

GUIDANCE FOR  
AUTHORITIES PLANNING TO  
IMPLEMENT PERSONAL  
DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS FOR  
MEMBERS  
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WLGA • CLILC

## Introduction

This guidance has been developed by the WLGA working with members and officers in the Member Development Champions and Member Support Officer Networks to assist authorities who are developing a personal development review scheme for elected members.

Authorities who have successfully introduced these schemes have done so at different levels ranging from a light touch review of roles and training needs, to a review of performance approaching a form of appraisal. We therefore suggest that any approach should be developed by members and officers working together to create a scheme that is seen as supportive to members in undertaking their role and is provided at a level that members believe is appropriate.

Authorities wishing to introduce a scheme which addresses the performance of members in an appraisal approach are advised to consider and agree with members additional guidance, support and training before they undertake this.

Although many authorities already offer Personal development Reviews to members, the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 places a requirement on authorities to provide all members with an opportunity to have a personal development review to assess their development needs.<sup>1</sup>

The WG has provided additional guidance on the process for the reviews at appendix 1.

This guidance has been designed to enable authorities to meet the Measure requirements, provides practical guidance for implementing personal development review schemes and provides case studies from authorities who have successful schemes in place. It also fits with the requirements for the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development (see appendix 2)

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<sup>1</sup> "A local authority must secure the provision of reasonable training and development opportunities for its members.

(2)A local authority must make available to each member of the authority an annual review of the member's training and development needs.

(3)The review must include an opportunity for an interview with a person who is, in the opinion of the authority, suitably qualified to provide advice about the training and development needs of a member of a local authority.

(4)In exercising its functions under this section a local authority must have regard to guidance given by the Welsh Ministers.

(5)In the case of an authority which operates a leader and cabinet executive (Wales), a reference in this section to a member of a local authority does not include the executive leader.

## Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011

## Definition

Personal Development Review (PDR) is a way for a member and his/her Authority to mutually assess a member's personal development needs. The review should be set within the context of the role of the member, his/her aspirations for what s/he hopes to achieve, the purpose and aspirations of the Authority and the needs of the community.

## Purpose

PDR schemes enable members to build confidence, develop skills and knowledge and improve their own performance and contribution to the council and the community. They can provide:

- Clarity for members about the expectations and accountabilities placed upon them.
- Understanding of and support for the individual and collective development needs of members
- Support for members in preparing for new roles (succession planning)
- An understanding and ownership of organisational goals
- Support for improved member performance

## Methodology

Authorities implementing a scheme may find it useful to consider the following as a possible approach:

1. Promote the value of the PDR approach, reassuring members that it is not a performance appraisal but a means of supporting and developing members. Personal development reviews and appraisals can often be confused, as was the case when the Draft Measure and accompanying Explanatory Memorandum was originally published.
2. Secure representative cross party agreement between members for the creation of the PDR Scheme agreeing the:
  - aims (these might include developing a greater understanding of member roles and responsibilities, providing the most appropriate, cost effective and effective support and development for members which also secure organisational and community objectives.
  - scope (such as whether members will discuss their performance and work plans in addition to their training and development and how an evaluation of the members previous training will be reviewed).
  - outcomes for the scheme and ways of measuring its success
3. Engage with internal expertise among members and officers (HR approaches to officer appraisal schemes, members with experience in this area) to develop the approach
4. Link the scheme with existing strategies for member support and development and other appropriate organisational strategies such as organisational development or people strategies.

5. Link the scheme with existing and developing member development needs analyses and training programmes. This might include:
  - Using any internal member development frameworks to help members in their deliberations.
  - Establishing ways of using the emerging training needs to inform member development programmes.
6. Establish role descriptions as the basis for the interviews. These should be developed with and endorsed by members prior to the PDR process.
7. Establish a clear methodology for undertaking the review. Such as:
  - Using pro-formas for conducting the interviews, (appendix 2).
  - Agreeing who will undertake the reviews, taking into account the Local Government Measure's requirement for a "suitably qualified" person to undertake the review . If this is to be a member, candidates might include the Leader, Deputy Leader, Group Leaders or Member Development Lead/Chair of Democratic Services. Experience suggests that it is preferable to spread the responsibility between members as much as possible. If this is to be an officer, candidates might include the Head of Democratic Services, member support officers and HR/training personnel. It may be appropriate to use external expertise in the process such as Leaders from other authorities or trained Member Peers to undertake Leader reviews.
  - Agreeing the role of officers in supporting the process and using the emerging information to devise member development strategies and programmes.
  - Establishing rules about confidentiality.
8. Provide training/briefing/written guidance for those taking part (appendices 3/4/5) so that no one takes part without all parties knowing what they are doing, why they are doing it and how.
9. Evaluate the scheme with all those involved, to see if the aims are being met.

