association.

Recommendations

- Immediate work is required to develop support for elected members and officers (e.g. change management officers) who will be working with Transition Committees (this is likely to include skills to deliver new/transferring functions, such as development plans, which may be taken forward as pilots during transition. This should include the development of briefing and engagement arrangements for elected members to meet the immediate challenges of supporting the transition committees. This should also be linked to the communication strategy.
- A sector wide campaign, led by NILGA, to encourage talented people to engage in local politics in anticipation of the May 2011 elections. The campaign should also focus on attracting women into politics.
- Commencement of work to address both severance issues and the remuneration allowance for elected members.
- Commencement of policy work to develop model Elected Member Development frameworks and toolkits (to include skills for delivering the transferring functions) so that high level policy, the framework and structures are agreed, supported and in place for the new councils.

Managerial Leadership

- 3.9 As with political leaders, managerial leaders are essential to both effective transition and long term success. Senior managers will be required to think and act strategically and exemplify the right behaviours in bringing clusters and people together, whilst middle managers whose responsibilities are mainly operational will be required to plan, deliver and evaluate services within the virtual clusters as well as managing the integration of systems, plans and people within the new councils.
- 3.10 During the transition period there needs to be put in place a comprehensive managerial leadership framework. The development and implementation of this framework should engage with existing staff and help them to prepare for the future and enable the existing councils (operating as virtual clusters) to assess current capacity, identify the local capacity gaps and put relevant

programmes in place to bridge the gaps both during the transition and within the new councils.

- 3.11 A number of programmes currently exist which are designed to meet managerial leadership development needs. The working group has undertaken a baseline assessment of current activity and has identified a number of existing programmes. This initial assessment should be developed to determine:
- How effective the current programmes are in meeting need
 - Whether there are any gaps in provision and,
 - What needs to be developed as a matter of urgency?

Recommendations

- The development of support for those key people involved in addressing key issues with Transition Committees (e.g. Transition Management Team HR, Finance, IT and Policy)
- The development of a leadership framework (e.g. management and leadership national occupational standards) to develop the appropriate leadership skills and expertise during transition
- The introduction of joint member-officer development activities

Local Government Workforce

- 3.12 There will be staff joining local government, staff leaving local government and staff working with new colleagues in new clusters. For each of these groups the transition period will be critical to the early effectiveness of the new councils. For those joining there will need to be in place an early opportunity to understand the difference they will find and to meet with their new colleagues. For those leaving there should be a duty of care to ensure that they are best prepared for their future and, as far as possible an opportunity to capture their knowledge before they go. For those working in new arrangements the earlier they are able to engage with new colleagues in planning and understanding the service challenges that integration will bring the smoother the transition will be.
- 3.13 During the transition period some groups of officers may be more affected by the change process or may be required to support the process, for example human resources, finance, IT and policy professionals. Opportunities need to be created now for these officers to enhance their skills and knowledge in other areas such as strategic management, leadership, change management, communication and engagement, project management and procurement. This might include training programmes, but also opportunities to share knowledge, experience and to participate in project teams or other on-the-job

developmental opportunities, preferably working across the clusters. The Transition Committees will be best placed to identify the necessary resources and to co-ordinate this work during the transition phase.

- 3.14 The working group has also requested from Central Government an indication of the type and level of capacity within staff transferring with functions as well as their skills and training and training and development needs, in order that Councils can forward plan capacity building activity.
- 3.15 In the longer term, whilst each of the new councils will face different workforce challenges each of them should have in place a comprehensive strategy to identify and address those challenges. The transition period should be used to develop a strategic approach to people management, an agreed list of sector wide people priorities and a template for use by each new council. This should build on the national Local Government Employers (LGE) example: The Local Government Workforce Strategy 2007 which identifies five strategic people priorities which any modern council should address.
- **Organisational development**- effectively building workforce support for new structures and ways of working to deliver citizen-focussed and efficient services in partnership
 - **Leadership development**- building visionary and ambitious leadership which makes the best use of both the political and managerial role, operating in a partnership context
 - **Skills development**- with partners, developing employees' skills and knowledge in an innovative, high performing, multi-agency context
 - **Recruitment and retention**- with partners, taking action to address key future occupational skills shortages; promote jobs and careers; identify, develop and motivate talent and address diversity issues
 - **Pay and rewards**- modernising pay systems to reflect new structures, new priorities and new ways of working and to reinforce high performance, including encouraging a total rewards approach

