

Leadership Development for Local Politicians: Evaluation of Longer-Term Outcomes and Impacts

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Executive Summary

Background: The LGA's Research and Information Team carried out an evaluation of the organisation's Political Leadership Development Offer. The research was requested by the Improvement and Innovation Board and feeds into the organisation's commitment to further support and develop effective political leadership. Information was gathered from 139 councillors who had attended at least one of the following events during 2014 to 2016: Leadership Essentials, Leadership Academy, and Focus on Leadership, Next Generation and The Leaders' Programme. Data was collected between May and August 2016.

Methodology: An online survey was developed and distributed to all delegates who had taken part in at least one of the LGA's leadership programmes between 2014 and 2016. The survey invited delegates to reflect on the training and support they had received and how, if at all, this had helped them to develop as local councillors. A series of statements linked to the LGA's Political Skills Framework asked how much, if at all, the LGA's training had enabled delegates to improve these skills. It was sent to 778 effective email addresses, and 18 per cent of respondents replied. Telephone interviews were carried out with 12 councillors, from a range of council type and regional areas, as well as political parties, to explore certain themes in more detail.

Meeting objectives: From the online survey, the LGA's training appears to have met the training objectives of a very high proportion of respondents – 95 per cent said their objectives had been fully or largely achieved. Eight out of ten said their goals were to develop their capacity to lead and to network and learn from other councillors, and that these goals had been met.

Increased confidence: Evidence from the survey and interviews shows that the LGA's training had, improved respondent councillors' confidence – 96 per cent said they felt greatly or moderately more confident in their role as a councillor having taken part at least one programme. In particular, improved confidence was mentioned in relation to improvements in respondent local leadership skills, partnership working and communication skills.

Local leadership: Evidence from the survey and interviews suggests that the LGA's training had positively impacted on councillors' local leadership skills. At least three-quarters of respondents said these skills – including building partnerships with others, engaging with all sections of the community and looking for new ways of representing people – had improved a great or a moderate amount as a result of the LGA's training. Examples of putting these improved skills into practice included better listening skills, greater engagement with others, stepping up into new roles and improved relations with officers.

Partnership working: Strong evidence of improved partnership working among councillors emerged from both the surveys and interviews. At least eight out of ten said their skills in partnership working – including supporting and empowering others and maintaining good relationships with colleagues and contacts – had improved a great or moderate amount as a result of the LGA’s training. Examples of putting these improved skills into practice included new ways of working with others within and outside of their council, working more inclusively and working across political party lines.

Communication skills: Feedback given via the surveys and interviews points towards positive improvements in councillors’ communication skills, as a result of the training. At least three quarters of respondent councillors said their communication skills – including listening well and adapting to others, feeling confident with speaking in public and creating more opportunities to communicate with different sectors – had improved a great or moderate amount as a result of the LGA’s training. Examples of putting these improved skills into practice included better use of using technology and media, listening more and being more tolerant, improved public speaking and using more positive language.

Political understanding: Good evidence emerged from the surveys and interviews to suggest that councillors’ political understanding had developed, or been topped-up, by the training. At least eight out of ten respondent councillors said their political understanding – including working well with people who hold different views and values, and promoting democracy and increasing public engagement – had improved a great or moderate amount as a result of the LGA’s training. Examples of putting these improved skills into practice included working with greater insight, empathy and with a wider perspective, and better cross-party working.

Scrutiny and challenge: Good evidence was found from the surveys and interviews of an improved understanding of councillors’ role within the scrutiny process. With the exception of ‘ensuring that citizens and communities are involved in the scrutiny process’, at least seven out of ten councillors said their skills in this area had improved – including presenting arguments in a concise way and being fair and objective. Examples of putting these skills into practice include challenging others, asking questions, and using information and evidence.

Regulation and monitoring: Reasonable evidence emerged from the surveys and interviews that councillors had gained a greater understanding of regulation and monitoring. With the exception of ‘knowing enough about legal processes’ and ‘meeting deadlines and balancing council life with other commitments’, at least two-thirds of respondents said their skills in this area had improved a great or moderate amount – including seeking feedback and basing judgements of evidence. Examples of putting these skills into practice included better time management and better chairing skills.

Introduction

The LGA's Political Leadership Development Offer (PLDO) forms part of the organisation's wider package of sector-led improvement. The PLDO includes a range of political leadership development programmes to support and develop councillors, to help ensure that local politicians are more confident and capable; well-equipped and well-supported to make a difference. The LGA's Improvement and Innovation Board, in November 2015, asked the Leadership and Localism Team for information on the longer-term outcomes and impact of the programmes.

Working with the LGA's Research and Information Team, the Leadership and Localism Team designed a small research project. Its aim was to better understand how learning may have become embedded and how behaviours may have changed, as a result of councillors attending at least one programme. It focused on: Leadership Essentials; Leadership Academy; Focus on Leadership; Next Generation; and The Leaders' Programme. Data was collected via an online survey and a series of telephone interviews between May and August 2016.

Online survey

Survey design

An online survey was developed to enable respondents to reflect on the training and support they had received and how, if at all, this had helped them to develop their skills to support them in their role as local councillors. Respondents were presented with a series of statements linked to the LGA's Political Skills Framework¹, which identifies the knowledge and skills needed to be effective in the role of councillor, across the key areas listed below (see Annex B for a full list of survey questions).

- **Local leadership:** This core skills set highlights the importance of councillor engagement 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 focuses on the need to both build and maintain good relationships with others (i.e. colleagues, council officers, community groups and other organisations) by identifying and working collaboratively to achieve shared goals. It recognises the need for councillors to both understand and value different contributions, to delegate or provide support as appropriate, and to take a long-term view in developing partnerships.
- **Communication skills:** This core skill recognises the need for councillors to demonstrate excellent communication skills across many different

¹ http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=1b5968fa-ae90-49ca-a416-ed94a126721a&groupId=10180 [Accessed 23 November 2016]

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 highlights 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:** These core skills are important day-to-day aspects of being a councillor. Councillors need to act as a critical friend by identifying opportunities for scrutiny both 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.

Councillors were asked how much, if at all, the LGA's training and support had enabled them to further develop in the areas listed above.

Response rate

The online survey was sent via email to 843 respondents who had taken part in at least one of the LGA's leadership programmes between 2014 and 2016. They were asked to give feedback on the longer-term outcomes and impacts of the programme, including examples of how key learning has been put into practice. The survey was in the field between 26 May and 30 June 2016. A total of 139 surveys were returned. This is a response rate of 16 per cent. Of the 843 councillors who were contacted, 58 emails were undelivered.² Taking these factors into account, and based on a reduced sample size of 778, the final response rate was 18 per cent.³

This response rate is lower than the standard achieved for most online surveys carried out by the LGA. Therefore, results should be taken as a snapshot of the views of this particular group of respondents, rather than as representative of all participants. However, it is fair to say that the results do provide a good indication of councillors' feelings about the programmes.

² A further three respondents said they had not taken part in a leadership programme due to illness, two could not recall taking part, two were on sick/annual leave.

³ A further five respondents gave email feedback rather than submitting a survey.

As mentioned, 843 councillors were invited to take part in the survey. Of these, 723 had taken part in one leadership programme, whereas others had taken part in up to six programmes (in which case, they were asked to give collective feedback). Table 1 gives a breakdown of the response achieved for each programme (see Annex A for a full breakdown of the responses received per programme).

Table 1: Response breakdown by programme attended			
Programme	Sample	Response Rate	
	N	N	%
Leadership Essentials	580	82	14
Leadership Academy	164	35	21
Focus on Leadership	127	16	13
Next Generation	112	42	38
The Leaders' Programme	17	5	29

Note: Based on 843 respondents in the original sample (respondents may have attended more than one programme)

Time in office

Among survey respondents, the number of years served as a councillor was mostly spread evenly across three time bands: two – four years (22 per cent), four to six years (23 per cent) and more than 10 years (24 per cent). See Table 2.

Table 2: How many years have you been a councillor, in total?		
	Number	Per cent
Less than one year	0	0
1-2 years	12	9
2-4 years	31	22
4-6 years	32	23
6-8 years	10	7
8-10 years	18	13
More than 10 years	34	24
Don't know	2	1

Base: all respondents (139)

Telephone interviews

Interview design

The telephone interviews aimed to bring together councillor views and reflections on the training and support they had received and how it had helped them. In particular, they were asked about their training aims, any specific impacts of the training in relation to the Political Skills Framework, any examples of being better equipped to deal with specific leadership issues or challenges and if they would recommend the training to others. They were also asked to provide suggestions about how the training and support could be developed or improved in the future (see Annex C for a full list of questions).

Sample

All councillors who took part in the online survey were invited to put forward their name for a telephone interview to further explore their experience and perceptions of the leadership programme(s) they had attended. Eighty three of the 139 respondents said they would be willing to take part.

Twelve councillors were selected on the basis of their responses to the online survey. In particular, those who gave specific examples of how the LGA's training had impacted on a particular core skill (as highlighted in the Political Skills Framework) were selected. The sample also included one councillor who said that her development was less than she had hoped. Two councillors were selected per core skill (i.e. two councillors who had given interesting feedback about 'local leadership' or 'communication skills' etc.).

Interviews took place in July and August 2016.

Interviewee details

The sample was designed to be evenly distributed (as far as possible with a small sample) across gender, type of authority, government region, political party and time in office. It included:

- Six women and six men.
- Six chairpersons or cabinet/lead members, three opposition leaders, one leader, one deputy leader and one backbench councillor.
- Six unitary authorities, two counties, two metropolitan districts, one district authority and one London borough.
- Four authorities in the South East, two in the South West, and one authority from the East of England, East Midlands, Greater London, West Midlands and Yorkshire and Humber.
- Four Labour councillors, three Conservative councillors, three Liberal Democrat councillors, one Green councillor and one independent councillor.