### **Further Assistance**

Is available from the WLGA in introducing and implementing Personal Development Review Schemes. Training is available for both members and officers in undertaking reviews and for those members who will be receiving reviews in how to get the most out of them.

We are grateful to those authorities who have shared their experiences of the PDR process to contribute to this new guidance.

### **Further information**

**Sarah Titcombe 029 2046 8638**

## **Appendix 1**

### **Statutory Guidance on Personal Development Review from the Welsh Government**

#### **Annual Review**

2.12 Every local authority member (other than an executive leader – see paragraph 23) must be offered the opportunity to have their training and development needs reviewed on an annual basis. It is recommended that much of the training and development needs of local authority members are identified by such reviews.

2.13 The review must include an opportunity for a pre-planned interview between the member and a suitably qualified person (see paragraphs 2.17-2.22). The interview could include a review of the training and development received by the member over the last year (or appropriate period if the local authority member has only been recently elected).

2.14 Local authorities may wish to consider detailing the outcome of the interview in an agreed plan which sets out training and development needs, if any, identified for the year ahead. It is recommended that this personal development plan is provided for the member and signed by both member and reviewer. This is a private document which is not expected to be published by the authority or member, although a member is free to publicise in his or her annual report any training and development undertaken if he or she so wishes.

2.15 In achieving the standard required for the Charter, local authorities will need to adopt role descriptions for the posts of leader, deputy leader, executive member, scrutiny member, chair of scrutiny and chairs of statutory and area committees. The descriptions could be used as a guide as to the skills required by the relevant member.

2.16 The review is an assessment of training and development needs. A local authority may wish to consider making it clear to members that the review is not a performance review or an assessment of how well or how badly a member has conducted their duties. That is not a statutory requirement and is a matter for the electorate to judge at the ballot box.

#### **Suitably Qualified**

2.17 It is for the local authority to determine who could be considered a suitably qualified person to conduct interviews with local authority members to discuss their training and development needs as part of their annual review. This responsibility could be allocated to the DSC within the authority. In most cases, this may not be a question of naming individuals, but of describing a post or office holder, (but see paragraph 2.22 below). It would probably be neither suitable nor desirable for a single person to be made responsible for conducting all interviews.

2.18 Some local authorities already carry out various practices in relation to the review of the training and development needs of its members. Practices include group leaders conducting interviews with their members or interviews being conducted by the leader and

the executive members. Both these practices are perfectly acceptable methods of complying with the requirements of the Measure.

2.19 Authorities may prefer, however, to divest the duty with their human resources officers. If this is the preferred option, local authorities may consider making the Head of Democratic Services (HDS) responsible for co-operating with human resources officers for this part of their work. If the Head of Paid Service was selected as a suitably qualified person to conduct an interview it would not be expected that they would work under the supervision of the HDS.

2.20 Some authorities may prefer to hire external consultants or peers to conduct interviews, which is also acceptable. Local authorities are encouraged to appoint a Member Development Champion from amongst its councillors.

2.21 It is recommended that there should be no surprises in the system and that individual members know who they can expect to conduct their interview. Local authorities may wish to consider including an option in their arrangements for members to make a request to the HDS to arrange for a different person to conduct their interview if there is good reason for so doing.

2.22 Finally, authorities must ensure that anyone conducting an interview must themselves have received suitable training in how to do this and are advised to liaise with the WLGA to ensure the provision of this. Therefore, even if the authority has chosen to allocate the duty of conducting reviews to a post, rather than an individual, that post holder should have received the necessary training before conducting reviews.

