

MENTORING

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Summary: Presents background information and options for developing a full mentoring scheme for Councillors

Recommendation: To consider the options outlined and agree a way forward

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Following the visit by members of the Panel to Halton BC on 25 February, this report sets out background information and options for developing Councillor mentoring as part of member development at Copeland.

2. WHAT MENTORING IS

2.1 Mentoring is a voluntary, confidential one-to-one relationship in which an individual works with a peer or more experienced person to explore issues or situations where they need support, development or guidance. Mentoring is intended to enable the mentee to grow in their skills, knowledge and understanding, with the mentee controlling the agenda and taking responsibility for their own learning. The mentor helps the mentee through listening, questioning and sharing experiences, without being prescriptive or directive. Trust, honesty and confidentiality are keys to successful mentoring partnerships.

2.2 The following are examples of situations where a councillor might find mentoring beneficial:

- As a new member, finding his/her way around an organisation – coping with time management, workload pressures, how to approach constituency problems, and getting to know political and officer relationships
- As an existing member, taking on a new role as for example, a portfolio holder, committee chair or group leader
- When needing to build skills and knowledge for new roles, for example in community engagement, locality working or new partnerships
- When facing a particular community or political challenge
- When considering a change in role or career advancement

3. TYPES OF MENTORING

- 3.1 Mentoring in organisations can range from highly structured and organised programmes through to informal arrangements made by the participants themselves. Many local authority members have made these kinds of informal arrangements, sometimes with the support of officers and/or political groups in facilitating them.
- 3.2 Mentoring schemes can be either internally or externally organised and resourced. Of the latter, the IDeA Councillor Mentoring Programme has become one of the most highly rated programmes and is in increasing use by UK local authorities. The IDeA offers four mentoring programmes:

One-to-one Mentoring – involves placement of an accredited peer mentor with appropriate skills, knowledge and experience in a one-to-one mentoring partnership with a Councillor mentee. The peer mentor is drawn from a regional pool of trained mentors who are practising Councillors with other authorities in the region. One-to-one mentoring is suitable for Councillors who face particular challenges in becoming senior portfolio-holders or group leaders, or seeking further development as frontline councillors, or for new Councillors in preparation for development of their civic careers. One-to-one mentoring is a developmental and learning technique aimed at building personal capacity, skills and learning, and increasing personal confidence and effectiveness. We have some experience of using accredited peer mentors for a small number of Copeland members in this year's member development programme. This has not had any cost as a limited number of mentoring hours have been made available at nil cost through the Member Development Gateway funded by CIEP.

Political Group Mentoring – is intended to benefit political groups facing periods of radical change, particularly those moving into or out of positions of power, or those operating in politically hung councils. It can also benefit under-performing authorities who have decided that political group development can contribute to overall organisational improvement. It involves structured programmes of face-to-face meetings and review sessions with peer members from other authorities but from the same political group.

Councillor Role Mentoring – is intended to benefit small groups of members from one authority with similar roles – for example executive members, scrutiny members or those with regulatory responsibilities, e.g. licensing or planning. The mentoring relationship is with a peer group of councillors from another authority with similar responsibilities. Role mentoring can be beneficial for councillors wishing to increase their skill levels in discrete areas or strengthen their internal or external relations or community leadership roles.

Induction Mentoring – is specifically designed to help in supporting and developing newly elected members. It involves a structured training programme delivered by IDeA to a pool of experienced Members from the same authority to act as “buddy” mentors to the new Councillors for a limited period (see also para ___ below).

Full details of the IDeA Programme are attached at Appendix “A”.

- 3.3 An internally structured and resourced mentoring programme would typically follow the broad outline of the IDeA one-to-one model described above, but would involve a trained pool of councillor mentors offering mentor partnerships with other councillors from the same authority. This model is in common use in a number of authorities including Halton. The trained pool could be relatively small in the context of overall Council membership. Alternatively all councillors could be involved in a mentoring partnership, both as a mentor and as a mentee. Internally structured mentoring can include a programme specifically designed for newly-elected Councillors following an election.
- 3.4 Mentoring partnerships can be either time-limited or permanent – in most cases the length of the partnership will depend on the aspirations of the partners themselves.