Using this NI Workforce Strategy as a guide, each new council should identify its own workforce development priorities and translate these into a HR Strategy and workforce development plan to address its particular needs and respond to its identified priorities

Recommendations

- The Transition Committees should co-ordinate resources to ensure a timely identification of the capacity building needs of existing Council employees – in terms of re-skilling etc
- Central Government should undertake the timely identification of the capacity building needs of transferring staff (pending clarification from Central Government in terms of staff profiling and exact numbers).
- The development and introduction of a Northern Ireland local government sector high level workforce strategy outlining a strategic

approach to people management which can be translated into an HR strategy and workforce development plan for the emerging councils.

Sustainability through Organisational Development

3.16 In considering a Capacity Building Framework for the Sector and the new councils post the 2011 elections the Working Group is mindful of the terms of Circular LG16/08: Guidance on the Formation of Transition Committees and Transition Management Teams issued by the Department on 28 October 2008. The Guidance document states under Terms of Reference - (2) Governance (6th bullet point on page 4), that one of the key decisions of the Transition Committees will be:

“To develop a local capacity building programme as necessary, based on the recommendations on capacity building agreed by the Strategic Leadership Board, as developed by Policy Development Panel C, for members and officers.”

3.17 This paragraph clarified the thinking of the Working Group in relation to the scope of the policy development work to be generated i.e. that the working group should recommend a model framework supported by a 'toolkit' of examples of best practice (sourced from within the sector and beyond) that could be sufficiently flexible to allow the new organisations to address their particular needs and respond to their identified priorities.

3.18 The working group proposes that the long-term effectiveness of this capacity building programme will be dependent upon its integration within an effective Organisation Development (OD) framework for local government.

3.19 Organisational Development (OD) focuses on making sure an organisation has the right 'fit for the future' workforce to achieve its strategic ambitions and to build the organisational competences set out above. It includes:

- Changing behavioural norms and cultural attitudes
- Building workforce support for the new structures
- Creating new ways of working to achieve the organisation's objectives.

3.20 Developing such an approach to OD sits well with the definition of capacity building referred to at the beginning of this report. The establishment of the new councils provides a unique opportunity to use a range of OD tools and techniques to assist in building strong, responsive, fit for purpose, service delivery and performance-driven local authorities in Northern Ireland.

3.21 The group recommends a strategic and integrated model of developing an Organisation Development Plan linked to an over-arching corporate or Council Strategy (see example at appendix 3). In this way, the organisational development, capacity building and performance management will be aligned to agreed aims and objectives and this will form the basis for the introduction and development of any capacity building measures.

- 3.22 The model must be sufficiently flexible to allow individual organisations to address their own particular needs and respond to their own identified priorities. Support will be required for councils to plan strategically and manage performance.
- 3.23 To ensure a sustainable approach to personal and organisational effectiveness there will be a need for a formal assessment or performance review processes. This will be necessary to identify development needs, and to monitor the effectiveness of any development interventions. Key components should include: competency frameworks, performance review mechanisms and personal development plans. Policy work should commence now to develop model frameworks and toolkits so that high level policy, the framework and enabling structures are in place for the new councils. A number of councils currently have similar processes in place and a review and analysis of existing approaches would be a good starting point.

Recommendations

- Development of an Organisational Development Framework for local government.
- Development of a range of organisational development frameworks and toolkits for key people management practices e.g. competency frameworks, performance review mechanisms and personal development planning methods based on existing best practice approaches and techniques to assist in building strong and effective performance driven local authorities.
- Ensure personal and organisational effectiveness through linkage with a performance review process.

