

## Councillor Personal Development Plan

From (insert date covered by Plan)

Agreed at meeting with  
 Group Leader/Democratic  
 Services on:

Name:

Identified learning or development need	Objective of learning		How & Who will provide this	Timing by when
	Personal Benefit	Council Benefit		



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Name: ..... Signed: ..... Date: .....

Once completed you must either provide a copy of the form or details of any internal or external training identified to Richard Clifford, Democratic Services Officer, for consideration as part of the Annual Training Plan.

### Summary of the Core Skills identified in the Political Skills Framework

The Political Skills Framework, devised by Local Government Improvement and Development, identified six core skills areas that applied to all councillors, with more for Cabinet members and Council Leaders. The six core skills are defined as:-

#### Local leadership

This refers to the need for councillors to engage with members of their community in order to learn about issues of local concern and help to facilitate a vision for the locality. It involves encouraging trust and respect between individuals and groups by mediating fairly and constructively between different organisations and sections of the community.

#### Partnership working

This aspect of the councillor role focuses on the need to build good relationships with others (i.e. colleagues, officers, community groups and other organisations) by identifying and working collaboratively to achieve shared goals. It recognises the need for councillors to recognise and value different contributions, delegate or provide support as required, and to take a long-term view in developing partnerships.

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### **Communication skills**

This skill area recognises the need for councillors need to demonstrate excellent communication skills across many different settings, including the ability to listen sensitively and use appropriate language with different groups. Councillors must also communicate regularly and effectively with all parts of their community using different forms of media.

### **Political understanding**

This skill set recognises the need for councillors to develop a range of political skills in order to communicate their values, promote a political vision, and encourage democratic processes and public engagement. It recognises that councillors need to work across group boundaries at times, yet still be able to maintain their own political integrity.

### **Scrutiny and challenge**

Scrutiny and challenge is an important day-to-day aspect of the councillor role. Councillors need to act as a critical friend by identifying opportunities for scrutiny inside and outside the council, and by providing constructive challenge and feedback to others. To be effective in this role, councillors need to analyse information quickly and present arguments that are concise, meaningful and easily understood.

### **Regulating and monitoring**

This skill set relates to the more judicial aspects of the role that require councillors to understand their legal responsibilities and follow protocol when evaluating arguments and making decisions. Not only do councillors need to balance public needs and local policy, they must also monitor progress and seek feedback on their own learning needs.

A copy of the Political Skills Framework is available in the Members Room or online [here](#)



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### **Personal Development Plan: Guidance for Councillors**

Colchester Borough Council is committed to supporting local councillors in carrying out their roles as democratically elected representatives of the community and community leaders, and recognises the need to provide appropriate training, learning and development opportunities to help councillors undertake these roles.

In order to support councillors in this way, it is important that a process is in place to help Councillors identify their learning and development needs.

The purpose of the Personal Development Plan (PDP) is to identify and record a Councillor's learning and development needs. It also provides a framework for recording how these learning and development needs may be met. It is designed to be relatively quick and easy to complete. Whilst completion of a PDP is not obligatory, it is important that Councillors take responsibility for identifying their learning and development needs in order to ensure that they are best placed to represent their constituents.

It should be completed by the Councillor following a discussion between the Councillor and their Group Leader. Group Leaders may, if they wish, nominate other Councillors within their group, to undertake this role on their behalf.

The period of time covered by the PDP is for the Group Leader and councillor to determine. A PDP may cover the four year period of office as a Councillor, but arrangements should be put in place for it to be reviewed at appropriate intervals. It would be appropriate for the PDP to be reviewed if the Councillor were to take on significant new responsibilities.

When considering learning and development needs, Councillors may wish to consider the core skills identified in the political skills framework. These were devised by the LGA as the core skills that apply to all Councillors. Further details of the individual skills are included on the Personal Development Plan. Councillors need to consider and discuss with their group leader the skills and knowledge they need to develop in order to carry out their responsibilities effectively. In particular they may wish to consider the learning and development needs that may have arisen from any new responsibilities they have taken on.

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In addition the Councillor and group leader may also want to consider more long term development needs and to identify areas of development bearing in mind the need for succession planning.

Councillors are also encouraged to consider learning and development in its widest sense. In addition to the traditional training course, learning and development can take many forms. Shadowing, online courses, research, attendance at meetings on subjects of interest are all forms of development.

Democratic Services should be informed by the group leader when a PDP is agreed as they need to keep a record of the numbers of plans in place. There is no need to provide a copy of the Plan as it is accepted that this is a private document. However, if a copy is not provided and training needs are identified that will require the provision of training then details of these will need to be fed through to Democratic Services in order for these to be considered when drafting the Annual Training Plan.