4. ROLES IN MENTORING

4.1 Successful mentoring partnerships depend on the participants being clear on their respective roles and on the framework and rules in which the partnership operates. For mentors as facilitators in the partnership some form of training in this role is usually beneficial.

4.2 **Mentors** need to be clear about:

- The nature of mentoring
- The role of mentor as facilitator not as prescriber
- Appropriate behaviours to deploy in mentoring, e.g.
 - Respect for the mentee even though their beliefs and values may differ from the mentor's
 - Empathy – the ability to view a situation from the mentee's viewpoint
 - Commitment to supporting the mentee in setting their own agenda and coming to their own conclusions
 - Commitment to confidentiality
 - Awareness of the mentor's position as role model
- Advantages of using a framework for the partnership – e.g. the GROW model (Goals/Reality/Options/Way Forward)
- Skills to use including active listening, questioning techniques, ability to summarise.

4.3 **Mentees** need to be clear about:

- The nature of mentoring
- What to expect from mentors
- Mentee responsibility to:
 - Set the agenda
 - Maintain confidentiality
 - Honesty and trust
- What to do if the partnership isn't working

4.4 A Mentoring Contract is sometimes used to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the participants in the partnership at the outset.

5. **OPTIONS**

5.1 In view of the foregoing the Panel is asked to consider how to take mentoring forward as part of our Member Development programme. The following options are suggested, which are not mutually exclusive:

A Make externally-sourced one-to-one mentoring (IDeA or similar) available to all Members as part of the 2009/2010 Member Development Programme, provided a development need is identified in the Member's MAP. This would have a cost implication unless the CIEP subsidy is continued into another year.

B Arrange for mentoring training for a small group of existing Councillors through IDeA, NWEO or similar, and offer one-to-one mentoring from this pool in 2009/2010. This could be rolled out to a larger group of Members in subsequent years depending on demand.

C Plan structured induction mentoring (internally or externally sourced) as part of the Induction Programme in 2011.

CHECKLIST FOR DEALING WITH KEY ISSUES

Please confirm against the issue if the key issues below have been addressed. This can be by either a short narrative or quoting the paragraph number in the report in which it has been covered.

Impact on Crime and Disorder	None
Impact on Sustainability	None
Impact on Rural Proofing	None
Health and Safety Implications	None
Impact on Equality and Diversity Issues	None
Children and Young Persons Implications	None
Human Rights Act Implications	None
Monitoring Officer comments	
S. 151 Officer comments	

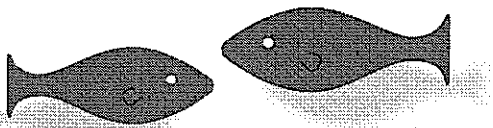
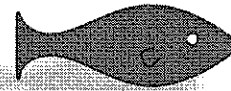
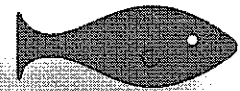
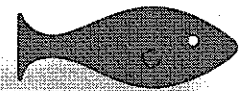
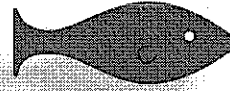
List of Appendices: Appendix “A” – IdeA Mentoring Programme

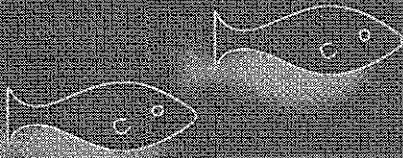
List of Background Documents:

List of Consultees:

Head of Legal & Democratic Services; Head of Finance & Business Development; Human Resources Manager; Portfolio Holder, Resources & Local Democracy

councillor mentoring programme



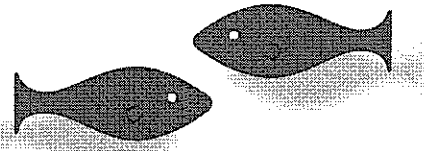


Mentoring is a well-established development technique that benefits individuals and groups. It is particularly useful in times of change such as when people are starting with an organisation or taking on new roles. Mentoring involves an exploration of needs, motivations, desires, skills and thought processes and encourages mentees to address the challenges they face.