4. Governance and Implementation

- 4.1 This report puts forward a strategy for capacity building which meets the various needs of the sector, individual councils, members and officers. Once the capacity building strategy has been agreed, further detailed work will be required to address the implementation, resource and governance requirements needed to deliver this strategic approach to capacity building. However, as it is important that these issues are considered at an early stage, the report also highlights implementation and other issues which the SLB and the sector as a whole will need to address. These include:

- (i) process for reaching agreement
- (ii) roles and responsibilities
- (iii) support structures and infrastructure
- (iv) resources and funding
- (v) communication and engagement

- 4.2 Research commissioned by the Department of Communities and Local Government indicates that quantifying the capacity of local authorities can be difficult, and even more so for the sector as a whole. Whilst there is scope to develop broad frameworks and generic capacity building programmes, each local authority must be responsible for implementing its own capacity building framework and for identifying its own capacity needs. Where proposals within this report relate to the sector, for example standards or frameworks, the SLB / PDP C will need to determine how these can be agreed and ratified across the sector, both during the transition stage and following RPA when the new councils are formally constituted.
- 4.3 A number of structures currently exist to support councils, elected members and officers, such as the Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC) and Training Group (LGTG), Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA), National Association of Councillors (NAC) and the Sector Skills Councils. Greater clarity will be required as to who will provide strategic support and implement capacity development activities within local government. Whilst it is recognised that there is need to develop a sector-wide model framework for officer and elected member development which could be applied as necessary, it is important to acknowledge the different needs of each council area. Accordingly any capacity/training development programme should be integrated within an overall organisational development programme and taken forward in-house within individual councils, where appropriate.
- 4.4 The SLB / PDP C will need to determine what support structures and infrastructure are required to support the longer term approach to capacity within the local government sector, as defined within this report. It is recommended that further work be undertaken to clarify and agree the roles and responsibilities of any proposed local government frameworks, of individual councils and of any supporting structures.
- 4.5 The group has sought to address some of the resource issues by identifying short, medium and long term priorities. Minister Foster, in her statement to the Assembly on 31 March 2008 stated that. " capacity building is a critical part of the implementation programme". and that it would require. " substantial investment from central government, subject to funding, and local government".
- 4.6 Guidance is sought from Central Government on the resources available, particularly in the short term to support capacity building during transition and how such resources would be allocated e.g. centrally administered, delivered through the Transition Committees, or on a draw down bid basis. It is worth noting that to improve local government in England the ODPM/LGA Capacity Building Programme has committed in excess of £100m to support capacity building in local authorities since April 2003.
- 4.7 As part of the implementation, ongoing communication and engagement will be required. It is understood that this will be managed centrally to ensure consistent and integrated messages in relation to local government reform. However, it will be necessary to undertake specific engagement with key

groups, such as Elected Members, existing council officers, staff representatives, transferring functions staff etc.

Recommendation

- Further work to be undertaken regarding governance and implementation issues i.e. the process for reaching agreement, roles and responsibilities, support structures and infrastructure, resources and funding and communication and engagement

5. Recommendations- Section- SUMMARY

5. Recommendations – building capacity for transition

5.1 Immediate work is required to develop support for elected members and officers who will be working on Transition Committees:

- Early clarification of the full role and remit of the Transition Committees in order to identify and assess appropriate capacity building interventions to ensure members are fully equipped to lead and deliver within the change process (Para 3.2)
- Required competencies and a skills set to be agreed for the Transition Committees / teams and action taken to ensure each committee / team has the necessary competencies (Para 3.2)
- The development of briefing and engagement arrangements for elected members to meet the immediate challenges of supporting the transition committees (Para 3.6 and para 4.7)
- Identification of a Change Champion within each of the new structures – to lead, direct & facilitate the change process – in conjunction with the Transition Committees (Para 3.4)
- A sector wide campaign, led by NILGA, to encourage talented people to engage in local politics in anticipation of the May 2011 elections. The campaign should also focus on attracting women into politics. (para 3.7)

- Commencement of work to address both severance issues e.g. loss of key knowledge and skills, members' succession planning needs and the remuneration allowance for elected members. (para 3.7)
- Identification of an overarching approach to project management – encompassing all new structures and all stakeholders – to ensure ongoing communication, consistent reporting methodology & transparency throughout the process (Para 4.5)
- Clarification provided in regards to the agreed budget to be provided to support capacity related activities and the means for its allocation (para 4.6)

