



# Member Training and Development Strategy

2014 - 2018



Adopted May, 2009  
Amended April 2014

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## 1. Introduction

One of Newcastle's Corporate Priorities is 'Transforming our Council to Achieve Excellence'. In order to fulfil this, it is important to ensure that our Councillors' have the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out their role effectively.

All Councillors, even those of more experience, require an element of training throughout their term with legislation etc changing constantly. Continuous Member Development is highly important as Councillors' have a duty to those who elected them and to the Council on which they serve.

Members will be encouraged to take responsibility for their own training and development needs by identifying areas in which they require further assistance. The aim is to ensure that every Member has the opportunity to acquire the skills required to perform their duties.

Members are **strongly encouraged** to be IT literate as it will make your life as a Councillor so much easier when it comes to receiving urgent information via e-mails. Newcastle is also moving towards the 'Paperless Member' whereby everything, including agendas will be sent electronically. If you are not fully confident with using IT equipment, our IT Section would be happy to assist and training will be given.

Members are asked to refer to the Constitution for the roles and responsibilities of Councillors, Members Code of Conduct and the remits of Committees.

## **2. West Midlands Member Development Charter**

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council signed up to the Charter in February, 2008 and was awarded the Primary Level in October 2010.

Working towards the Charter helped the authority to build upon its' programme to ensure that Members' Training and Development is seen as a key component in the success of the Organisation, thus enabling the Council to deliver high quality services that are valued by its customers. It has also helped in achieving targets within the Council's Corporate Priorities, notably, 'Transforming our Council to Achieve Excellence' as mentioned in the Introduction. The experience gained, through the establishment of Personal Development Plans has given Members the opportunity to identify the skills and knowledge which are required to ensure that they are trained to a level appropriate to their roles and responsibilities.

## **3. A Strategic Approach**

- I. Research carried out by the West Midlands LGA has identified three specific areas that constitute key drivers behind any strategic member development plan.
  - Requirements placed upon Elected Members by the Local Authority
  - Personal aspirations of Elected Members
  - Requirements placed upon Elected Members by their constituents and community organisations.
  
- II. The models attached at Appendix A show some of these key drivers, the possible outcomes that can be achieved from them and the areas of development and training that could help to achieve these outcomes.
  
- III. The models can help Elected Members to identify areas where they might like to concentrate their training and development and focus their attention. They can also act as a check list to ensure that all key aspects of Member Development are being explored.

#### **4. Objectives:**

- I. To establish a culture whereby Elected Member development is seen as a key component in the success of the Organisation.
- II. To equip Elected Members with the skills and knowledge necessary to enable the Council to deliver high quality services that are valued by their customers.
- III. To ensure that all Elected Members are trained to a level appropriate to their roles and responsibilities.

#### **5. How these objectives will be achieved:**

- I. By ensuring that the training strategy derives from and contributes to the Council's Corporate Priorities.
- II. By providing training opportunities in response to organisational, individual and statutory needs that will be assessed on an annual basis through the use of Personal Development Plans (PDPs).
- III. By utilising external training facilitators where necessary and from in-house or electronic sources when required.
- IV. By monitoring and evaluating all training and development activities to ensure that value for money is obtained and that the benefits to individuals and the Council are measurable.
- V. By making all training equally available to all Elected Members.

#### **6. Member Development Panel -**

##### **Terms of Reference**

- To identify and implement the requirements of the West Midlands Member Development Charter and to develop and implement a Member Development Strategy.
- To identify a process for the implementation of Personal Development Plans and offer all Members the opportunity to participate.

- To ensure that all Member development and training opportunities relate to Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council's corporate priorities.
- To engage all elected members in the process of member development and training.
- To establish a mechanism to evaluate overall effectiveness of Member Development.
- Identify financial resources required to deliver development needs.
- To address issues relating to the provision of ICT for elected members.
- To help promote the members website and to encourage members and officers to use the site on a regular basis.
- To monitor the provision of member support.