Councillor mentoring is available for all local authorities, including fire and rescue services, in England. Capacity building programme subsidy is available to CPA-rated poor and weak authorities and district councils.

The IDeA offers four mentoring programmes:

- **one-to-one mentoring** – for councillors facing particular challenges and changes
- **political group mentoring** – particularly useful when there is a change in the political control of a council, both for those gaining control and those moving into opposition
- **role mentoring** – for small groups of councillors from one authority or a number of authorities who have similar responsibilities
- **induction mentoring** – a buddy system of mentoring is for new and experienced councillors facing challenge in new and/or existing roles.



One-to-one mentoring is for councillors who face particular challenges such as becoming portfolio holders, and others seeking development as frontline councillors.

One-to-one mentoring also prepares new councillors for more challenging roles as their civic careers progress.

Mentoring works best as a confidential relationship, giving the learner or mentee the opportunity to speak freely with the mentor about any concerns they may have.

Mentoring is a personal learning experience, a two-way exchange of information that taps into both individuals' abilities to learn.

One-to-one mentoring is a developmental and learning technique aimed at increasing personal capacity, skills and learning.

supporting the leadership role

This mentoring activity can be applied effectively to a variety of roles at all levels within a local authority and can help:

- increase the capacity, skills and learning of all councillors
- support a structured learning process for managing political and management change in a rapidly shifting environment
- raise the profile and demonstrate the value of effective political leadership, local democracy and strong local government.

building personal capacity

It supports and encourages councillors to take responsibility and control of personal learning and development to increase their capacity and effectiveness.

It can:

- how they orient themselves to the outside world build and strengthen personal leadership skills
- increase personal confidence and effectiveness
- establish internal and external networks to enable councillors to secure information and support
- improve performance and develop personal capacity.

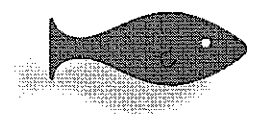
one-to-one mentoring includes:

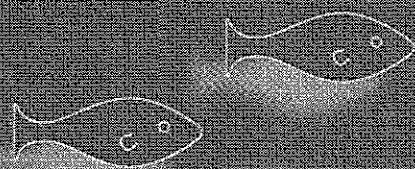
- an opportunity for councillors to share visions, experiences and best practice with an emphasis on self-learning
- protocols governing the mentoring relationship, including confidentiality
- a tailor-made learning agreement agreed to suit councillor needs, likely to include, participative observation, learning from good practice and self-learning
- placement of an accredited peer mentor with appropriate skills, knowledge and experience
- provision of an induction session, background information and overview of the procedures involved and introductions
- several meetings during the relationship, telephone and e-mentoring contact throughout and for up to three months afterwards
- review and evaluation at agreed times allowing sufficient time for reflection on actions taken, exercise of new personal styles and strategies and so on
- access to the IDeA Knowledge website and supporting documentation.

eligibility and cost

One-to-one mentoring is available for new and experienced councillors, including leaders and executive members.

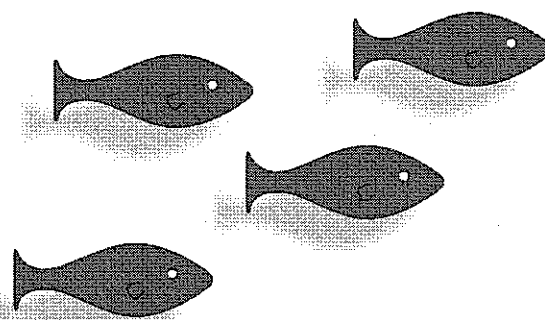
One-to-one mentoring costs between £2,600 and £3,800, depending on the number of peer mentor days agreed.