5.2 At a sector wide level:

- Commencement of policy work to develop model Elected Member Development frameworks and toolkits (to include skills to deliver new/transferring functions) so that high level policy, the framework and structures are agreed, supported and in place for the new councils. (Para 3.8)
- The development of a leadership framework to develop the appropriate leadership skills and expertise during transition (Para 3.10)
- Consideration of the relationship between the work of this sub-group and the sub-groups considering issues such as governance, performance management, human resources, transition (particularly the issue of change management), organisational structures, customer focus and community planning). (Para 1.7)

5.3 At a local level (existing council aggregating to virtual cluster):

- An assessment of current skills against those required for effective transition (Para 3.1)

6. Recommendations- building capacity for post transition

6.1 The Working Group recommends the following high level approach to capacity building post RPA, building on the work carried out during the transition phase:

- Elected members – The development and introduction of a member development charter for elected members (Para 3.8)
- Officers- The development and introduction of a leadership framework for officers (Para 3.10)
- Transferring staff - Identification of the ongoing capacity building requirements of transferring staff (Para 3.14)
- Workforce development - The development and introduction of a Northern Ireland local government sector high level workforce strategy outlining a strategic approach to people management (Para 3.15)

- Organisational Development - A strategic approach to capacity building whereby processes and programmes are integrated within an overall organisational development process and linked to a performance review process (Para 3.21)
- Roles and responsibilities – Whilst it is recognised that there is need to develop a sector wide model framework for officer and elected member development which could be applied as necessary, it is important to acknowledge the different needs of each council area. Accordingly any capacity/training development programme should be integrated within an overall organisational development programme and taken forward in-house within individual councils where appropriate. (para 4.3)

Immediate Requirements

6.2 To ensure that these frameworks are developed and agreed in time for the new councils, it is recommended that work commences now on developing the policy proposals and high level frameworks. This should include:

- The development of councillor role descriptions. This need not be a 'blank sheet' exercise. Much of the work done elsewhere on the core councillor role should be relevant in the Northern Ireland context, subject to review and amendment as appropriate
- The IDeA Political Skills Framework forms an excellent starting point for laying out the skills and capacities required to be an effective councillor. Work would be necessary to adapt this to the Northern Ireland context.
- An Elected Member Charter provides a simple, but thorough, mechanism for encouraging local action. It is a generic charter that is not situation specific and should be usable 'off the shelf' in Northern Ireland.
- A structured strategic and business planning framework which embraces people as well as organisational development and focuses on service delivery. (Example model at appendix 3). To be developed within an overarching Organisational Development (OD) process.
- A structured evaluation process which forges the links between people, performance & business performance ensures value for money and measures return on investment against organisational goals.

7. NEXT STEPS

7.1 Subject to approval, the Working Group will:

- Convert this strategy into a series of implementation plans addressing each of the key building blocks
- Identify the resources needed to put plans into action and assign responsibilities at a sector wide and/or local level

- begin to develop the key policy frameworks outlined above and source supporting documents, policies, procedures, frameworks, best-practice examples etc for issue (through PDP C, SLB and RTCG) to Transition Committees and Transition Management Teams in 2009.



skill framework for elected members

community leadership (CL) engages enthusiastically and empathetically with the community in order to learn, understand and act upon issues of local concern. Mediates fairly and constructively, encouraging trust by representing all sections of the community.

positive indicators

- engages proactively with community, canvasses opinion and seeks new ways of representing others
- keeps up-to-date with community and issues of local concern, drawing information and resources from a range of sources and people
- approachable, is empathetic and understanding and encourages trust
- provides a voice for all sections of the community and develops partnerships inside the council and with external organisations,
- mediates fairly and constructively between people with conflicting needs
- campaigns with enthusiasm, courage and persistence on behalf of others

negative indicators

- does not engage in community activities, waits to be approached and is difficult to contact (eg says 'I'm not your councillor')
- keeps a low public profile and is not easily recognised by members of the community
- is exclusive in approach, and does not focus equally on community groups or issues
- does not have detailed understanding of local issues and needs
- concentrates on council processes and meetings rather than constituents
- unrealistic about what can be achieved and does not deliver on promises

regulating and monitoring (RM) understands and executes judicial role by following protocol, evaluating arguments and making decisions that balance public needs and local policy. Ensures progress by monitoring and intervening where necessary.