For a full breakdown of the sample see Annex D.

Programmes attended

Table 3: Programmes attended by telephone interviewees					
Cllr	Leadership Academy	Leadership Essentials	Focus on Leadership	Next Generation	The Leaders' Programme
Councillor 1		Yes			
Councillor 2	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Councillor 3				Yes	
Councillor 4		Yes			
Councillor 5					Yes
Councillor 6				Yes	
Councillor 7				Yes	
Councillor 8				Yes	
Councillor 9	Yes				
Councillor 10		Yes			
Councillor 11		Yes	Yes	Yes	
Councillor 12			Yes		

Notes

Please note the following when reading the report:

- Where tables and figures report the base, the description in brackets refers to the group of councillors who were asked the question. The number provided refers to the number who answered each question. Please note that bases vary throughout the survey.
- Throughout the report percentages in figures and tables may add to more than 100 per cent due to rounding.

Full Results

This section outlines the full set of survey results.

Councillors' objectives

Survey feedback

'Developing one's capacity to lead' and 'to network and learn from other councillors' were the most common objectives among respondent councillors, in taking up the LGA's Political Leadership Development Offer – 81 per cent, in each case (see Table 4).

	Number	Per cent
To develop my capacity to lead	113	81
To refresh or sharpen my leadership skills	58	42
To share my experiences with others	44	32
To network and learn from other councillors	112	81
To learn about the latest developments	62	45
To work with others on the big issues facing the sector	46	33
To explore and test new ways of working	73	53
Other ⁴	10	7

Base: all respondents (139)

Thirty four per cent of respondent councillors said their goals in taking up the LGA's Offer had been 'fully achieved' and 61 per cent said their goals had been 'largely achieved' (see Table 5).

	Number	Per cent
Fully achieved (met all goals)	47	34
Largely achieved (met most goals)	85	61
Partially achieved (met some goals)	7	5
Not achieved (no goals met)	0	0

Base: all respondents (139)

Interview feedback

The 12 councillors who were interviewed about their training experiences were asked to provide some details about their goals. The two most commonly mentioned goals were networking with a group of people in a common situation, and sharing

⁴ Other responses were: "Focus on planning leadership"; "To deal better with the press"; "It was mainly to learn more about the specific statutory and other roles as lead member for children"; "To learn about systems leadership"; "To investigate the political landscape of modern times I was a councillor 30 years ago"; "To get a qualification pending losing my position"; "To better understand the psychology of Leadership"; "Understand leadership in a political role"; "To understand my leadership style"; and "To learn about planning as I thought I knew little".

one's experiences or learning with other authorities. One respondent summarised this by saying: "I found it quite illuminating with people who were similarly-minded and had a lot of ideas about how to change things." Other goals were: developing effectiveness as a councillor; gaining confidence; improving public speaking skills; accumulating knowledge; and having time to reflect.

Some respondents said they were in a new role or position, thus were attending specific courses to acquire the specific knowledge needed to be effective in this new role/position. Others sought reassurance through the training that their current understanding was correct.

Councillors also said they welcomed the opportunity to gain a new perspective, for example, mixing with those in leadership roles or with opposition councillors. One respondent said: "I was just interested in what I would feel as a non-leader. I'm not a cabinet member for Children's Services. I was interested in the substance of what people had to say who were in charge of Children's Services as opposed to me not being in charge." Similarly, others hoped the training would help them in their role of communicating with others, approaching problems effectively, and developing more productive ways of working.

Gaining knowledge and learning from experienced trainers was also mentioned. One councillor said of a course leader: "We could relate to what she had been doing in her career, as well as seeing what we could take forward in ours. It informed me."

The perceived quality of LGA training was mentioned by one councillor who had been seeking training in a specific area, saying: "The LGA training provided a safety net rather than me going off and possibly prescribing myself to a training course elsewhere where I couldn't be sure there would necessarily be any value added."

Confidence and Wider Impacts

Confidence

Sixty per cent of respondents replied ‘a great extent’ when asked about the extent to which they felt more confident in their role as a councillor, having participated in the LGA’s Leadership Development Programmes. A further 36 per cent said they felt more confident ‘to a moderate extent’ (see Table 6).

Table 6: Overall, taking into consideration all your responses, to what extent do you feel more confident in your role as a councillor, having participated in the LGA’s Political Leadership Development Programme(s)?

	Number	Per cent
To a great extent	84	60
To a moderate extent	50	36
To a small extent	4	3
Not at all	1	1
Don’t know	0	0

Base: all respondents (139)

Support resulting in wider impacts

The 12 councillors who were interviewed by telephone were asked to describe some of the wider impacts of attending the leadership programme (specific impacts are reported later). For their own council, responses included: having more understanding of, and a more constructive approach to, commissioning; incentivisation as a technique to increase motivation and re-energising others; the importance of providing evidence to support an argument; and further developing one’s ability to ask better questions and public speaking skills.

Increased confidence had enabled some councillors to play a greater part in council meetings, in terms of influencing debate, expressing their opinions and putting ideas forward. One councillor said: “...the [Leaders’] course has given me the confidence to behave in a more leader-like way, being less tentative and more proactive.”

Relatedly, training in public speaking and good communicating were highlighted as insightful and resilience-building. One councillor recalled how the training had benefitted him when addressing a potentially hostile/unsupportive council meeting: “The [Next Generation] training provided practise and tools to construct the best speech you can, and some of the back-up for that like [controlled] breathing and confidence.”

The Myers-Briggs personality work undertaken by councillors on the ‘Next Generation’ and ‘Focus on Leadership’ programmes also had a wider impact for some councillors. They said that learning about different personality types – and ways to communicate effectively with these – had led to a greater understanding of

the ways other people think. This, in turn, had benefitted their working relationships with group leaders and also councillors from other parties.

Mentoring was also viewed positively by some councillors who suggested that being supported by another colleague had helped them plan and structure their work, to the benefit of their council more widely.

Additionally, using social media to communicate with, and to inform people, along with the importance of increased listening and speaking to residents was also raised. One councillor, who attended the Leadership Academy, spoke about how the programme focused on 'the voice of the people' and had encouraged her to look at things a little differently in her role as a politician. She said:

“One of the things I have done since the course is to let people know I am there to help them and that is my role as a councillor. I have actually started setting up some voluntary groups’ tea and bingo – to combat isolation. This is not really to do with my portfolio but it is to do with my ward.”

Building networks

The 12 councillors interviewed by telephone were asked if the programme/s they had attended had helped them to build networks for informal support. Those who attended residential courses were more likely to have developed helpful connections than those attending day-long training.

Networking may have been more incidental than a key feature of one's attendance; “a by-product of being there”, as one councillor said. Others said that although networking during the course had been valuable, they had not actively pursued their contacts once the course had ended. One councillor articulated this saying: “I haven't really used the networks from the course subsequently, but I did find it very useful and interesting interacting with others at the time.” The various geographic locations of attendees, along with workload issues, were given as reasons for a lack of subsequent networking.

Networking both on the course and afterwards was, nonetheless, viewed positively. One councillor said; “What you are being taught is one thing and how people are reacting to it and contributing to it with their experience is also very valuable.” The same councillor also mentioned the benefits of listening to the views of others from different areas around the country.

Some councillors had further developed the relationships generated at the various training events. Some spoke about the development of WhatsApp and/or Twitter groups to retain contact with fellow attendees. These networks were described by one councillor as providing “...an invaluable way of discussing things” and “a confidential, ideas-sharing space”.

The LGA conference also provided interviewees with the opportunity to catch-up and re-connect with contacts from their respective programme/s. One councillor spoke about the value he now placed on networking as a result of The Next Generation course, saying:

“I went to the LGA Conference this year, mostly due to having gone last year [as part of the Next Generation training]. This year, different evenings catching up with members of the network and chatting to them about what’s happening. And, I’m going to [name of party] conference which I haven’t been to for about 10 years...I’m actually looking forward to meeting up with the gang again and finding out what they’ve been doing and see how other people’s careers are going. It’s [networking] something I hadn’t identified or thought of beforehand. You don’t realise how important those networks and contacts are until you have it and you think how did I live without it?”

Similarly, another councillor mentioned that she had continued networking after her training had finished by having regular meetings with her counterpart in another authority. She said, prior to the course, this would never have occurred to her nor would she have had the confidence to do it.

Local Leadership

Survey feedback

Forty seven per cent of respondent councillors said they had seen ‘a great amount’ of improvement in their ability to ‘building partnerships with others’ as a result of the LGA’s training. Otherwise, the largest proportion of respondent councillors said their local leadership skills had improved ‘a moderate amount’ as a result of the training, as highlighted in Table 7.

Table 7: Below are a series of statements about local leadership. Please indicate how much, if at all, you feel the LGA’s training has improved your skills in these areas:

	A great amount		A moderate amount		A small amount		Not at all		N/A	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Engaging with all sections of the community	26	19	85	61	21	15	3	2	4	3
Canvassing opinion from all sections of the community	19	14	84	60	28	20	4	3	4	3
Looking for new ways of representing people	43	31	65	47	23	17	3	2	5	4
Keeping up-to-date with local concerns	38	27	68	49	23	17	5	4	5	4
Being seen as approachable	46	33	58	42	22	16	7	5	6	4
Building partnerships with others	65	47	61	44	6	4	3	2	4	3
Acting as a mediator	34	24	71	51	23	17	7	5	4	3
Championing others’ needs	36	26	70	50	23	17	6	4	4	3

Base: all respondents (139)

Survey examples

The 139 respondents who took part in the online survey were asked to provide specific examples of how the training they had received from the LGA had improved their skills in local leadership. Eighty nine councillors provided a wide range of examples. The most common themes are shown in Figure 1, along with some illustrative examples (the higher the theme, the more times it was mentioned).