'Mentoring involves patience, perseverance and hard work. As with most things in life, people will get out only what they put in. The success of any mentoring scheme will directly relate to the effort both individuals are prepared to make. I cannot understate the benefits it brought me as an individual and I will always champion the mentoring scheme. My advice is this: if you are offered a mentor, then go for it. If not, then ask for one!'

Councillor Marco Longhi,
portfolio holder, Walsall Council



Councillor role mentoring works with a small group of councillors from one authority or councillors with similar roles from a number of authorities – such as committee or cabinet members with portfolio, corporate or service responsibilities or members of overview and scrutiny committees.

It uses an accredited peer councillor mentor in an innovative way within an action-learning approach. The action-learning group will have between eight and ten members and can involve single or cross-party groups.

improving the leadership role

Councillor role mentoring is designed to strengthen the leadership demonstrated by councillors at executive and non-executive level by:

- providing support, clarity and advice about the complex and diverse issues that arise within individual and specialist roles
- improving performance, effectiveness and 'survival' skills, by focusing on the resolution of real issues in an atmosphere of experiential learning and review
- increasing role effectiveness to enable organisational and service improvement for local communities
- contributing to the wider objectives and priorities of the council
- increasing the group's ability to solve their own future issues in an effective and self-sufficient manner.

building personal capacity and learning

The action-learning approach requires participating councillors to be open-minded, enthusiastic and willing to challenge and assess individual and group effectiveness within their specific skill areas – such as regulation and monitoring, scrutiny and challenge, communication, community leadership and managing performance, while acting to address personal and group development needs.

role mentoring includes:

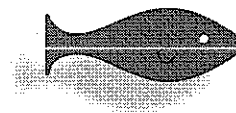
- an opportunity for councillors to share visions, experiences and best practice through a refreshing approach with an emphasis on learning and personal development
- protocols governing the mentoring relationship, including confidentiality
- a tailor-made learning agreement for the mentoring period to suit councillor needs, which may include one-to-one meetings, observation and learning from good practice

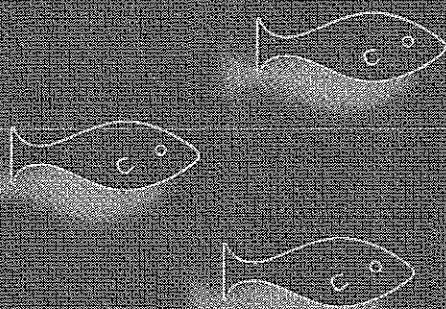
- placement of a peer member mentor with appropriate skills, knowledge and experience
- a series of meetings during the relationship, telephone and e-mentoring contact throughout and for up to three months afterwards
- review and evaluation at agreed times during and after delivery
- sufficient time for reflection on actions taken, exercise of new personal styles, and strategies
- access to the IDeA Knowledge website and supporting documentation
- a self-sustaining model for future problem solving activity in the authority.

eligibility and cost

Role mentoring is for councillors wishing to improve their personal effectiveness, internal and external relationships, and strengthen their community leadership role.

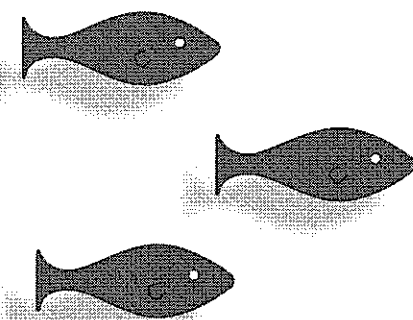
It costs between £4,400 and £6,900, depending on the number of peer days and consultant support required.





'I gained lots of benefits from mentoring, such as learning about best practice, problem solving, discussing political issues, and how best to work with senior officers. While it may be difficult at first, it helps to be constructively challenged by your mentor on difficult areas. It forces you to make decisions.'