positive indicators

- evaluates arguments according to evidence, makes independent and impartial judgements
- chairs meetings effectively, follows protocol and keeps process on track
- follows legal process, balancing public needs and local policy
- monitors performance and intervenes as appropriate to ensure progress
- seeks feedback on own performance and engages in self-directed learning
- understands and acts on judicial role in order to meet legal responsibilities (eg duty of care, corporate parenting)

negative indicators

- does not declare personal interest and makes decisions for personal gain
- does not check facts or consider all sides of a story, makes subjective and uninformed judgements
- leaves monitoring and checks on progress to others
- makes decisions without taking advice or considering regulations and wider development frameworks
- fails to recognise or address limits of own knowledge and expertise
- misses deadlines, leaves business unfinished and lacks balance between council work and other commitments



skill framework for elected members

scrutiny and challenge (SC) acts as a critical friend by seeking opportunities for scrutiny and providing constructive feedback. Analyses information quickly and presents arguments in a concise, meaningful and easily accessible way.

positive indicators

- looks for new methods and topics for critical challenge and scrutiny
- quickly analyses and assimilates complex information, taking account of the wider strategic context
- presents arguments in a concise, meaningful and easily accessible way
- inquisitorial, asks for explanations and checks for implementation of recommendations
- objective, rigorous and resilient in challenging process, decisions and people
- acts as a critical friend, provides constructive feedback and acknowledges the success of others

negative indicators

- does not prepare thoroughly or check facts, uses selective information and draws subjective or biased conclusions
- overly reliant on officers and tends to back down when challenged
- fails to recognise or engage in scrutiny as part of their role
- assimilates new information slowly, focuses on detail and does not distinguish between important, irrelevant and inaccurate information
- adversarial in style, aggressive and confrontational when challenged
- prefers political 'blood sports' to working collaboratively for the good of the council, abuses scrutiny processes for political gain

communication skills (CS) listens sensitively, uses appropriate language and checks for understanding. Communicates regularly with individuals and groups in the community, speaks clearly and confidently in public, and makes sure that people are informed.

positive indicators

- communicates regularly with community via newsletters, phone calls and local media
- listens sensitively, checks for understanding and adapts style as necessary
- builds relationships with local media and creates opportunities for communicating key decisions, activities and achievements
- speaks clearly and confidently in public, uses accessible language and avoids jargon or 'council-speak'
- provides regular feedback, keeps people informed and manages expectations
- uses appropriate language to communicate key points verbally and in writing (eg letters, reports, interviews and presentations)

negative indicators

- interrupts, appears not to listen and uses inappropriate or insensitive language (eg shouting, being rude or abusive)
- communicates reactively and is slow to respond when approached by others (eg public, colleagues, officers or media)
- fails to listen to others' views and presents rigid and inflexible arguments,
- uses information dishonestly to discredit others and is unwilling or unable to deliver unpopular messages
- fails to participate in meetings and lacks confidence speaking in public
- presents subjective and confused arguments using poor language and style



skill framework for elected members

working in partnership (WP) builds positive relationships by making others feel valued, trusted and included and by working collaboratively to achieve goals. Maintains calm and focus, recognises when to delegate or provide support and is able to take a long-term view in developing partnerships.

positive indicators

- builds good relationships with colleagues, officers and wider community
- achieves goals by co-ordinating others, maintaining task focus and persisting in the face of setbacks
- empowers others to take responsibility, knows when to delegate or provide support
- makes others feel valued, trusted and included, recognises and is inclusive of people from different backgrounds
- patient, takes a long-term view in developing networks and partnerships
- maintains calm and focus when criticised or under pressure

negative indicators

- uses status and position to exert control or impose solutions, fails to involve people in decisions
- exclusive in approach, fails to utilise diverse skills and perspectives of others
- unable to work across political divide and places political gain before collaborative working
- acts alone rather than seeking help or working as part of a team
- uses divisive tactics to upset relationships, council policies and decisions
- defensive when criticised, blames others for failure and does not admit to being wrong

political understanding (PU) acts ethically, consistently and with integrity when communicating values or representing group views in decisions and actions. Works across group boundaries without compromising values or ethics.

