



Introduction and Rationale

This Competency Framework for Members has been developed in consultation with all the Devon authorities through the Devon Improvement Programme and it is set out as an easy and generic way of highlighting skills and behaviours required by Members to perform their different roles. It allows performance to be measured against core competencies, and enables authorities to provide structured learning and development programmes to assist with Members' personal development.

Competencies can be defined as individual characteristics or skills that can be both measured and shown to make a difference to performance. The competency approach ensures Members focus on behaviours, skills and abilities required by particular roles.

Competencies can measure 'how' Members do things in the same way objectives measure what they do.

Who is it for?

The framework will be used primarily by officers responsible for Member learning and development to identify the training needs of their Members and, subsequently, to develop appropriate training programmes. It will also assist authorities wishing to introduce performance appraisals and development plans for individual Members. Members, on an individual basis, may also use it to self assess their own needs.

Competency Framework for Members

Competency Area	Knowledge Descriptor	Skills	Methods	Who and When
1. Political Understanding/ Governance	a) Understands the managerial and political structure of the council b) Understanding of Internal Control environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates an understanding of the decision making process. • Understands Member and officer remits. • Understands political balance implications (Local Gov and Housing Act 1989) 	Induction Process Ongoing engagement with officers and other Members Availability of source reading materials/ e-learning modules	All Induction (run over a period of 3-6 months)
	c) Overview of all service areas and systems within the authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands authority's management structure and remit of service areas. 	Induction process On going engagement with officers and other Members Standards Board website, bulletins and guidance.	All Induction
	d) Knowledge of the constitution and the understanding of the Codes of Conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands the national policy framework and local context. 	Induction process Training sessions relating to specific elements	All Target specific training to Chairs and Vice Chairs (e.g. procedural standing orders)
	e) Overview and Scrutiny and its remit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully understands scrutiny role and its remit. • Demonstrates analytical skills and objectivity. • Investigates and challenges • Evidence based policy development. • Knowledge of how to effectively and appropriately challenge decisions, including use of call in. 	Calling and interviewing expert witnesses. Training in research and interviewing skills.	Scrutiny and Overview Members. As and when appointed to relevant council bodies.

Political Understanding/ Governance	f) Understanding of appropriate non-political decision making (e.g. in respect of non-political issues such as planning, housing, licensing, etc).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate decision making skills, including openness and objectivity. • Ability to look at the wider picture for the benefit of the electorate. 	Mentoring Appropriate leadership	All
	Mentoring	•		
2. Integrity	a) Ethical understanding, self awareness and control.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handles information appropriately. • Applies knowledge learned to appropriate situations. • Is willing to read and understand large documents, strategies and policies 	Officer briefings. IDeA Member handbook. Code of conduct. Development activities specifically around ethics, standards and equalities. Standards Board/ Ethical Toolkit	All Induction and ongoing.

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3. Community Leadership	a) Knowledge of: own ward and wider authority area, community/ voluntary groups and public sector organisations. b) Understanding of community issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective researching. • Effective communication. • Networking • Public speaking. 	Tour of authority. Source demographic & other information profiling ward / area. Visits to local group & Town / Parish Council meeting and keeping in touch with grass root issues.	All Induction and ongoing
	c) Is able to champion and act as advocate for local community without losing sight of the strategic context for the authority as a whole. Represents all sectors of the community and mediates fairly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectivity • Strategic understanding, avoiding parochialism • Understanding of authority's corporate goals and objectives • Mediation 	Communicating authority's strategy in practice Involvement in prioritisation process, service and budget planning.	All On-going
4. Leadership	a) Interpersonal and Social Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handles relationships effectively. • Motivates and encourages. • Focuses on specific goals • Inspires trust 	Member appraisals. Coaching and mentoring.	Political Leaders. Executive Members. Potential leaders / shadow leaders.
	b) Develops and communicates a shared vision for the authority and community: knowledge of community strengths, areas of improvement and key issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic visioning • Builds alliances within the authority and with the community. • Communicates effectively • Commitment to learning, developing others and best practice 	Support / mentoring from other local authority Leaders. Keeping up to date with national initiatives (through publications, news sheets, Members' pages on web site.	Political Leaders. Executive Members. Potential / shadow Leaders. Attendance at National Conference level