Councillor Graham Baxter, leader,
North East Derbyshire Council



Political groups often face periods of change. Whether working in a hung council, taking control or moving into opposition, they welcome encouragement and support and benefit from learning how others have coped in the same circumstances.

Political group mentoring is particularly useful when there is a change in the political control of a council. For those gaining control, support is often needed for building groups, role understanding and dealing with new and existing relationships within the administration.

For those moving into opposition, support on how to deal with the loss of control and managing this transition may be required before the group can start to move forward again effectively.

taking on the new role

Councillors experiencing change within a group need guidance, reassurance and the ability to develop a greater understanding of their new responsibilities.

Political group mentoring compares their role with others, engages in dialogue with peers and provides in-depth information on services – from the very basic to the most complex issues surrounding vision and strategy, relationships, budgets, policy development, and consultation.

building personal capacity and learning

Political groups can also learn the benefits of the softer side of leadership by becoming more informed and receiving information and acquiring skills in areas such as influencing, negotiating, stress management, work-life balance and other general interpersonal skills.

political group mentoring includes:

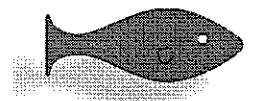
- planning day(s) consisting of discussions with group members, analysis and consideration of options, observation of the group in operation at group meetings, council meetings and liaison with external agencies
- protocols governing the mentoring relationship, including confidentiality
- a tailor-made learning agreement to suit individual and group needs, including one-to-one meetings, participative observation, learning from good practice and self-learning

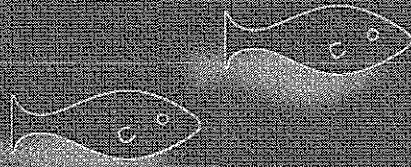
- placement of the same political party mentor with appropriate skills, knowledge and experience
- several meetings during the relationship, delivered onsite, which may include an away-day or similar event
- review meetings at relevant and agreed times, allowing sufficient time for reflection on actions taken, and the exercise of new personal styles and strategies
- telephone and e-mentoring contact throughout and for up to three months afterwards
- access to the IDeA Knowledge website and supporting documentation.

eligibility and cost

This kind of mentoring is designed to help councillors at all levels cope with moving into control or opposition or operating in a hung council. It is also available to under-performing authorities that have decided political group development can support overall organisational improvement.

Political group mentoring costs between £4,000 and £7,000, depending on the circumstances of the group(s) and number of councillors involved.





'I think everyone should have a mentor. As a leader of a group or a council it should be mandatory because you learn so much, so quickly. Having a mentor has been one of the most useful experiences I've had as a councillor.'

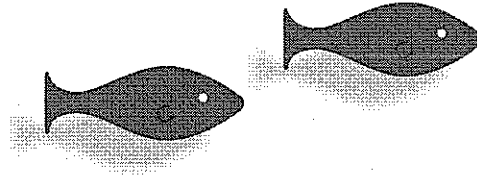
Councillor Claire Hudson, leader,
Liberal Democrat group,
Mendip District Council

case studies

Case studies of a number of different mentoring relationships are contained in *Someone To Watch Over Me* on the IDeA Knowledge website.

more information:

tel 020 7296 6863
email ncmp@idea.gov.uk



Newly elected councillors are under great pressure to find out what they have to do. In an induction period they need to prioritise their responsibilities, assess the mass of information they face, understand the political and group environment they work in and seek reassurance that others may be feeling the same and support is available. The buddy system of induction mentoring is for new and experienced councillors facing challenges in new or existing roles. It helps support the development and learning needs of newly elected councillors by pairing them with more experienced councillors who can give their support and share their knowledge and experience. It enables new councillors to become more confident and effective in their roles as quickly as possible.