Interview feedback

Specific examples

The telephone interviews involved asking two councillors to elaborate on the feedback given about a particular core skill in survey responses. The comments given about local leadership are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Examples of local leadership	
<p>The Leaders' Programme</p> <p>Councillor 5</p>	<p>Survey comment: <i>"I have been far more proactive in engaging with the other group leaders...and this is specifically due to the tools given on the course which gives more confidence in techniques to use."</i></p> <p>Interview feedback: <i>"I found this course useful because I have tended to think I have really got to make this work and actually now I have been more relaxed now in that realisation that this is never going to work so don't expend unnecessary on it. I found that the most useful thing – not to beat myself up over things."</i></p> <p>This councillor was confident that various exercises learned on The Leaders' Programme were embedded in her working practices. She said all of the programme was useful, but particularly the use of diagrams to illustrate different personality types.</p> <p>The councillor said this exercise had developed greater understanding of how to strengthen relationships with individuals who were clearly co-operative and proactive, but had also helped with managing a relationship with somebody more difficult.</p> <p>The exercise had helped the councillor focus on how to work with proactive individuals, and to get the best from a situation while not wasting energy in areas where one was never going to move forward.</p>
<p>The Next Generation</p> <p>Councillor 8</p>	<p>Survey comment: <i>"It [the training] has helped me take on a committee chair role for the Group; present a party motion effectively at Full Council; review my leadership ambitions and path."</i></p> <p>Interview feedback: The councillor said the Myers-Briggs personality assessment, and the 360-degree feedback process, proved particularly helpful when presenting a motion at full Council (the first motion he had ever presented) – which took place a few days after completing the public speaking element of The Next Generation programme.</p> <p>More broadly, the councillor said both the Myers-Briggs training and the 360-degree feedback had helped to break-down the tactical/teamwork alliance-side of councillors' work.</p> <p>He added, prior to the training, he had viewed himself more as a deputy leader than a leader but The Next Generation programme had been particularly helpful in learning about influencing skills, and the attributes needed to succeed in council leadership.</p>

Interview feedback

The 12 councillors who were interviewed by telephone were asked for examples of how they had become better equipped to deal with specific leadership issues or challenges as a result of attending their respective leadership programmes.

Working with others was a common theme. For instance, one councillor mentioned being encouraged to think about the strengths and weaknesses of others and to accommodate those, saying: "Some people are more forensic or scientific they can get roles of research... some are more extrovert and give them lead spokespeople roles, talk to the press, and take on those challenges." Another said The Leaders' Programme had given pointers about how better to deal with people, form alliances and get things done. She said:

"Through listening to other leaders. When they were talking about worrying about things I was thinking, I used to worry about that but actually I know how to deal with that and I have dealt with that and it gave me the confidence to think actually you can do it." Councillor 5

Developing one's understanding of different styles and methods of communication to maximise effectiveness was also mentioned. One councillor gave an example of putting this into practice:

"I go to the meetings and represent my group and make sure I communicate with everybody and I use a style that they like. For example, some people prefer a call, others an email. So, it's a case of understanding the different preferences as well. But, I think if you communicate and are open, you can work well together as a group." Councillor 6

Gaining confidence in using new communication techniques through which to lead more effectively also featured in feedback. For instance, speaking about chairing skills, one councillor said: "I now realise that techniques for chairing are really important. I probably had been quite worried about that and I now feel more confident." Another said more generally:

"I never said very much in council unless I was asked a question or had an announcement. I didn't challenge political views when I first started and I have done that since. I questioned a [name of party] member recently on the validity of some information ...whereas before I would have waited until afterwards and emailed her saying I didn't agree. But now I will say it in public because I learnt I have a voice and I have learnt to use it now." Councillor 9

Another councillor, who had attended two programmes, spoke about how she had further developed skills in communicating with officers – and how this was bringing about some changes in culture. She had worked with her LGA mentor on developing effective councillor-officer relations, particularly when planning and developing

strategies. She was now asking more questions of officers, and they in turn were asking her about desired outcomes. This councillor added that, for the Adult Social Care course she attended, it would have been useful for her senior officer to also attend – to consider how they work together, where they should be focusing their efforts and issues for the future.

Finally, one councillor talked about the RADA training that he had received on the Next Generation programme. He said that although this had been challenging for him, and uncomfortable at times, it had helped him to gain a better understanding of his strengths. He said:

“The lady who was running the RADA had us lying on the floor, very uncomfortable, but it was all about controlling your breathing and making sure people understand what you are saying because I think I went recognising the fact that I can write a great argument...I can do that well. But when I speak, I struggle to distance myself between my home life and my professional life at times. I have strong regional accent and you sometimes talk too quickly and they gave us tips on how to resolve that. That was useful because you can only win an argument if people can understand what you are saying.”

Councillor 3

Partnership Working

Survey feedback

Forty-three per cent of respondent councillors reported that the LGA’s training had improved, to ‘a great amount’, their skills in ‘maintaining good relationships with colleagues and contacts’. A similar number (42 per cent) said their skills in ‘developing networks and partnerships’ to ‘a great amount’. Further to this, between 47 and 56 per cent said they had improved their skills to ‘a moderate amount’ in all the leadership areas described in Table 8.

Table 8: Below are a series of statements about partnership working. Please indicate how much, if at all, you feel the LGA’s training has improved your skills in these areas:

	A great amount		A moderate amount		A small amount		Not at all		N/A	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Maintaining good relationships with colleagues and contacts	60	43	67	48	8	6	2	1	2	1
Helping others to build partnerships	47	34	75	54	12	9	2	1	3	2
Supporting and empowering others	51	37	75	54	7	5	3	2	3	2
Valuing and including people from different backgrounds	46	33	78	56	9	6	1	1	5	4
Developing networks and partnerships	59	42	65	47	11	8	1	1	3	2
Staying calm and focused under pressure	48	35	68	49	17	12	2	1	4	3
Engaging with all relevant groups within your ward	34	24	77	55	17	12	5	4	6	4
Being able to accept criticism and admit to being wrong	35	25	75	54	16	12	7	5	6	4

Base: all respondents (139)

Survey examples

The 139 councillors who responded to the online survey, were asked to provide specific examples of how the training they had received from the LGA had improved their skills in partnership working. Eighty nine provided a variety of examples. The most common themes are shown in Figure 2, along with some illustrative examples (the higher the theme, the more times it was mentioned).

Figure 2: Examples of putting partnership working skills into practice

Theme	Example
Local action New ways of working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“I’ve lead a group of parishes to fund and run a local bus service.”</i> - <i>“Working with a local community group on a redevelopment programme to ensure other community views are heard.”</i> - <i>“Working with sports teams representatives to further their working more closely to get better facilities as a ward group rather than individual clubs.”</i> - <i>“We have an issue with lack of Broadband in rural areas and actively pulling together suppliers, parish councils and other interested parties in to a clearer understanding of how we need to get to 100% Superfast coverage in our largely rural area (we are now winning!).”</i> - <i>“We now have a partnership with four district councils looking at ways we can pool CLI [Community Infrastructure Levy], but keeping our own independence.”</i> - <i>“We have connected with all local groups that work in two wards joined by a road and have meetings that effect both areas in order to work with PCSO [Police Community Support Officer], Police, other voluntary groups and Neighbourhood Watches giving us a better in sight about what is needed to meet the needs of local people.”</i>
Joint working Partnership working Collective working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“Getting voluntary groups to work together to deliver solutions.”</i> - <i>“Chairing ward partnership meetings in my ward where the local communities, stakeholders, housing providers, street cleaning team, the police and local ward Councillors all meet quarterly to work in partnership, discuss and resolve local issues.”</i> - <i>“Working with the police and three tiers of local government to eliminate a local issue.”</i> - <i>“Got me to understand that the community is also a partner.”</i> - <i>“Greater awareness of internal and external partnership and the value of including partners from all sectors in the development of local solutions.”</i> - <i>“Introduced some action learning sets to informal meetings of cabinet so that we can collectively work on big issues together.”</i>
Inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“Listen to those with different skills.”</i> - <i>“I try more to listen to all views and engage with even those I would consider not to be colleagues rather than just colleagues.”</i> - <i>“The ‘wicked problems’ scenario has led me to being more universally engaged and has allowed me to better appreciate the needs and wants of all groups, not just the most vocal.”</i>
Confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“Confidence to forge new directions.”</i> - <i>“I work with officers of my local council to achieve an understanding of the big picture and how together it could be possible to solve issues. I also communicate with other council members to gauge a variety of ways they may have dealt with issues. Again, it is the development of my own confidence which grew during participation in The Next Generation course I attended.”</i> - <i>“It’s helped me to prepare my debate when presenting to full council and not be worried about challenge.”</i>
Cross-party working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“It has helped me consider the need to build cross party alliances, where possible, on matters of common cause.”</i> - <i>“Have successfully engaged with opposition councillors on issues which are mutually beneficial.”</i>
Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“Since the training, I have put more effort into attending events, finding out who does what and where and passing that information to those who need it.”</i> - <i>“I am attending more business networking events and have taken a role on our local housing association board and provided a number of links at the officer level.”</i>

Interview feedback

Two councillors who took part in the online survey were asked to elaborate on their comments about partnership working. Their comments are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Examples of partnership working	
<p>Leadership Essentials, Focus on Leadership, Leadership Academy</p> <p>Councillor 2</p>	<p>Survey comment: <i>“Better working relationship within party structures and much more proactive in seeking meetings with developers, police, etc.”</i></p> <p>Interview feedback: The councillor said, while ‘partnership working’ was covered in the Leadership Academy, there was scope for more emphasis to be given – or room for a stand-alone course. He said:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“The actual work of influencing partners, more joint work with health etc., it’s becoming increasingly part of the council’s work. And also the leader’s [work] is a lot less control and demand, and a lot more about influencing.”</i></p> <p>He added that partnership working – and influencing key partners – was increasingly becoming part of councillors’ work (aside from being involved in party structures) and ‘getting it right’ was ‘important for the future’. He also said ‘working more innovatively’ with others was an area for further development, for example, on devolution or business rates.</p>
<p>Focus on Leadership</p> <p>Councillor 12</p>	<p>Survey feedback: <i>“I found the sessions on personality types extremely helpful in making me understand my own way of working and how that interacts with the way other people like to work.”</i></p> <p>Interview feedback: This councillor said Focus on Leadership was particularly useful in helping her understand, and be sympathetic to, the ways in which other people think about things. She said it had helped her to be more patient and understanding towards the ways others approach problems and projects.</p>