## **7. Induction Process for Newly Elected Members**

- I. An Induction Day will be attended by all newly Elected Members and will include presentations from Chief Officers, some basic training and an induction pack including a Members' Handbook and the Constitution. Re-elected Members will also be invited to attend the induction session to share their knowledge with those who have been newly elected.
- II. All newly elected Members will be offered mentoring from an individual council officer or member of a political group for the first six months following their election.

## **8. Member Development Annual Training Plan**

- I. An Annual Training Plan will be compiled by the end of July 2014 and by the end of June for subsequent years to 2018. (Appendix B).
- II. Following the receipt of completed Personal Development Plans (PDP's) an Annual Training Plan will be compiled from a number of sources including requests from individual Members, learning needs analysis questionnaires, the PDPs, new legislation, Central Government initiatives and any other external influences.
- III. All training undertaken will be evaluated, reviewed and the outcomes fed back into all future training strategies, plans and policies.

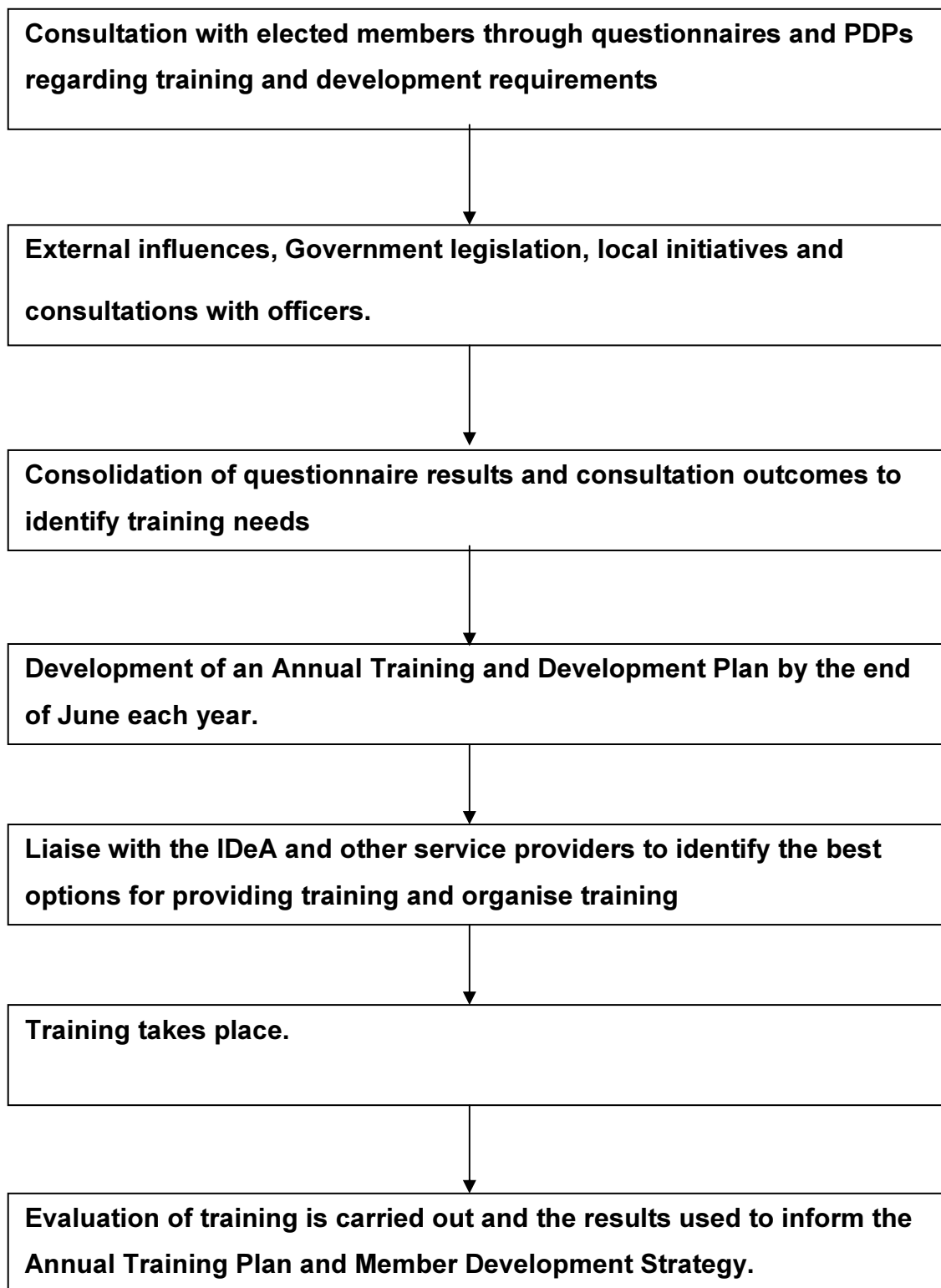
## **9. Training Courses**

- I. Please complete your PDP as this will ensure that the correct training courses are provided throughout the year and those most requested can be sourced.
  
- II. Training courses should be interesting and informative and in some cases, fun. Methods of delivery will include:
  - Internal courses
  - Informal in-house briefings / workshops
  - External conferences / seminars
  - Written learning materials
  - Peer Mentors
  - E-learning packages
  - Visits to other local authorities / shared learning
  - DVD's
  
- III. All Members are strongly encouraged to identify and request training courses which relate to their individual role / Portfolio / Committees etc. Training request forms are available from Geoff Durham in Member Services. As there is a limited training budget, Members will need to demonstrate the relevance and benefit to the Council prior to payment being authorised.
  
- IV. All Chairs and Vice Chairs of Committees will be strongly encouraged to attend a chairing skills course.
  
- V. Elected Members sitting on quasi-judicial committees such as Planning and Licensing will be required to undertake committee specific training prior to attending their first meeting. Similarly for Public Protection.
  
- VI. Members sitting on Audit and Risk, Scrutiny and any other specialised committees will be strongly encouraged to attend related training courses prior to attending the first meeting of the committee.