### **Executive Leader of the Local Authority**

2.23 Section 7 of the Measure does not apply to the executive leader (or elected mayor) of an authority. However, there may, of course, be occasions where the leader wishes to receive training or development and there is no suggestion that, by excluding them from the provisions of the Measure, they should not be able to receive training, nor, indeed, an annual review or an interview with a suitably qualified person.

## Appendix 2

### Criteria from the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development for Personal Development Review

<b>Arrangements are in place for all members to be offered a Personal Development Review.</b>	<b>Charter</b>	<b>Advanced Charter</b>
	Personal support and development reviews which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ are based on role descriptions</li> <li>▪ contribute to personal development plans</li> <li>▪ are conducted by senior members or other deemed suitably qualified as set out in the Measure guidance</li> <li>▪ are made available for all members and must be undertaken by members in receipt of a senior salary.</li> </ul>	The majority of members, undertake PDRs regularly and at least annually according to the requirements set out in the first level. The PDR provides opportunities for members to identify the level at which development is required.

## Appendix 3

### Example Framework Pro forma for a Personal Development Review.

Please complete this pro forma and bring it to the meeting, this form is confidential to you and the person who is conducting your review except for the final sheet which will be used by member support officers for your personal development plan and to prioritise activities for the Authority's training programme.

**1. What are my current roles and responsibilities?** (e.g. the council executive/cabinet portfolio, overview and scrutiny member, chair, member of a statutory committee such as planning, licensing etc. In the community, ward member/community leader)

**2. What specific tasks to I need to achieve this year?  
What do I plan to do? By when?**

**3. What do I need to know about and be able to do to undertake my role and deliver my plans?** (Your role description, person specification and the member development framework/ questionnaire may help you here)

**4. What aspects of my role am I confident in?**

**5. Where am I less confident?**

**6. What might prevent me from undertaking my role effectively?** (consider any personal, organisational or political issues which might be a barrier to success)

**7. What learning and development have I undertaken this year?**

**8. What have I learned and been able to achieve as a result of this learning and development?**

**9. What additional learning and development would be useful, use the table below.**

<b>Areas that I would like to develop are:</b>	<b>Preferred method of development</b> (e.g. visits to other authorities, peer networking, practical workshops, e learning etc.)
Skills (e.g. meeting management, questioning techniques, media interviews,	
Knowledge (e.g. the code of conduct, equalities, the planning process, local policy etc.)	

**My learning and development needs for this year (please discuss this section of your pro forma with your member support officer, it will be used to create development plans and training programmes)**

<b>Area for Development</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>Priority</b>
<i>example How to Chair scrutiny meetings effectively</i>	<i>I`d like to observe meetings in other authorities A workshop on chairing skills would be handy I`d like to receive some written guidance for scrutiny chairs</i>	1
<i>example Understanding of the planning system to answer constituents enquiries</i>	<i>A workshop on all the planning basics would be useful A meeting with planning officers on specific issues raised by people in my community about planning permission</i>	3
<i>example Local Government Finance, how do I contribute to the budget setting process?</i>	<i>I`d like to have discussions with finance officers and some mentoring from Cabinet member for Finance and Resources as this is an area I`d like to move into.</i>	2
<i>example Training in the use of social media</i>	<i>A meeting with someone who can explain how to use Twitter safely to publicise what I do and encourage the public to contact me.</i>	4

**My evaluation of the training I have already received**

<b>Training undertaken</b>	<b>What difference has this made to the way I work as a member</b>
<i>example Council induction programme on the work of the council and who's who.</i>	<i>Has given me a good refresher of how the council operates which has enabled me to explain this to people attending my surgeries and know who the appropriate officers are to speak to. It also highlighted areas where I need further training.</i>
<i>example media skills training</i>	<i>Helped me represent the council more effectively at a radio interview last week</i>
<i>example attended the Leadership Academy</i>	<i>Helped me understand my own leadership style and how it differs from other I am now working more effectively with other Cabinet members I also had help on a personal leadership challenge.</i>

## **Appendix 4**

### **Example Guidance for Members Conducting Reviews (Interviewers)**

Before conducting your review(s) you may find it useful to consider the following guidance:

#### **Purpose of the Review**

The purpose of your meeting will be to provide your interviewee with an opportunity to review their role generally, identify any specific tasks for the year ahead, consider the areas where they feel confident and identify areas where they will be more challenged and may need support and development. Their learning and development needs together with the usefulness or otherwise of previous development will then be fed back to member support officers to create development programmes.