Communication Skills

Survey feedback

The largest proportion of councillors said their communication skills had improved to ‘a moderate amount’ (55 per cent) as a result of the LGA’s training (see Table 9). Approximately a third said their skills in the following areas had improved ‘a great amount’ as a result on the LGA’s training:

- ‘Using different methods to communicate’ (37 per cent)
- ‘Feeling confident when speaking in public’ (35 per cent)
- ‘Listening well and adapting to others’ (34 per cent)
- ‘Delivering unpopular messages’ (32 per cent)

Table 9: Below are a series of statements about communication skills. Please indicate how much, if at all, you feel the LGA’s training has improved your skills in these areas:

	A great amount		A moderate amount		A small amount		Not at all		N/A	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Regularly communicating with different sections of the community	33	24	77	55	22	16	2	1	5	4
Using different methods to communicate	51	37	59	42	19	14	5	4	5	4
Listening well and adapting to others	47	34	71	51	13	9	3	2	5	4
Feeling comfortable using technology to communicate with people	37	27	66	47	20	14	9	6	7	5
Feeling confident when speaking in public	49	35	56	40	21	15	6	4	7	5
Creating more opportunities to communicate with different sectors	34	24	80	58	15	11	5	4	5	4
Communicating clearly in spoken and written forms	41	29	64	46	20	14	8	6	6	4
Delivering unpopular messages	45	32	62	45	17	12	8	6	7	5

Base: all respondents (139)

Survey feedback

Those who took part in the online survey, were asked to provide specific examples of how the training they had received from the LGA had improved their communication skills. Ninety five councillors provided examples. The most common themes are shown in Figure 4 along with some illustrative examples (the higher the theme, the more times it was mentioned).

Figure 4: Examples of putting communication skills into practice

Theme	Example
Using technology and social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>"Thinking a lot more before I post on social media."</i> - <i>"I am now using Twitter to communicate public health messages effectively and link with other professionals and politicians in this field."</i> - <i>"Adopted new communication platforms and been more aware of how online communications are managed."</i> - <i>"Honing communication/multimedia skills via radio/television and through micro-teaching."</i>
General confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>"I accepted doing a TV news interview for Health and Adult Social Care about whistleblowing. I have no previous experience in this area and the training enabled me to handle it well and with confidence."</i> - <i>"I am more comfortable and confident speaking publically and better able to do so off the top of my head when required to do so. Before I was uncomfortable unless very fully prepared and almost scripted."</i> - <i>"I'm much more comfortable with door knocking now and I embrace every opportunity to get my message out. I have a high amount of elderly in my ward and they do appreciate the personal interaction and being listened to."</i> - <i>"Before the course I struggled to speak in public. Now however I feel much more confident and happy to speak and air my views."</i> - <i>"I have sound communication skills but the enhanced confidence from this training is empowering."</i>
Listening and tolerance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>"Better at listening to people I disagree with...More willingness to present policies in a way that pulls people along, rather than simply stating my view and expecting others to agree."</i> - <i>"I am now more open about what my role is within the Council. I am not there to solve people's problems but to help them solve their problems in their own ways."</i> - <i>"I have discovered the power of face-to-face talk, and the need to be quiet and listen. My relationships with the individual members of my Group is much improved. I have also learnt more from them than I thought I would."</i> - <i>"I have excellent communications. However, before the course I thought I knew what people want but the I can now see that I need to listen more and get better examples of what they need and help them to help themselves."</i>
Public speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>"The skills I've learned have helped me speak more effectively at Council debates."</i>
New communication tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>"I have instigated a regular news letter to my group about my portfolio and asked them to hold me account to keep it regular. I'm about to launch a similar system about the leadership."</i> - <i>"We have produced a ward newsletter to go out monthly to all local communities and residents in the ward. Social Networks have been used as well to communicate and reach out to residents and the communities."</i> - <i>"Do a regular blog for a local free paper and have opened it up for the councillors to do in turn."</i>
Positive language and body language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>"I have become much more aware of using positive language."</i> - <i>"I can 'read' others a little better now and adapt my communication style accordingly e.g. when dealing with a piece of casework I was able to see that I was being 'stalled' and deflected and so I changed my approach to achieve the outcome that was required."</i> - <i>"The RADA training in Next Generation Module was a revelation and tips and techniques learned have been invaluable in my role. I also liked the psychology of communications modules – understanding colours and information different people listened for in presentations i.e. vision, process, facts, people."</i>

Interview feedback

Two councillors who took part in the online survey were selected to elaborate on their comments about communication skills. Their comments are shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Examples of communication skills	
<p>Next Generation Councillor 3</p>	<p>Survey comment: <i>“Personality type training and RADA training has revolutionised the way I approach public speaking and arguments.”</i></p> <p>Interview feedback: The coaching on personality types within the Next Generation was new to this councillor. He said about grouping of delegates’ personalities into colours:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“I was very much a ‘blue’ meaning my arguments are presented, and I like to hear arguments, through facts and figures and that is the way I am convinced, and that’s the way I expect to convince people.”</i></p> <p>He said, through the training, he realised that his approach to working clashed with people of an ‘opposite’ colour. He gave this example:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“In my council, I was arguing that we have to implement the adult social care levy. I would have previously presented this as a fact-based argument: ‘We are £X million short and we need to do this because it raises £1m.’ But, it was explained in the training that that’s a cold way of looking at things and wouldn’t convince someone who was ‘red’ or ‘green’. The way to convince them, still telling the truth, would be to say: ‘Think about how this would impact on an elderly resident in your area’, as opposed to just thinking about the money. That did change things. Now, when I present an argument, I try to tick the boxes of each coloured groups a bit more, to get more aspects into why you should make the decision, not just the financial aspect.”</i></p>
<p>Focus on Leadership, Leadership Essentials (x4), Next Generation Councillor 11</p>	<p>Survey comment: <i>“The sessions didn’t really allow for time to improve oneself, especially to work on our own weaknesses.”</i></p> <p>Interview feedback: This councillor gave some examples of where the courses had been useful, specifically case studies and training on public speaking. However, overall, she would have liked more time for self-reflection, and more space to think about areas where she might need to improve and also how she could best demonstrate her own self-improvement.</p> <p>She added that, apart from a session on ‘getting your message across’, limited time was given for thinking about one’s own improvement. She said working on aspects of ‘how I have changed’ were left to evening/break-out sessions, or having conversations with other delegates.</p>

Political Understanding

Survey feedback

Forty five per cent of respondent councillors said their skills in ‘working well with people who hold different views and values’ had improved ‘a great amount’ as a result of the LGA’s training – a greater proportion than said ‘a moderate amount’. For all other statements within the ‘political understanding’ skill set between 43 and 58 per cent of respondent councillors said their skills had improved ‘a moderate amount’ (see Table 10).

Table 10: Below are a series of statements about political understanding. Please indicate how much, if at all, you feel the LGA’s training has improved your skills in these areas:

	A great amount		A moderate amount		A small amount		Not at all		N/A	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Promoting democracy and increasing public engagement	40	29	80	58	15	11	0	0	4	3
Building cohesion between members of your own group	58	42	61	44	11	8	5	4	4	3
Working effectively in other political environments (e.g. outside the council)	52	37	68	49	12	9	2	1	5	4
Clearly communicating political values through canvassing and campaigning	45	32	68	49	15	11	6	4	5	4
Actively developing your own political intelligence	53	38	66	47	9	6	5	4	6	4
Working well with people who hold different views and values	62	45	60	43	12	9	2	1	3	2
Gaining better knowledge of the council’s values and objectives	44	32	69	50	16	12	5	4	5	4
Translating group values into ways of helping the community	42	30	73	53	15	11	3	2	6	4

Base: all respondents (139)

Survey feedback

Those who responded to the online survey, were asked to provide specific examples of how the training they had received from the LGA had improved their skills in political understanding. Eighty two councillors provided a wide range of examples. The most common themes are shown in Figure 6 along with some illustrative examples (the higher the theme, the more times it was mentioned).