It uses experienced councillors to sustain and build member development within the authority. The buddy activity is delivered through in house training for up to ten experienced councillors who then go on to mentor their newly elected colleagues. This provides individual, collective and sustained contributions to an authority committed to the effective induction of new members.

improving the quality and effectiveness of new councillors

This kind of mentoring can support councillors with:

- navigation skills to find their way around and through politically managed organisations
- managing political group relationships
- engaging with other councillors, officers, constituents and the media
- coping with time management, workload, documentation and ICT
- who to liaise with, how to keep records and who to inform
- how to be an effective participant at meetings
- understanding constitutional matters, declarations and codes of conduct.

building individual and organisational capacity

The benefits of the buddy system for an authority include:

- an enhanced understanding of the relationships and roles within the authority's induction processes
- the development of a structured process by which to mentor new councillors
- an opportunity to develop the mentor styles and skills needed to provide effective mentoring
- ensuring that progress and review is an integral part of the mentoring process
- support to experienced councillors during the mentoring period
- ensuring that mentoring is delivered consistently and can sustain the learning from the training day
- providing the authority with experienced councillors skilled in mentoring.

inclusion mentoring includes:

- a meeting to scope and plan the mentoring option and agree the practical and behavioural ground rules
- an induction session, background information and overview of the procedures involved
- placement of an experienced peer mentor with appropriate skills, knowledge and experience
- a one day training and pairing event
- review and evaluation of the scheme
- telephone and e-mentoring contact involving participants throughout the duration of the buddy system
- access to IDeA Knowledge and supporting documentation.



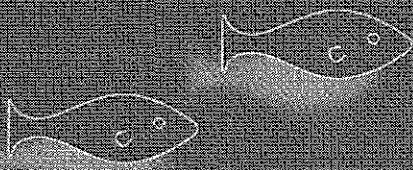
eligibility and cost

This activity supports any local authority with an influx of new members. Up to ten new councillors are paired with senior, more experienced councillors to help them through their first few months.

The opportunity also exists to pair with other authorities, especially where there are insufficient experienced councillors from a particular political group to match the new intake.

It is a self-sustaining process – for example heads of democratic services can also attend to ensure that the authority has the skills to continue with the process in subsequent years.

The buddy system of induction activity costs £3,100 and is delivered by specialist trainers and an accredited IDeA peer.



How councillors work to empower their local communities is an issue of increasing importance. Ward Visits are a one-off diagnostic exercise to help councillors improve how they work within their wards and with their communities.

It enables them to review what they have achieved in their wards and how they relate to their local communities. It also helps to identify challenges and opportunities to promote both representative and participative democracy.

In particular it will help them to:

- clarify the issues and opportunities facing their ward
- identify opportunities to encourage greater public involvement
- identify any tensions between ward priorities and those of the local authority as a whole
- reflect on the impact these tensions may have on their own roles as a ward representative and as members of the council as a corporate body

supporting the leadership role

This mentoring activity is intended to be applied to all councillors but focuses on their roles within the ward. It can help:

- increase the capacity, skills and learning of councillors
- support a structured learning process for reviewing service priorities
- raise the profile and demonstrate the value of effective political leadership, local democracy and strong local government.

building personal capacity

It supports and encourages councillors to build a relationship of understanding and trust between the their ward and the communities within it.

It can:

- link the local perspective with their roles as community leaders;
- identify how they can encourage greater public involvement;
- provide a better sense of their ward as a place and how it can develop
- increase personal confidence and effectiveness
- improve performance and develop personal capacity

ward visits include

- an opportunity for councillors to share visions, experiences and best practice with an emphasis on self-learning
- placement of an accredited peer mentor with appropriate skills, knowledge and experience
- a ward map of what the individual member sees as the main local issues
- a report including main observations, identified ward priorities and matters for consideration and action

eligibility and cost

Ward visits are available for all councillors and can be arranged on an individual / one-off basis or as part of a wider development programme.

Each visit can cost between £1,200 and £500 depending upon the number of wards being visited and whether it forms part of a larger mentoring project.