positive indicators

- actively represents group views and values through decisions and actions
- helps develop cohesion within the group and contributes to healthy communication between the group and the council
- communicates political values through canvassing, electoral campaigning and by identifying new ways of engaging the public
- committed to developing own political intelligence and understanding of local and national political landscape
- acts ethically, understands and communicates political values to others
- works across group boundaries without compromising political values

negative indicators

- demonstrates inconsistent political values, lacks integrity and tends to say what others want to hear
- has poor knowledge of group manifesto, values and objectives
- puts personal motivations first, goes native or changes beliefs to match with those in power
- acts alone and fails to support group colleagues in public forums
- fails to translate group values into ways of helping the community
- lacks understanding of how central government policy impacts on local issues and council functioning



skill framework for cabinet members

providing vision (PV) creates a shared council vision by establishing strategic policies and prioritising actions. Actively encourages involvement of others in policy formation and works collaboratively to analyse information and promote understanding. Open to new ideas and ways of doing things

positive indicators

- establishes strategic policies and prioritises actions based on local needs, manifesto and regional opportunities
- works with officers to collate and analyse information and inform budget priorities and performance plans
- actively encourages involvement of stakeholders in policy formation
- creates and communicates a shared council vision, providing clear direction and promoting understanding
- open to new ideas and adapts innovatively to a changing environment (eg e-government)
- acts to broaden perspective and enhance effectiveness by learning from others and sharing best practice (eg other councils, IDEA)

negative indicators

- takes short-term 'quick fix' approaches to policy formation, focuses on day-to-day issues rather than future needs and fails to see beyond the next election
- excludes members, officers and public from decision-making and is overly selective in use of information to guide policy decisions
- resistant to change, prefers 'old ways' of doing things and fails to draw on the experience of others (eg councils, peer support)
- does not identify or act on opportunities to promote the council or influence national and regional agendas
- inward looking, does not communicate and explain council vision and policies
- does not work within CPA guidelines or act on recommendations

managing performance (MP) works closely with others to develop, promote and achieve objectives and represent council at a strategic level. Encourages scrutiny, monitors performance and responds positively to feedback and ideas.

positive indicators

- works closely with senior officers to develop, agree and implement portfolio strategies
- sets and communicates realistic and achievable objectives, monitors performance and acts to address deficits
- develops knowledge of council systems and inputs council views at area specific meetings (eg planning, licensing)
- emphasises a team approach and shares responsibility for success and failure
- encourages scrutiny and responds positively to feedback, challenge and ideas
- represents electorate and council at a strategic level through links and partnerships at local, regional and national levels

negative indicators

- uses support inconsistently or ineffectively, fails to consult or is too reliant on officers or external support
- inflexible and resistant to scrutiny, alternative views and solutions
- creates a 'them and us' attitude to officers, opposition, non-cabinet members or external councils and agencies
- operates in secret and fails to open processes and decision-making to others – 'tells' rather than 'sells'
- overly focused on process and debate, fails to reach conclusions
- fails to integrate own portfolio with wider cabinet agenda



skill framework for **WV]bYhia Ya VYfg**

excellence in leadership (EL) provides visionary and charismatic leadership, is well prepared, able to troubleshoot and juggle conflicting responsibilities. Works to shape a culture of excellence by acting as the public face of the council and a role model for others. Encourages co-operation and communication across political and council boundaries.