Figure 6: Examples of putting political understanding skills into practice

Theme	Example
'Insight, empathy and a wider perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Really enjoyed the opportunity to work with a range of cross party delegates which helped demystify my political preconceptions and break down political party barriers. These new friendships enabled us to have open political debates and insights [and understand] each other's political motivations. The experience was very positive and our friendships have continued post programme."</i> - <i>The course encouraged me to think differently and not along party lines – and for that I am eternally grateful."</i> - <i>I believe that the LGA's training, particularly through sessions with [name of trainer] have developed my political understanding. Moreover, the perhaps greatest tool I have gained from the LGA in this regard has been the ability to network and discuss ideas with the next generation cohort in which I took part. This enables me to compare and contrast the challenges I face in local government with other, often radically different, areas. In such ways I have developed my political knowledge and understanding on a level not possible without the next generation programme."</i> - <i>I have broadened my view on how others think and hence better placed to respond accordingly. In a particular case relating to decision making on allocation of priorities I have used my skills to emphasise the political direction I felt we should be taking with positive effect."</i>
'Understanding of working with opposition and others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>"Working with Councillors from other political parties and not viewing them as the 'enemy' to achieve common objectives."</i> - <i>"Working with members from different ends of the political spectrum to achieve common goals. E.g. working...on the establishment of regional adoption agencies."</i> - <i>Fundamentally people should be councillors first and party members last. I have developed better cross-party relationships than with some in my own party."</i> - <i>"This area was the strongest need for me. Through this course it has helped me to recognise the need to build and to sustain positive political relationships with others - as far as this is possible."</i>
Knowledge of political issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>"I've learned to capitalise on 'grey areas' of the impact of policies from central to local government in order to gain cross party support e.g. motions on notice that would be very difficult for others to disagree with."</i> - <i>"The political skills of the trainers were invaluable."</i> - <i>"Yes I research and read all weekly bulletins and think about how I translate those messages to constituents and what is relevant to those I represent. I am now extremely confident in sharing grassroots views with Westminster colleagues so that they understand why people feel disconnected."</i> - <i>"I have gained a greater understanding of the link between my parties national and local objectives. I have utilised this to apply for funding for a newly created women's forum to encourage more local women into politics and political activism. Something I am very proud of."</i>
New ways of working and local action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>"I have developed a better scheme with regard to developing the local plan and consulting and bringing the community with me. I.e. getting them to make the decision."</i> - <i>"I am also about to instigate one-to-one meetings with all members of my group, to gain feedback about their issues and look for feedback from them about my leadership."</i> - <i>"We have had some particularly trying devolution negotiations and I was able to remain above the fray and be seen as an honest broker. I think the Leadership course helped in this."</i> - <i>"Helping to set up a new Friends Group for Labour to encourage my community to be empowered and engaged with politics."</i>

Interview feedback

Two councillors, who took part in the online survey, were selected to elaborate on their comments about improvements to their political understanding. Their comments are shown in Figure 7:

Figure 7: Examples of political understanding	
<p>Leadership Essentials</p> <p>Councillor 1</p>	<p>Survey comment: <i>“Since becoming Group Leader, I have taken time to work with colleagues, understand and support their programmes – and through that build a team with capacity and cohesion.”</i></p> <p>Interview feedback: This councillor said, while councillors bring a broad range of skills and life experience to the job, there are always areas where they are not expert. For him, commissioning and procurement was a weak point. He described a procurement issue, which ended agreeably, whereby councillor-officer relations had become strained. He described his frustration in not knowing the right questions to ask in order to fully examine the advice being given:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>“...it was one of those things where I wouldn’t have known any better [about the advice provided by officers] but I felt irritated for not asking ‘who is giving you that advice, where did you get that from, how do you know that is the right advice?’.</i></p> <p>He was keen to attend the Leadership Essentials course on commissioning to develop his skills in this area, and also learn from others. He said:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>“One of the great things I find, when you go to one of these events, is there are people who are doing good things, who you can learn from, and people from a smallish group who are willing to say ‘that didn’t work and if I was doing it again, I would do, this, this and this’. I find that so invaluable.”</i></p> <p>He added that, being an opposition councillor, he wanted to be a position whereby he could ask informed questions. And, if or indeed when he does achieve a leadership role, he wanted to be in a good position to challenge the council’s commissioning approach going forward, in terms of being innovative and also getting good value for money.</p>
<p>Leadership Academy</p> <p>Councillor 9</p>	<p>Survey comment: <i>“I now feel confident about my political values and I am able to communicate them to fellow politicians and the general public. I have had to canvas for two elections since taking the course and was very confident about how I speak to people on the doorstep and in public places. I also read more about politics for background understanding.”</i></p> <p>Interview feedback: The councillor said she felt more confident about her political values and communicating them to others, as a result of attending the LGA’s Leadership Academy. She had only been a councillor for a year when she was made a cabinet member, and the course was helpful to her as an early-career politician. She said of the course:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>“It didn’t matter who you voted for, or what persuasion you were, one of the biggest things I found [about the course] was it gave me more confidence talking to other authorities. There was a real mix of authorities –</i></p>

	<p><i>metropolitan, large city councils – a whole plethora. So, it was partly that as well that gave me more confidence that when I was speaking, people actually understood what I meant and I got their experiences of situations too.”</i></p>
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Scrutiny and Challenge

Survey feedback

The largest proportion of councillors said the skills they needed to scrutinise and challenge in their day-to-day role had improved ‘a moderate amount’ since taking part in the LGA’s training (between 45 and 55 per cent). Of all the statements provided to councillors about scrutiny and challenge, 40 per cent said their skills had improved ‘a great amount’ in relation to ‘presenting arguments that are always concise, meaningful and easily understood’ (see Table 11).

Table 11: Below are a series of statements about scrutiny and challenge. Please indicate how much, if at all, you feel the LGA’s training has improved your skills in these areas:

	A great amount		A moderate amount		A small amount		Not at all		N/A	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Engaging in scrutiny as an everyday part of your role	35	25	70	50	19	14	7	5	8	6
Understanding of the scrutiny process	35	25	63	45	22	16	10	7	9	6
Identifying areas for scrutiny	36	26	68	49	19	14	7	5	9	6
Ensuring that citizens and communities are involved in the scrutiny process	26	19	67	48	27	19	9	6	10	7
Dealing with new information	32	23	76	55	19	14	5	4	7	5
Being fair, objective and rigorous when challenging processes and people	53	38	64	46	12	9	5	4	5	4
Presenting arguments that are always concise, meaningful and easily understood	55	40	62	45	14	10	4	3	4	3
Being constructive in your criticism	52	37	63	45	16	12	4	3	4	3
Using scrutiny resources appropriately	30	22	62	45	23	17	11	8	13	9

Base: all respondents (139)

Survey feedback

Those who took part in the online survey, were asked to provide specific examples of how the training they had received from the LGA had improved their skills in scrutiny and challenge. Seventy seven councillors provided detailed examples. The most common themes are shown in Figure 8 along with some illustrative examples (the higher the theme, the more times it was mentioned).

Figure 8: Examples of putting scrutiny and challenge skills into practice

Theme	Example
Challenging others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“Challenge - immensely helpful session with the Chair of [a] LSCB. All about remembering to take a fresh look and push boundaries.”</i> - <i>“The training received around public speaking and personality types coupled with the increased political understanding received from the course has improved my skills in scrutiny and challenge and allowed me to fairly scrutinise colleagues' and officers' work a balanced manner.”</i> - <i>“It has helped on a scrutiny steering group that I sit on. It has made me look more closely at lines of questioning and how to look inside the answers given...not just accept the outward.”</i> - <i>“Concise guidance, sometimes reliant on the individual themselves but event made me more aware of being able to challenge on basic areas that held the most beneficial answers. All LAs are different, so differential input was worthwhile.”</i> - <i>As a portfolio holder I have gained a greater understanding of the importance of scrutiny to challenge and promote change, since the academy training I have begun meeting with chairs of scrutiny more regularly and have successfully encouraged and supported reviews into my portfolio as a positive move to support change and celebrate success.”</i> - <i>“I do more homework now on the subject matter. I try to be more concise with questioning. I'm less afraid to ask the stupid question. It's working progress.”</i>
Improved understanding of scrutiny process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“The course has helped [me] understand how the scrutiny process works and made me look more carefully for likely questions/queries.”</i> - <i>I no longer see scrutiny as something that goes on exclusively within a committee...I see it as a process of constant engagement and challenge, with the major considerations at a scrutiny committee. We can operate scrutiny as individual councillors as well as teams/committee members.</i> - <i>Most certainly developed my scrutiny input. Realise our officers welcome not resent scrutiny. My committee is nominated for a Municipal Journal award for scrutiny.”</i>
New ideas and ways of working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“Ideas on how to approach bringing items for scrutiny and the sort of items appropriate for scrutiny.”</i> - <i>“We now have more meaningful scrutiny.”</i> - <i>“Take the time to delve deeper.”</i> - <i>Developing a framework for scrutiny around Child Sexual Exploitation.”</i> - <i>Changed some scrutiny work to workshop style.”</i>
Asking questions, using information and evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“I am better able to interpret the information and data in the reports and to formulate more focuses questions.”</i> - <i>Provide examples as evidenced proof rather than a plain unsubstantiated answer.”</i> - <i>“As lead member able to ask pertinent question, assess arguments and provide good evidence to scrutiny committee.”</i>
Taking part in scrutiny	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“It is mostly in the area of being scrutinised that I have benefited, but I have deployed these skills in relation to other tiers in the devolution space.”</i> - <i>“I scrutinise the decisions of others more and also reflect on my own decisions.”</i> - <i>“Being subject to scrutiny concentrates the mind on your subject. I am content to accept reasonable amendments.”</i>

Interview feedback

Two councillors, who took part in the online survey, were asked to elaborate on their comments about improvements to their skills in scrutiny and challenge. Their comments are shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Examples of scrutiny and challenge	
<p>Leadership Essentials</p> <p>Councillor 4</p>	<p>Survey comment: <i>“Concise guidance, sometimes reliant on the individual themselves but event made me more aware of being able to challenge on basic areas that held the most beneficial answers. All LAs are different, so differential input was worthwhile.”</i></p> <p>Interview feedback: This recently-elected councillor, while not a Lead Member, sat on her council’s Schools, Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee. She had been encouraged to attend the course due to the valuable contributions she had made to the Committee. She said:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“...we need to know how to scrutinise and challenge...I’ve always said it, and I’ll always continue to say it, it always ends up the majority of accountability is leadership...it’s got to be watertight.”</i></p> <p>She said she regularly received data and information from officers, but needed the tools to decipher its quality, reliability and completeness. She said of the Leadership Essentials trainers:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“They gave guidance on finding out if you are asking the right questions and getting the right data...Children’s Services is pretty much the same all over, and being a larger authority doesn’t make any difference, the point is...the accountability should be there anyway.”</i></p>
<p>Leadership Essentials</p> <p>Councillor 10</p>	<p>Survey comment: <i>“I have learnt how to handle scrutiny questions as a portfolio holder.”</i></p> <p>Interview feedback: The councillor said he had benefitted from exploring key council relationships on the Leadership Essentials course, particularly the need for close working relationships between officers and portfolio holders. It had been helpful to learn more about the importance of engaging with officers and obtaining a sensible level of knowledge in order to deal with scrutiny questions. He said:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“The course helped me understand what the best level of relationship with staff would be and the importance of this – I was unsure of this as a new councillor.”</i></p>

Regulating and Monitoring

Survey feedback

Of the areas where ‘a great amount’ of improvement had been made to councillors’ skills in regulating and monitoring (i.e. the more judicial aspects of their role), 40 per cent selected the statement ‘seeking feedback or looking for opportunities for personal development’ (see Table 12). Aside from this, the largest proportion of respondent councillors said their skills had improved ‘a moderate amount’ following the LGA’s training (between 35 and 47 per cent).