#### **Preparation**

You may want to familiarise yourself with the role description of the person whose review you are conducting and consider some of the questions that you will ask to help the interviewee explore their role and needs. Although Member support and training officers will provide full information to all members, you may wish to re-familiarise yourself with the training, development and support that might be available to members in your authority. Your interviewee will contact you to plan a time and place convenient to you both where you can have a confidential undisturbed conversation. The meeting should take no longer than an hour and a half.

#### **Undertaking the Review**

Please remember that the conversation you have with your interviewee needs to be kept confidential to yourselves.

Your role is to help the interviewee consider his/her role/contribution, strengths/weaknesses and training needs. You should act as an objective sounding board in this exploration.

Your role is not to give your own feedback on the performance of your colleague.

Use the pro forma as a basis for your discussions

It is the responsibility of the interviewee to undertake any actions resulting from the conversation, keep any documentation and discuss any emerging development needs with member support officers

Any additional support required from the authority may also be identified and fed into the organisation as appropriate.

## **Appendix 5**

### **Guidance for Members Being Interviewed**

Before undertaking your review you may find it useful to consider the following guidance:

#### **Purpose of the Review**

The purpose of your meeting will be to provide you with an opportunity to review your role generally, consider any specific tasks for the year ahead, consider the areas where you feel confident and identify areas that you might find challenging and may need support and development. You will have an opportunity to identify learning and development needs which you will then be able to feed back to member support officers to organise development programmes. You can also review the usefulness of training that you have already received.

#### **Preparation**

Before your meeting you will need to complete the pro forma. This will help you to think about your role, specific tasks for this year and any support that you might need. You'll also find it useful to review your role description, person specification and the member development framework/questionnaire.

Make contact with your interviewer and plan a time and place convenient to you both where you can have a confidential undisturbed conversation.

#### **Undertaking the Review**

Please remember that the conversation you have with your interviewer needs to be kept confidential to yourselves.

Use the pro forma as a basis for your discussions

Your interviewer will help you consider your role/contribution, strengths/weaknesses and training needs. They will act as an objective sounding board in this conversation.

Their role is not to give their own feedback on your performance.

Please note that it is your responsibility to undertake any actions resulting from the conversation, keep any documentation and discuss any emerging development needs with member support officers.

Any additional support required from the authority may also be identified and fed into the organisation as appropriate.

## Appendix 6

### Development for members and officers undertaking reviews

Authorities might want to consider the following when providing development for members/officers undertaking reviews

1. Provide training only when the approach and methodology has been developed by the authority
2. Work with HR and training professionals to identify some aspects of good practice when undertaking reviews bearing in mind the differences between member PDR and staff performance review
3. Work with members individually to identify their requirements for development based on previous experience and levels of confidence.
4. Provide support throughout the process so that members and/or officers have continuing guidance if they need it and opportunities to reflect on how it went

The following might be considered as learning outcomes for the training for members

- Members understand the reasons for implementing PDR, the approach taken by the authority and the details of the scheme
- Members fully understand their role and responsibilities as an interviewer
- Members are able to employ interpersonal questioning and listening skills to facilitate the interview and best support the interviewee
- Members are aware of some of the pitfalls inherent in the interview process
- Members are able to identify any further development needs to help them undertake the interviews

The following might be considered as learning outcomes for the training for officers

- Officers understand the reasons for implementing PDR, the approach taken by the authority and the details of the scheme
- Officers appreciate the difference between Member PDR and the staff appraisal process
- Officers have an understanding of the role of members and the skills/knowledge behaviours required to undertake it
- Officers fully understand their role and responsibilities as an interviewer

- Officers are able to employ interpersonal questioning and listening skills to facilitate the interview and best support the interviewee
- Officers are aware of some of the pitfalls inherent in the interview process
- Officers are able to identify any further development needs to help them undertake the interviews

## **Appendix 7**

### **Local Authority Approaches, please contact the authorities for further information**

#### **Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council**

The Development review process aims to assist members in identifying key strengths and achievements during each 12 month period and identify areas where they wish to receive additional support or development.