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4. Leadership	c) Political Leadership: Understands the relationship between national and local politics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands the political vision. Demonstrates strategic awareness. 	Undertake peer support. Attendance at relevant events at national level.	Political Leaders. Executive Members. Potential / shadow Leaders. Attendance at National Conference level
	d) Relationship with Chief Executive and key officers (Understands the roles and responsibilities of CEx and key officers).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Networks efficiently. Works jointly with CEx and key officers on strategic objectives. 	Participation in regular meetings and discussions with CEx and other senior officers.	Leader. Ongoing as appropriate.
	e) Manage reputation of the local authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displays high level media skills. Demonstrates and understands valuable networking and interpersonal skills. 	Briefings and discussions with senior officers. Advanced media skills courses. Awareness of Beacon status.	Ongoing as appropriate.
	f) Strategic Resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displays an awareness of local authority budget and corporate policy Understands priorities and lesser priorities. Able to think corporately, not parochially. 	1 to 1 approach with key officers. Develop understanding of budget processes.	Ongoing as appropriate.
	g) Effective chairing of meetings: following protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chairing skills and understanding of procedural standing orders 	Member development sessions Mentoring	Existing Chairs and those who will be potential Chairs

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5. Communication	a) Knowledge of sources of information and methods of organising it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to demonstrate efficient and effective research skills. 	Members page on portal. Information and advice from other Members, Member Support officers and other officers	All Ongoing
	b) ICT awareness, understanding and use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good computer literacy skills including email and use of internet. 	Use Learning and Improvement Portal (LIP), undertake e-learning modules on LIP Encourage use of discussion forums on LIP Encourage attendance on in-house ICT training	All Ongoing
	c) Works effectively with different audiences and can develop and maintain relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is able to appreciate different needs of different audiences 	Training Performance review through appraisal.	All Ongoing
	d) Communicates regularly with the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has awareness of equality and diversity issues. • Good interpersonal skills. • Good presentation skills. • Good Media skills • Use of plain English principles • Provides relevant and timely feedback 	Through newsletters, phone calls and local media. Media skills training. Equality & Diversity awareness sessions.	All Ongoing
	e) Sensitivity to others: provides an effective channel of communication between the local authority and the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good negotiation skills • Ability to maintain objectivity and an open mind. 	Workshops and mentoring. Member Services Officers and other key officers to provide timely advice and support.	All Ongoing

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6. Partnership Working	a) Develops an understanding of when partnership work is the most effective method of achieving the desired outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays knowledge of the local authority's priorities. • Has an awareness of external environment. • Understands the objectives and culture of the organisation and that of potential partners. 	Organisational awareness. Strategic thinking across boundaries.	Members as representatives on other bodies. Ongoing
	b) Develops partnerships inside the authority and with external organisations, including representation of outside bodies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands the roles of Members, officers and different agencies. 	Builds good relationships with colleagues, officers and the wider community. Develops understanding of dual roles. Relevant skills training.	Members as representatives on other bodies. Ongoing
	c) Achieves goals through effective partnership working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy skills. • Presentation skills. • Good communication skills. • Good negotiation skills. • Interpersonal skills. • Skills in sourcing information and advice. 	Relevant training including awareness and value of partnership working opportunities.	Leader, Executive Board and Members of Overview and Scrutiny
	Monitors results from partnership working at the local level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands the key objectives of partnerships. • Use of analytical skills against key objectives. 	Heightening awareness of performance monitoring and application of associated skills.	All Members involved in partnership working and representing outside bodies.

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7. Performance Management	Monitors performance and intervenes as appropriate to ensure progress. Maintains objectives through an understanding of Performance Indicators (PIs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good analytical skills. • Monitoring and questioning skills. • Challenging skills. 	Presents arguments in a concise, meaningful and easily accessible way.	Executive Members - with Members taking ownership of performance relating to their own portfolios Scrutiny Members - challenging (as appropriate)
	Communicates performance priorities and results to communities and stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops an understanding of budget and performance indicators. • Good communication skills 	Workshops, Seminars and training. Officer briefings and performance data.	All Ward Members
	Evaluate and scrutinise performances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of interdependency between performance & budget 	Seminars. Workshops Officer briefings	All Ward Members Portfolio holders need particular knowledge of their own areas of responsibility.

Footnote:

Separate and specific training will be required for Members sitting on regulatory committees e.g. planning, licensing