Table 12: Below are a series of statements about regulating and monitoring. Please indicate how much, if at all, you feel the LGA’s training has improved your skills in these areas:

	A great amount		A moderate amount		A small amount		Not at all		N/A	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Understanding and acting on your judicial role	33	24	60	43	14	10	10	7	22	16
Basing your judgements on evidence	40	29	62	45	15	11	8	6	14	10
Effectively chairing meetings	44	32	55	40	12	9	10	7	18	13
Knowing enough about legal processes	23	17	65	47	22	16	12	9	17	12
Monitoring others to ensure progress	33	24	64	46	20	14	8	6	14	10
Seeking feedback or looking for opportunities for personal development	55	40	53	38	17	12	6	4	8	6
Meeting deadlines and balancing council life with other commitments	42	30	48	35	19	14	17	12	13	9

Base: all respondents (139)

Survey feedback

Those who took part in the online survey, were asked to provide specific examples of how the training they had received from the LGA had improved their skills in regulating and monitoring. Fifty four councillors provided examples. The most common themes are shown in Figure 10 along with some illustrative examples (the higher the theme, the more times it was mentioned).

Figure 10: Examples of putting regulating and monitoring skills into practice

Theme	Example
Time commitments and work-life balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Learning the things I do and do not need to do helped to regulate my time commitments." - "One module on the Leadership Academy really made me understand the benefit of having a healthy work life balance." - "Chatting to other councillors has helped me further with work-life balance, particularly balancing a political career as a councillor with a professional career."
Chairing meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "I have been able to successfully chair the Policy & Finance Committee & encouraged members to reference papers during in debate." - "I took over chairing [name of group] just after the course (in difficult circumstances) and held it together with a complete new team and some division." - "I think my chairing skills have improved, certainly I feel more confident in a chairing capacity now."
General confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Gained in confidence to build relationship with legal officers and engaged with Chairs of relevant committees." - "A better understanding of changes to Planning legislation. Confidence to ensure that evidence presented by Officers is challenged." - "Have a clearer grasp on legal and quasi-legal roles within the Council. I feel much more confident in dealing with issues."

Interview feedback

Two councillors, who took part in the online survey, were asked to elaborate on their comments about improvements to their skills in regulating and monitoring. Their comments are shown in Figure 11.

Figure 11: Examples of regulating and monitoring

<p>Next Generation Councillor 6</p>	<p>Survey comment: <i>"Balancing my time and meeting commitments and deadlines. The Myers Briggs training has really helped as my personality is not geared for organisation! I am now much more structured and understand how my personality impacts on others who are not like me and understanding MB is great for team building. One of the best things I have done with LGA."</i></p> <p>Interview feedback: Speaking about regulating and monitoring, the councillor said she had been able to 'revisit things' and 'track herself' a bit more as a result of the Next Generation course. For instance, temper her extrovert behaviour, and also listen more in the workplace (especially when meeting residents e.g. listening as their councillor, remaining neutral and open and acting as an advocate).</p>
<p>Next Generation Councillor 7</p>	<p>Survey comment: <i>"Being more trusting of officers and setting them tasks to achieve and supervising the result rather than trying to micromanage."</i></p> <p>Interview feedback: This councillor spoke about a change of administration at his council, which saw his party move to control after many years in opposition. He said this change had put a strain on councillor-officer relations:</p> <p><i>"...it took a lot of time to get their [officers'] heads around working for the council and administration, it's not about political parties, it's literally, when they were in that position [pre-election] they were working for that administration, now we are in administration it is about working with us. And understanding their motivation too."</i></p> <p>The councillor said the Next Generation course had focused on Maslow's motivation theory, which had helped him explore the motivations behind</p>

people's behaviour. He said:

"We did a lot around Maslow which was very useful for understanding that they [officers] are not trying to be deliberately awkward. It's more the way they have come up...it's their way of looking at things. So, it gave us a much better understanding of officer relations. It was one of the hardest things to get changed over when we came into administration."

Improvements and Recommendations

Recommending the programme

All 12 councillors who were interviewed said they would recommend to other members the course(s) they had attended. One remarked on the positivity he had drawn from attending The Next Generation course: "...it reenergises you to be around people who are driven and motivated and passionate about their areas." Another councillor who had attended several courses said: "It has been great for me and I don't think I would be where I am now without it." And, a further councillor said of The Leader's Programme: "Every penny you spend on the course is worth it."

Several interviewees noted that their course had particular value to younger and/or newer councillors and aspiring leaders. One councillor, however, acknowledged issues of timing and execution saying: "Some cabinet members have just come into post and some of the relevant courses have just ended." Another raised the issue of convincing colleagues to attend: "...getting people to come forward – who you believe are ready for it and who say they want to do – it can be an issue."

One councillor commented on the benefits taking away course materials, saying she had made these available to her colleagues: "I took all the information back to my group office and we had it all on the memory stick. I said 'anyone who wants to access that, it is good information'."

Some councillors said they would recommend their respective course(s) because of the networking opportunities presented, and the chance to learn from colleagues in other councils. The mixture of delegates was viewed positively. One said: "...it is really important to mix with other councillors and other authorities to see how things are done differently..." Another mentioned the benefits of having frank discussions with other delegates, saying of The Leadership Academy: "Yes, wholeheartedly [I would recommend] and I enjoyed it. It was really good and meeting the people I met. We were all very honest and what you say in the room stays there. It was so nice not to have to be on your guard all the time."

Other councillors praised specific elements of their respective course(s), including the course trainers, the event planning and the pace of the course. Using Warwick Conference Centre as a venue was also mentioned positively, as the high quality facilities had made councillors feel valued and appreciated. For instance, one councillor said:

“ [The trainer]...said ‘we want you to be here [at Warwick Conference Centre]. You are the best at what you do...So it was definitely nice to feel valued.”

Suggested improvements

The 12 councillors who were interviewed by telephone made various suggestions for developing the LGA’s Leadership Development Offer. Most comments focused on:

- distance travelled to attend events
- more targeted courses for specific groups and levels of experience
- more targeted and effective course advertising.

Several councillors referred to the long travel time needed to attend events. One councillor commented that the cost of attending events in London, at a time when councils are facing financial pressure, could discourage attendance. Another councillor requested “...a better balance of courses run in the North and the South” as the distance to the South of England was off-putting. It was suggested that more regional courses be introduced to avoid extended travelling (particularly for day-long courses), and also webinars to secure maximum participation.

The introduction of more targeted courses for specific groups was also suggested as an improvement. One councillor was keen to see the women-only courses saying:

“Women-only LGA courses would be very good, as we do face some challenges because it [local politics] is very male dominated... maybe a course to help you [female politicians] overcome those challenges...and maybe encouraging other women, or changing the culture because – to be frank – that culture in local government has been there for so long.”

The same councillor also suggested courses for minority groups. Others suggested running training specifically for new younger councillors, and some felt that attendance on courses early in one’s political career should be encouraged for maximum benefit. One councillor said: “It [Leadership Academy] is really good to do in your first year because you get to see so much about how councils work and how the officers work.” Related to this was a comment made about the level of teaching on the courses and the possibility of tailoring courses to different levels, suggesting a more advanced level for more experienced councillors.

Some councillors mentioned the need for more targeted and effective course advertising. For example, one suggestion was for stronger marketing to encourage attendance by new members. Another said that he found out about The Next Generation course through a counterpart in a neighbouring council. He said, without that recommendation, he wouldn’t have known about the course.

Further to these comments, one councillor spoke about the high quality trainers on the Leadership Essentials, and said it would be helpful to keep in touch with these colleagues. She also thought there was more opportunity for the trainers to encourage delegates to connect, otherwise it wouldn't happen.

"I took some business cards [from delegates], but I think, as a rule, we should all go in a room and all exchange cards straight away. Another colleague said 'York are doing something really good' and I said 'only weeks ago I [met] a councillor from York'. I happened to keep his card. Something really good came out of that."

She added:

"Left to ourselves, we won't do it [connect]. Say, 'why don't you mentor-up with somebody from the Leadership Academy or buddy-up, and even if you only send three emails in the next 12 months, just try and do it. Or there's a prompt, someone actually prompts us, because I won't do it unless someone prompted me. That would be a good thing. Instead of walking away from the event."

A range of other comments included: a focus on health; a more defined role for Next Generation delegates attending the LGA's conference; developing the LGA's mentoring offer; maintaining the level of media training; pairing Lead Members and officers at training sessions (to learn together in a safe environment); and having something tangible to take away at the end of a course.

