

New Political Leadership in the Ward

A half day workshop for all members facing budget cuts, using the Localism Bill, and working with shared services and management.

Purpose

This workshop sets out the new options for ward leadership presented by budget cuts, the localism bill and shared services. It will help members get a personal focus on specific ward initiatives they can take and devise an action plan for their ward. It is particularly timely after the May elections, the emerging Localism Bill, and where councils are moving to share management and services.

The new agenda

Two new challenges face all council:

- **the impact of budget reductions 2011-14** – how to assess and moderate the impact in the ward
- **the Localism Bill** – how to stimulate leadership in the community, handle the planning, housing and other changes and be a broker in the right to challenge and right to buy – all part of the six essentials of decentralisation

For some councils there will be a sharing of services and management with other councils to bring in greater efficiency and effectiveness.

All members will be expected to provide stronger leadership of their wards.

Why pick up this challenge?

First councils all members will be expected to provide stronger leadership of their wards and this could be radically different.

Second, members must provide leadership if the changes are not just to be driven by officers and members playing 'catch up'.

It will need members not just to raise their game but to widen their leadership style .

Preparation

A short position paper for the council on the challenges it faces will be sent in advance.

Programme (illustrated overleaf)

Programme (Illustrative half day programme)

- 9.00 **Introduction: Leadership and why it will need to be different**
Introduction by the Leader; looking at the broad challenges **and** why time is necessary for what it means to the ward.
- 9.05 **Personal leadership and support teams**
A brief introduction to personal leadership and how the small groups around tables will be used
- 9.20 **Group task 1: what impacts will the cuts make?**
A brief presentation of the Council's and other public service cuts in the area (as set out in the advance paper). An impact assessment in each ward – who, how and when will they impact?
- 10.00 **Input : what opportunities does the new localism provide?**
Decentralisation essentials:
1. **less bureaucracy** – the following are going regional strategies, standards board, predetermination rules and CPA, LAAs and the Audit commission
 2. **empowering communities** – power of general competence, community right to buy, neighbourhood plans
 3. **increased local finance control** – council tax referendum, business rate discounts, community infrastructure levy and self financing (through new housing bonus/new business rate rebate)
 4. **diversifying public service providers** – community right to challenge, community right to buy
 5. **open up to scrutiny** – publishing over £500, transparency from public bodies on contracts, salaries and staffing
 6. **accountability to local people** – local referendums, service users voting with their feet
- Group task 2: What looks promising and useful to your ward?**
Team discussion and working out possibilities
- 11.00 Coffee/tea
- 11.15 **Big Society: A relevant bigger picture?**
The local member as a leader and stimulator of community activity – does the Big Society suggest fresh ideas?
- 11.45 **Group Task 3: Working up a personal ward agenda**
Use of groups of three to support and challenge each person to shape a ward agenda (3 x 15 mins each)
- 12.30 **Input and discussion: What the council can do for you**
Presentation by Leader/portfolio holder as to what you can expect of the Council and what the Council will expect of you. Discussion and agreement as to what will happen next.
- 1.00 Finish