

CYNGOR SIR *POWYS* COUNTY COUNCIL

FRAMEWORK FOR MEMBER MENTORING

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Introduction

The role of the elected member is a complex and challenging one. All members, from the newly elected to the more senior and experienced, can benefit from support and development in reacting to new or personally challenging situations.

Members in Powys County Council [PCC] are provided with a range of essential support and development activities, but these cannot always cater for some of their individual and immediate needs. Mentoring is another approach that members have for development, which can meet these needs from time to time.

PCC is committed to support members in their mentoring activities by offering the support outlined below.

What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is a confidential relationship where a mentee works with a mentor to explore issues or situations where they need support or development. The mentee sets the agenda and takes responsibility for their learning within the relationship. The mentor helps the mentee to learn through asking questions and sharing their experience without being too directive, and enables the mentee, through discussion, to learn new information, or discover their own solutions to challenging situations.

The following are examples of when members could find mentoring useful:

- as a new member getting to “know the ropes”, coping with time management, workload challenges or understanding political and officer relationships;
- as an existing member taking on a new role such as that of leader, chair, portfolio holder or champion;
- when facing a particular political, community or leadership challenge;
- when needing to build new skills such as community engagement or media relations;
- when considering a change of role or wishing to advance in a political career.

What Is Not Included

- Support that would otherwise be provided by means of the individuals own political group, including national support which political parties provide to political groups.
- Questions relating to or affecting a political group’s view / position relating to a matter which the mentee should be asked to refer to his / her political group leader.

The Authority’s Approach to Mentoring

The Authority will provide support for any member wishing to act as a mentor or be mentored by colleagues by:

- arranging for training to be provided to potential mentors
- providing basic written guidance on mentoring techniques to mentors
- providing information on how to make the most of mentoring opportunities to mentees
- finding suitable mentors from within or if necessary outside the authority for members as available
- providing mentors with ongoing support and training as required

Training

All members acting as mentors will be provided with some basic training in the techniques and personal style required to be a mentor. This basic training will be facilitated by the Welsh Local Government Association [WLGA]. Councillors who have been mentors in the past or who are currently mentors in other areas of their working lives, will be expected to attend this training, as their experiences will be of value to those who are becoming mentors for the first time.

The training will not include guidance on the “messages” to be given to mentees as this relies on the personal experience and expertise of the member mentor.

Guidance

The Authority will use the WLGA’s “Guidance for Member Mentors”.

Matching Mentors with Mentees

The Authority will maintain a record of members who are willing to act as mentors. If members require help with finding a mentor, officers will facilitate the matching based on the needs of mentees based on, for example, gender, role and experience.

On-going Support and Training

Members acting as mentors may find they need guidance in their role. Guidance will be providing by officers in the Council but if required, due to the confidential nature of the mentoring relationship, support will be sourced externally using member mentors from other authorities. The Council will seek the assistance of the WLGA, if required.

Evaluation of the mentoring process

A review will be undertaken of the mentoring scheme one year after its implementation. The evaluation will be considered by the Democratic Services Committee.

Utilising mentors in future councils

Members who have been trained as mentors and who do not seek re-election in 2022 should be asked if they would be prepared to act for a period of up to 12 months as mentors for new Members of the Council, thus providing initial support for those Members. This would provide those new Members with experienced support in “learning the ropes”, as well as the Council not losing the investment, which it had made in those former councillors acting as mentors.