1. Members in receipt of an SRA complete individual review forms requiring them to:
  - Outline the key responsibilities of their role
  - Consider their current performance, key achievements, skills and knowledge
  - Outline the learning and development they have undertaken in the last year and
  - Consider what additional skills or knowledge they would like to develop
2. Members attend a Development Review meeting with the Senior Member nominated to undertake the review consisting of:
  - A review of the information provided by each member in their individual review questionnaire
  - A discussion on support and development needs
  - Formulation of an action plan to address support and development needs
3. A copy of each individual action plan is collated and returned to Human Resources to inform the training and development programme implemented following the review process.

#### **Brecon Beacons National Park Authority**

The Authority agreed a policy and pro forma for Personal Development Interviews in October 2008 as part of its work towards the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development. The first PDIs were carried out in January/February 2009 by the Chairmen of the Authority, the Planning, Access and Rights of Way Committee and the Audit and Scrutiny Committee. The Chairman of the Authority had a PDI with the Chairman of Snowdonia National Park Authority which was reciprocated later in the year. These members received a briefing pack with role descriptions, attendance records, the PDI policy and form, and briefing notes as to how to conduct the interview. They also had a briefing session with the HR Manager, Democratic Services Manager and Member Champion for Member Development.

In the PDIs Members were asked to focus on their roles, the induction programme and the subsequent development they had received, and were encouraged to identify any gaps, and areas in which they wished to develop in the coming year. All members agreed to have PDIs which added real value to the process. Any training needs were passed to the Democratic Services Manager and used to produce a Training Needs Analysis to inform the Member Development Programme for the following year.

The PDIs were deemed very useful by members but also for the three Chairmen who had the opportunity to spend dedicated time with members. The wider governance issues arising from the PDIs were collated and debated at a workshop later in the year, at the request of the three Chairmen.

The ongoing PDI process and supporting documentation has evolved over the last three years to meet members' needs as they move through their period of office. In particular we have developed different versions of the pro-formas for new members and those at a later stage in their term of office, so that induction can be specifically reviewed as well as ongoing development and support for more experience members. Members, while appreciating the offer of a PDI, have latterly opted for a 'light touch' approach which may simply be a short conversation or telephone call with the Member Champion or Chairman. One or two members felt that they were confident and supported in their roles and did not require further support at that stage. This flexible approach has enabled the process to be maintained and matured, and it is now regarded as 'the way we do things' rather than something additional.

### **Torfaen County Borough Council**

To ensure Torfaen Members' PDRs are up to date and relevant they are conducted annually by the Member Development Officer. A one to one interview with every member is arranged to discuss informally and confidentially their individual training and development needs. A pro-forma is copied to the Member before the meeting and then discussed and completed during the meeting. The pro-forma questions are varied and include background information relating to work experience and previous training as well as aspirations and needs of the community.

During the interview Members are encouraged to identify their own training and development needs in relation to their roles within the authority, aspirations and community needs. The officer provides advice and makes suggestions on topics that are likely to benefit the Member in light of their role/portfolio within Torfaen. During the meeting the officer completes the pro-forma (previously circulated to the Member) and following the meeting a completed copy of the pro-forma is sent to the Member for further consideration and final sign-off. A list of training needs is formulated from the information using the pro-forma which will be used to determine future training programmes. The information identified i.e. training requests, are recorded on a 'Training Needs Analysis' spread sheet maintained by the Member Development Officer. The 'Training Needs Analysis' will assist the Member Development Officer to determine which training sessions should be given immediate priority and is useful for planning future sessions. All members are informed by the Member Development Officer of upcoming training and development opportunities – and when an individual member has requested training in something specific, we make an extra special effort to let that individual know (and encourage them to attend) when that specific training, which they requested, is arranged.

To date the approach taken in Torfaen is relatively light touch in that Members are encouraged and assisted to identify any additional support and development in a one-one interview that has been arranged on a date and time convenient to the Member. Members are comfortable with the approach which was developed as part of the work towards the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development. So far, the PDRs have been successfully conducted with all Members participating.