Limited improvements

The online survey gave councillors the opportunity to report on the extent to which the LGA's training had improved their skills in the six core skill areas outlined in the Political Skills Framework. As shown in previous sections of this report, a small number of councillors indicated that they had improved 'a small amount' or 'not at all' (between nine and 36 depending on the sub-skill in question). The sub-skills receiving the highest number of 'a small amount' and 'not at all' responses were:

- **Local leadership:** 'Canvassing opinion from all sections of the community' – selected by 32 councillors
- **Partnership working:** 'Being able to accept criticism and admit being wrong' – selected by 23 councillors
- **Communication skills:** 'Feeling comfortable using technology to communicate with people' – selected by 29 councillors
- **Political understanding:** 'Gaining better knowledge of the council's values and objectives' – selected by 21 councillors
- **Scrutiny and challenge:** 'Using scrutiny resources appropriately' – selected by 34 councillors
- **Regulating and monitoring:** 'Meeting deadlines and balancing council life with other commitments' – selected by 36 councillors

These councillors who indicated that one or more sub-skills had improved 'a small amount' or 'not at all' were asked to briefly explain the reason for this choice. Between 28 and 55 councillors (depending on the core skill in question)

The main response given was that councillors felt their improvement in certain areas was limited because they were already skilled in these areas – what the training had done was add to these. For example, comments included:

"I am already skilled in these areas and have enhanced them through the course."

"The areas I ticked 'a small amount' for are areas I already felt I was strong at."

"These were areas where I feel that my skills had already been developed to a reasonably high standard."

The second most common response was that councillor thought the sub-skill in question was not covered on the course (for example, if they were on a specific Leadership Essentials course, such as planning or sport). Comments included:

"Not a key part of the course undertaken."

"Not really covered in great depth, but what was included was excellent."

"My LGA leadership training was restricted to planning. Consequently, it did little to influence my input to scrutiny."

"More on leadership not scrutiny. Though improving basic skills helped."

Other comments, made by fewer respondents included:

- Leadership events as **'top-ups', 'enhancers' or 'refreshers'** (linked to the response of 'already skilled') e.g. "These are areas I am already fully engaged in so the course helped but more in confirming my current approach rather than radically changing it", "The aspects of leadership training provided by the LGA allowed me to top-up robust study of community engagement" and "The course reaffirmed the rationale for continuing to do what I was doing".
- **Work-life balance** e.g. "I try hard to maintain a balance but at times issues, meetings and problems rear up to challenge that balance. Building in 'free' time in my diary so not overloaded" and "Virtually impossible to balance personal life with this role!"
- **Self-criticism** e.g. "I recognise my fault of not readily accepting criticism", "The 'small amount' refers to my ability to accept criticism. No amount of training would improve my ability to accept criticism of my work!" and "In some situations tensions are building and it can become difficult to remain in control of a situation however this is something I hope to work on".

- **Lack of opportunity to put into practice** what was learned at leadership events (including difficult political situations) e.g. “These are areas that I find difficult and will have to put a lot more effort into in order to achieve. The training gave guidance, but now is trying to put it into practice”, “It is dependent on what you have had to do since [the training]” and “There are historical factions within the group. It is difficult to overcome these differences (which tend to be personality based, not politically driven)”.
- **Struggle with new technology** e.g. “Still not confident using social media. The training didn’t really add to the communication methods we already use in the Ward as local Councillors” and “I am confident using email and texts, I am not great at using the other social media communication formats”.

Further comments

Those who took part in the online survey were given the opportunity to add any additional comments about the impact that the leadership programme had had on their leadership behaviours, strategies, skills or mindset. The most commonly given feedback centred on key themes shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12: Additional feedback

Theme	Example
Sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“I think the whole experience has been enormously valuable from meeting others to engaging in the course. Being a cross party course was invaluable as well and the way political barriers were broken down by the end of the first weekend was brilliant as I think we all realised we had very similar challenges.”</i> - <i>“It was great to have the opportunity to meet with other leaders and hear insights in their presentations/speeches and to talk informally in the evenings. Also, good to hear fellow participants’ perceptions of their council leaders and to learn ‘how not to do it’.”</i> - <i>“Good to hear about how others went wrong as well as the success stories.”</i> - <i>“I think the Next Generation programme is hugely beneficial and informative and is a great way to build a network of members from across the country. Long may it continue.”</i> - <i>“Next Gen course was particularly good at improving the way I work within my group and with volunteers and within the council. Excellent for networking and for getting campaign ideas. And pushing me to do more social media. The 360 [degree] feedback was very helpful.”</i> - <i>“Difficult to pin down in the form of this survey but the courses challenge ones positions and force leaders to examine their basis to be in the leadership position. The networking with other leaders is hugely important.”</i> - <i>“LGA is well respected as is the venue (University of Warwick). It has been empowering to discuss the course with others and set up debates about challenging local issues. Other councillors have applied for the course on my recommendation and a culture of enabling and access to education has positively impacted on the organisation. Identifying the individual ‘currency’ that others value has helped to inform how to facilitate information giving and ‘buy in’ to suggestions. Some of my group find me even more of a challenge because I am more informed, assertive and talk to other parties and consult widely in the community. My work and success rate is high, mostly because the course has given</i>

	<i>me the confidence to use strategies and real councillor experiences to enhance decision making.”</i>
Increased confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“The leadership academy for me was a wonderful experience, as a new portfolio holder it gave me the confidence and skills to engage fully with my role, make difficult decisions and navigate the political landscape. It was without doubt some of the best training I have ever attended.”</i> - <i>“I feel more confident and empowered in my role down to both the training programme and the shared knowledge of other attending councillors.”</i> - <i>“[It] was a milestone in my political career and provided me with skills, knowledge and confidence to be given a cabinet position. And of course an amazing group of councillors to bounce ideas off. I would recommend this course to anyone wanting to be challenged.”</i>
Quality of programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“In terms of personal development the Leadership Academy is the best course I have ever done. It helped me understand my capabilities and gave me tools to manage difficult situations with officers and other Councillors. I may not always get it right but I know what good looks like. Effective opposition was a good opportunity to reflect on strategies and set priorities - maybe should be single party?”</i> - <i>“Excellent people delivering tools and techniques for us on the young councillors training course. Really helped. Don't think this survey has allowed me to show you the impact it had and how good it was.</i> - <i>“Incredibly helpful...”</i> - <i>“Fantastic training.”</i>
Self-awareness/ self-reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“The big thing was the learning on self-understanding and on understanding others. First time in a life time I have really had my strengths and weaknesses assessed.”</i> - <i>“I am more aware of the skills I need to improve on and the strategies I need to put in place.”</i> - <i>“I gained a huge amount from the training, it makes me realise how much there is to learn.”</i>
Recommend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“I would highly recommend it. The course has been very helpful and thanks to all those who took part.”</i>

Annex A: Response Breakdown

Response breakdown – programmes attended			
	Sample	Response Rate	
	N	N	%
Leadership Essentials (all programmes)	580	82	14
Leadership Essentials: Planning Programme	131	16	12
Leadership Essentials: Sport	74	4	5
Leadership Essentials: Children’s Services	71	13	18
Leadership Essentials: Cultural Services	52	8	15
Leadership Essentials: Finance Programme	46	10	22
Leadership Essentials: Effective Scrutiny	45	3	7
Leadership Essentials: Commissioning Academy for Elected Members	44	8	18
Leadership Essentials: Adult Social Care	24	2	8
Leadership Essentials: Getting Your Message Across	21	4	19
Leadership Essentials - Political Leadership Masterclass: Working with the Media	20	7	35
Leadership Essentials: Digital Leadership	16	2	13
Leadership Essentials - Political Leadership Masterclass: Cultural Change	15	2	13
Leadership Essentials - Political Leadership Masterclass: Consultation and Engagement	11	1	9
Leadership Essentials - Political Leadership Masterclass: Risk Management	9	2	22
Leadership Essentials: Fire and Rescue	1	1	100
Leadership Academy	164	35	21
Focus on Leadership (all programmes)	127	16	13
Focus on Leadership: Young Councillors’ Weekender	53	5	9
Focus on Leadership: Effective Opposition	41	10	24
Focus on Leadership: BAME Councillors’ Weekender	33	1	3
Next Generation (All Parties)	112	42	38
The Leaders’ Programme	17	5	29

Annex B: Survey Questions

LGA'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Welcome

Thank you for taking part in this survey about the LGA's Political Leadership Development Programmes

You can navigate through the questions using the arrows at the bottom of each page. Use the back arrow if you wish to amend your response to an earlier question. You can complete a portion of the survey and return later to finish the rest by using the link supplied in our e-mail. To ensure your answers on each page have been saved, click on the 'page forward' arrow at the bottom of the page. All responses will be treated confidentially. Information will be aggregated, and no individual or authority will be identified in any publications without your consent. Identifiable information may be used internally within the LGA.

Please complete the survey at your earliest convenience and by Thursday 9th June 2016 at the latest.

The survey should take about 15 minutes to complete.

Respondent Details

Please complete/amend as appropriate:

Name _____
Authority _____
Role _____

How many years have you been a councillor, in total?

Please select one option.

If you are no longer serving as a councillor, please select total time served.

- Less than one year
- 1-2 years
- 2-4 years
- 4-6 years
- 6-8 years
- 8-10 years
- More than 10 years
- Don't know

Programme completed

Please tell us, which programme(s) from the LGA's Political Leadership Development Programmes did you complete? Please select all that apply

- The Leaders' Programme
- Leadership Academy
- Next Generation
- Leadership Essentials (please answer below)
- Focus on Leadership (please answer below)

Which module(s) - Leadership Essentials

Please tell us, which Leadership Essentials module(s) did you complete?

Please select all that apply

- Adult social care
- Children's services
- Sport
- Cultural services
- Commissioning academy for elected members
- Finance programme
- Getting your message across
- Effective scrutiny
- Digital leadership
- Planning: new government and planning
- Planning: leading planning services
- Planning: updating your local plan
- Planning: understanding developers and development economics
- Political leadership masterclass: consultation and engagement
- Political leadership masterclass: cultural change
- Political leadership masterclass: risk management
- Political leadership masterclass: working with the media
- Don't know

Which module(s) - Focus on Leadership

Please tell us, which Focus on Leadership module(s) did you complete:

- Young councillors' weekender
- BAME councillors' weekender
- Effective opposition
- Don't know

Objectives

What were your objectives in taking up the LGA's Political Leadership Development Offer?