positive indicators

- provides visionary and charismatic leadership, inspires trust in others and gains commitment to policies and decisions
- shapes a culture of excellence and acts as a role model for appropriate behaviour, ethical practice and democratic process
- builds strong relationships with senior officers and cabinet based on open communication, co-operative working and trust
- acts as the public face of the council and champions council needs in regional and national debates
- works across political and council boundaries to foster communication and encourage co-operation
- well prepared and able to troubleshoot, judges what to get involved in and when to say 'No'
- committed to learning, developing others and sharing best practice
- effectively 'juggles' numerous, potentially conflicting, responsibilities

negative indicators

- maintains personal control by imposing views and being overly directive
- demonstrates partiality for own party members and uses position to promote party agenda to the detriment of wider council needs
- defensive, avoids making difficult or unpopular decisions and unwilling to admit mistakes
- lacks clear parameters between own role and that of CEO, fails to delegate or make use of others' strengths
- overly reactive, fails to plan ahead or foster a sense of mission
- does not encourage communication with community or promote the council, lacks public recognition as a figurehead
- inconsistent in style and behaviour, fails to 'walk the talk' or set an example for others
- lacks detailed knowledge of different council sectors and fails to integrate information to provide an overview of council functioning

Appendix 2: Elected Member Development Charter

REGIONAL/IDeA CHARTER

Accreditation Guidelines With Example Evidence

Regional and IDeA Charters for Member Development aim to promote best practice in member development.

The Accreditation Good Practice Guidelines, developed by the IDeA and Regions, are heavily influenced by the Investors in People national quality standard.

| Proposed Guidelines for Accreditation |
|--|
| <p>Process</p> <p>Stage 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sign up (declaration of commitment to the charter) • action plan outlining what needs to happen to meet the principles of the charter • work towards charter status / implement the plan <p>Stage 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self assessment against good practice guidelines • external review (member and officer peers visit as critical friends) • charter status awarded if principles met <p>Stage 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintain good practice • demonstrate improvements made since being awarded charter status • reassessment within a minimum of 3 years <p>Annual award ceremony by the IDeA for the Council making most significant progress through becoming a Member Development Charter Council. Regions to be involved in development of process and setting criteria for selection of winners.</p> <p>Process developed for accrediting assessors.</p> |
| <p>Accreditation - Good Practice Guidelines</p> |
| <p>1. Commitment to member development</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. Top political and managerial leadership commitment to development of elected members 1.2. Policy statement 1.3. Equality of opportunity and access to learning and development 1.4. Budget 1.5. Officer resource support 1.6. Dissemination of learning |
| <p>Accreditation Good Practice (continued)</p> |

| |
|---|
| <p>2. Strategic approach to member development</p> <p>2.1. Member led strategy</p> <p>2.2. Linkage to council corporate plan</p> <p>2.3. Member roles clearly set out</p> <p>2.4. Process for identification of needs at individual and Council wide level</p> <p>2.5. Structured and timely approach to promoting development opportunities</p> <p>2.6. Appropriately learn with external partners</p> <p>2.7. Strategy for Induction</p> <p>2.8. Addresses political leadership and team development</p> <p>2.9. Mechanisms for evaluation, and informing future plans, identified</p> |
| <p>3. Member learning and development plan in place</p> <p>3.1. Addresses development priorities</p> <p>3.2. Identify what development activities should achieve</p> <p>3.3. Sets out how, when, where and who is responsible</p> <p>3.4. Takes account of access to development opportunities</p> <p>3.5. Linkage between Individual plans and the council's corporate and other plans</p> <p>3.6. Representative elected members consulted</p> |
| <p>4. Learning and development is effective in building capacity</p> <p>4.1. Members learn and develop effectively</p> <p>4.2. Learning is shared with other elected members and where appropriate with officers and stakeholders</p> <p>4.3. Investment in learning and development is evaluated in terms of benefits and impact</p> <p>4.4. Identifies (and implements) Improvements to learning and development</p> <p>4.5. activities</p> |
| <p>5. Elected Member Development promotes work life balance and citizenship</p> <p>5.1. Assists those with family responsibilities</p> <p>5.2. Reviews how council business is conducted to allow for equality of access to key political decision making mechanisms</p> <p>5.3. Holds events for the community to encourage people to become</p> <p>5.4. community leaders</p> |

Appendix 3: Integrated Council Strategy and OD Frame

