



PROGRESS REVIEW – MENTORING SUPPORT TO ROTHERHAM COUNCILLORS

The LGA has placed a team of experienced peer mentors – councillors from other authorities – to work with councillors in a range of leadership roles across Rotherham Council, to provide them with a source of confidential and candid advice, support and challenge as they work to deliver improvements in governance and service delivery to give local people a council they can have confidence in.

Mentors are working with the Leader and members of Rotherham's Advisory Cabinet; Leader of the Opposition Group and the Chairs and Vice Chairs for other senior roles across the council including the Planning Board, Advisory Licencing Board. Working in conjunction with the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS), the LGA has also placed mentors to work with the Chairs of the Council's Scrutiny Commissions and Scrutiny Management Board. The all out elections in May 2016 resulted in a large number of new councillors being elected.

In general, Rotherham members continue to engage well with their mentors. The LGA mentors have been impressed by the commitment of the Rotherham councillors they have been working with to tackle the challenges facing the council and strive to turn things around. The knowledge and grasp of issues demonstrated by a number of Rotherham councillors has been noted by their mentors. Both mentors and Rotherham councillors themselves feel they have become more confident in their roles and this has continued to grow since the all-out elections in May 2016. Mentors feel that members continue to have good and constructive relationships with the Commissioners.

Rotherham members have continued to visit other local authorities and explore how other councils and councillors work, tapping into the wider local government experience offered by the mentoring team and beyond. Some members have participated in the LGA's Leadership Academy and are applying that learning to their roles in the council. Mentors continue to offer advice as to how members' previous experience – gained both in politics and elsewhere – can be applied to their new roles.

The LGA's mentoring team continues to support the Advisory Cabinet to work effectively as a team (additional mentors have recently been placed with new portfolio holders); and with individual Advisory Cabinet members where executive powers were returned earlier this year.

Working with the council's senior management team to set the budget for 2017/18 will be a focus for the next phase of mentoring support, building on good working relationships and appropriate political direction. Mentors envisage supporting the council's leadership in working with the wider membership to support the council in delivering its new Corporate Plan and in the longer term, becoming a more outward facing local authority.

The LGA will continue to provide support for Rotherham Council as further powers are returned to democratic control.

Judith Hurcombe, LGA Programme Manager
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