Please tick all that apply

- To develop my capacity to lead
- To refresh or sharpen my leadership skills
- To share my experiences with others
- To network and learn from other councillors
- To learn about the latest developments
- To work with others on the big issues facing the sector
- To explore and test new ways of working
- Other (please state) _____

Objectives achieved?

Were your objectives achieved?

Please tick one option

- Fully achieved (met all goals)
- Largely achieved (met most goals)
- Partially achieved (met some goals)
- Not achieved (no goals met)

Core Skill 1 - Local Leadership

This skill 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.

Improved skills

Below are a series of statements about local leadership. Please indicate how much, if at all, you feel the LGA's training has improved your skills in these areas:

Please tick one option on each row

I have improved my skills.....

	A great amount	A moderate amount	A small amount	Not at all	N/A
Engaging with all sections of the community					
Canvassing opinion from all sections of the community					
Looking for new ways of representing people					
Keeping up-to-date with local concerns					
Being seen as approachable					
Building partnerships with others					
Acting as a mediator					
Championing others' needs					

Local leadership skills (if skills remained same or small improvement)

You selected 'a small amount' or 'not at all' for one or more items. Please, briefly, explain the reason(s) for your choice:

Examples of Local Leadership skills improvement

Can you provide any specific examples of how the LGA's training has impacted on your local leadership skills? For example, have you tried any new or improved ways of leading as a result of the training, which have had a positive outcome? Please give details:

Core Skill 2: 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.

Improved skills - Partnership working

Below are a series of statements about partnership working. Please indicate how much, if at all, you feel the LGA's training has improved your skills in these areas:

Please tick one option on each row

I have improved my skills...

	A great amount	A moderate amount	A small amount	Not at all	N/A
Maintaining good relationships with colleagues and contacts					
Helping others to build partnerships					
Supporting and empowering others					
Valuing and including people from different backgrounds					
Developing networks and partnerships					
Staying calm and focussed under pressure					
Engaging with all relevant groups within your ward					
Being able to accept criticism and admit to being wrong					

Partnership working skills (if skills remained same or small improvement)

You selected 'a small amount' or 'not at all' for one or more items. Please, briefly, explain the reason(s) for your choice:

Examples of partnership working skills imp

Can you provide any specific examples of how the LGA's training has impacted on your skills in partnership working? For example, have you tried any new or improved ways of working in partnership as a result of the training, which have had a positive outcome? Please give details:

Core Skill 3: Communication Skills

This skill area recognises the need for councillors 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.

Improved skills - communication skills

Below are a series of statements about communication skills. Please indicate how much, if at all, you feel the LGA's training has improved your skills in these areas:

Please tick one box on each row

I have improved my skills

	A great amount	A moderate amount	A small amount	Not at all	N/A
Regularly communicating with different sections of the community					
Using different methods to communicate					
Listening well and adapting to others					
Feeling comfortable using technology to communicate with people					
Feeling confident when speaking in public					
Creating more opportunities to communicate with different sectors					
Communicating clearly in spoken and written forms					
Delivering unpopular messages					

Communication skills (if skills remained same or small improvement)

You selected 'a small amount' or 'not at all' for one or more items. Please, briefly, explain the reason(s) for your choice:

Examples of Communication skills improvement

Can you provide any specific examples of how the LGA's training has impacted on your communication skills? For example, have you tried any new or improved ways of communicating as a result of the training, which have had a positive outcome? Please give details:

Core Skill 4: 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.

Improved skills - political understanding

Below are a series of statements about political understanding. Please indicate how much, if at all, you feel the LGA's training has improved your skills in these areas:

Please tick one option on each row

<i>I have improved my skills...</i>	A great amount	A moderate amount	A small amount	Not at all	N/A
Prompting democracy and increasing public engagement					
Building cohesion between members of your own group					
Working effectively in other political environments (e.g. outside the council)					
Clearly communicating political values through canvassing and campaigning					
Actively developing your own political intelligence					
Working well with people who hold different views and values					
Gaining better knowledge of the council's values and objectives					
Translating group values into ways of helping the community					

Political Understanding (if skills remained same or small improvement)

You selected 'a small amount' or 'not at all' for one or more items. Please, briefly, explain the reason(s) for your choice:

Examples of political understanding imp

Can you provide any specific examples of how the LGA's training has impacted on your political understanding skills? For example, have you applied any new or improved political knowledge as a result of the training, which has had a positive outcome? Please give details:

Core Skill 5: 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.

Improved skills - Scrutiny and challenge

Below are a series of statements about scrutiny and challenge. Please indicate how much, if at all, you feel the LGA's training has improved your skills in these areas:

Please tick one option on each row

<i>I have improved my skills</i>	A great amount	A moderate amount	A small amount	Not at all	N/A
Engaging in scrutiny as an everyday part of your role					
Understanding of the scrutiny process					
Identifying areas for scrutiny					
Ensuring that citizens and communities are involved in the scrutiny process					
Dealing with new information					
Being fair, objective and rigorous when challenging processes and people					
Presenting arguments that are concise, meaningful and easily understood					
Being constructive in your criticism					
Using scrutiny resources appropriately					

Scrutiny skills (if skills remained same or small improvement)

You selected 'a small amount' or 'not at all' for one or more items. Please, briefly, explain the reason(s) for your choice:

Improved skills – Scrutiny

Can you provide any specific examples of how the LGA's training has impacted on your skills in scrutiny and challenge? For example, have you applied any new or improved knowledge about scrutiny and challenge as a result of the training, which has had a positive outcome? Please give details:

Core Skill 6: 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.

Improved skills - Regulating and Monitoring

Below are a series of statements about regulating and monitoring. Please indicate how much, if at all, you feel the LGA’s training has improved your skills in these areas:

Please tick one option on each row

I have improved my skills...

	A great amount	A moderate amount	A small amount	Not at all	N/A
Understanding and acting on your judicial role					
Basing your judgements on evidence					
Effectively chairing meetings					
Knowing enough about legal processes					
Monitoring others to ensure progress					
Seeking feedback or looking for opportunities for personal development					
Meeting deadlines and balancing council life with other commitments					

Regulating skills (if skills remained same or small improvement)

You selected ‘a small amount’ or ‘not at all’ for one or more items. Please, briefly, explain the reason(s) for your choice:

Improved skills – regulating

Can you provide any specific examples of how the LGA’s training has impacted on your skills in regulating and monitoring? For example, have you applied any new or improved knowledge about regulation and monitoring as a result of the training, which has had a positive outcome? Please give details:

Confidence

Overall, taking into consideration all your responses, to what extent do you feel more confident in your role as a councillor, having participated in the LGA’s Political Leadership Development Programme(s)?

- To a great extent
- To a moderate extent
- To a small extent
- Not at all
- Don’t know

Further comments

Please use this box to tell us anything else about the impact of the LGA’s training on your leadership behaviours, strategies, skills or mindset:

Follow up interviews

Would you be willing to take part in a short telephone interview to help us further improve our knowledge about the impact of the LGA’s Political Leadership Development Programmes on local politicians?

Please select one option

- Yes
- No

Contact details

Please provide us with your telephone number. A member of the LGA’s Research and Information Team may contact you in the next few weeks.

Thank you very much for your help.

Annex C: Telephone Interview Questions

1. Can I just confirm which programme(s) you attended?
2. And can I just confirm your role within [name of] council?
3. In our survey, we asked you for specific examples of how the LGA's political leadership development programme(s) has impacted on your skills in certain areas. We were very interested in what you said about [name of core skill]. You said [quote]. Is there anything you'd like to add to this?
4. Before I ask you about the impacts of the training, can you just provide some details about your goals? Was there anything particular you were hoping to gain from taking part either personally or for your council more widely?
5. One of the aims of the political leadership development programmes is to introduce participants to each other and build networks for informal support and advice. Do you think this has been achieved for you personally? Prompt: How has this benefitted your role as an elected representative? How have you used your connections and networks since attending?
6. We're also interested to know if the support offered to participants through the programmes has gone on to have any wider impacts. Can you think of any examples of things you have done differently as a result of the training that have:
 - a) Led to better outcomes for your authority?
 - b) Led to better outcomes for your local area/community?
7. Do you have any examples of how you've become better equipped to deal with specific leadership issues or challenges, as a result of attending a political leadership development programme?
8. Would you recommend the course(s) to other members?
9. Do you have any suggestions about how the LGA could develop or improve its political leadership development offer to help and support councillors?
10. Thank you very much for taking the time to give us this feedback. Before we finish, is there anything else you would like to say about the LGA's political leadership offer?

Annex D: Telephone Interview Sample

Telephone interviewees		Number
Gender		
	Female	6
	Male	6
Ethnicity		
	White British	11
	British Pakistani	1
Role		
	Leader of Council	1
	Deputy Leader of council	1
	Leader of Opposition	3
	Chair or cabinet/lead member	6
	Councillor	1
Type of authority		
	County	2
	District	1
	London Borough	1
	Metropolitan district	2
	Unitary	6
Region		
	East of England	1
	East Midlands	1
	Greater London	1
	South East	4
	South West	2
	West Midlands	1
	Yorkshire and Humber	1
Years as councillor		
	1-2 years	2
	2-4 years	2
	4-6 years	2
	6-8 years	1
	More than 10 years	5
Political party		
	Conservative	3
	Green	1
	Independent	1
	Labour	4
	Liberal Democrat	3
Political leadership programme cohort		
	2014-15	1
	2015-16	9
	Both	2



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We consider requests on an individual basis.