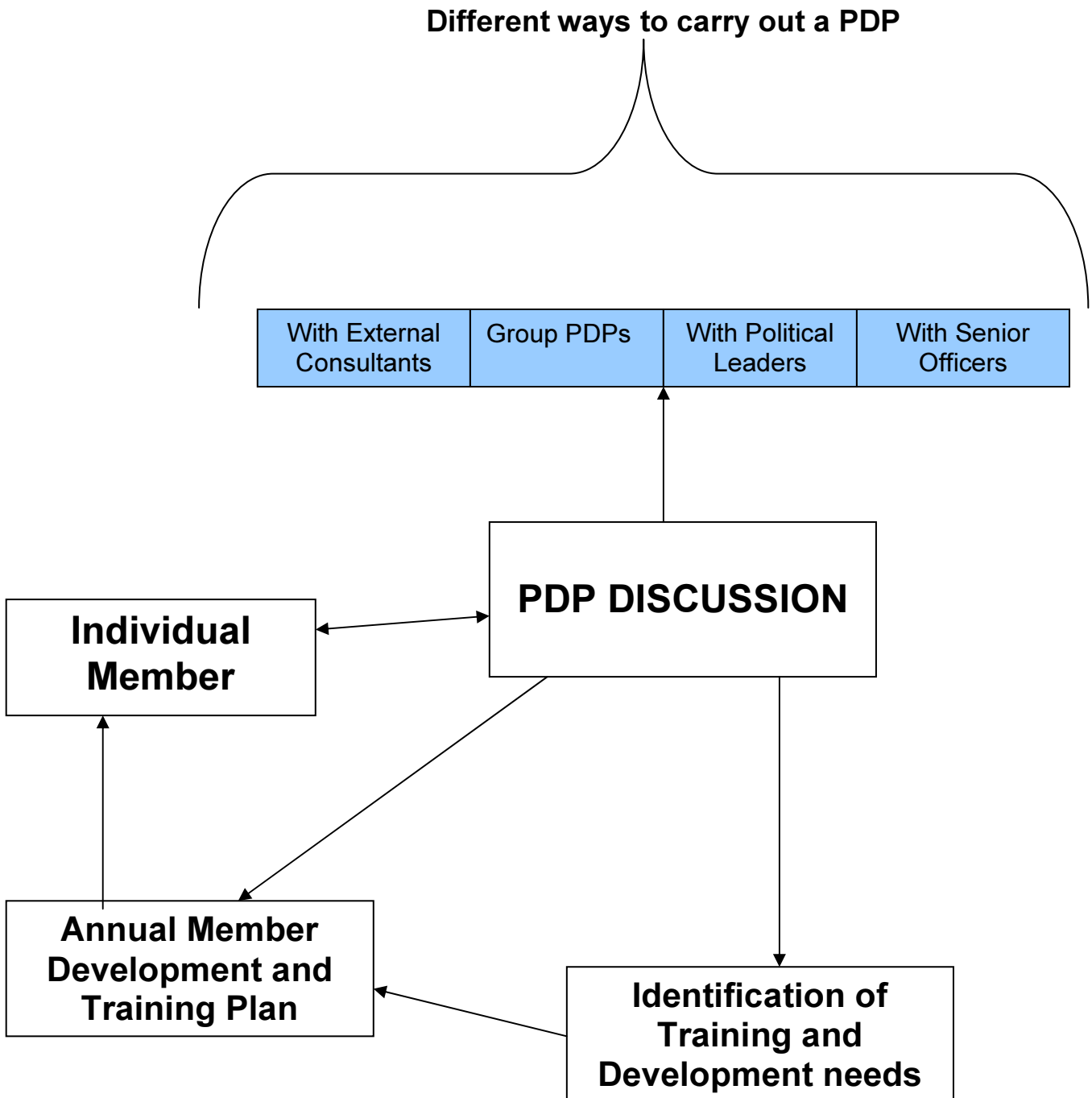
- VII.** All Elected Members will be encouraged to undertake ICT training in order to fully contribute to the work carried out by the Council and in particular any Committees to which they are appointed.
  
- VIII.** Where possible, the Council will aim to undertake shared learning with neighbouring authorities.
  
- IX.** All Elected Members are expected to undertake a minimum of 24 hours training per year. Individual records of training undertaken by Members are kept to evaluate which Members reach their training quota.

## 10. Process for Elected Member Training and Development



## 11. Personal Development Plans

- I. Each Elected Member is strongly encouraged to complete and commit to an annual Personal Development Plan (PDP) / Skills Audit which will help to identify individual training needs that can then be fed into the annual training plan.



- **Commitment from political leadership**

It is the Group Leader's responsibility to ensure that their Members complete the PDP and audit of skills to identify training needs. In addition, Group Leaders are requested to nominate a number of Mentors within their Group to whom new Members can approach.

- **Member led strategy approach**

The way in which PDPs are carried out will be agreed within each group for their preferred way to identify training and development needs. These plans will then provide officers with the information needed to produce a training programme for Elected Members. It will be a completely Member-led process with Officers available as facilitators.

- **The Creation of an Annual Member Development Plan**

The feedback from the PDP discussions will help officers to produce an Annual Member Development Plan that will detail how the authority will address development priorities including how, when, and who is responsible, including responsibility for implementing, monitoring and evaluating the plan. The PDP process will be available to all Elected Members.

- **Monitoring of progress against the Member development Plan**

Completion of Annual PDPs will ensure that progress is being made and that member development needs are being successfully addressed.

- **Evaluation**

Feedback from elected Members at PDP discussions can help to form part of the evaluation process which will then help to inform improvement.

## **12. Summary**

Through the implementation of this strategy we hope to ensure the provision of identified training and development needs for all elected Members.

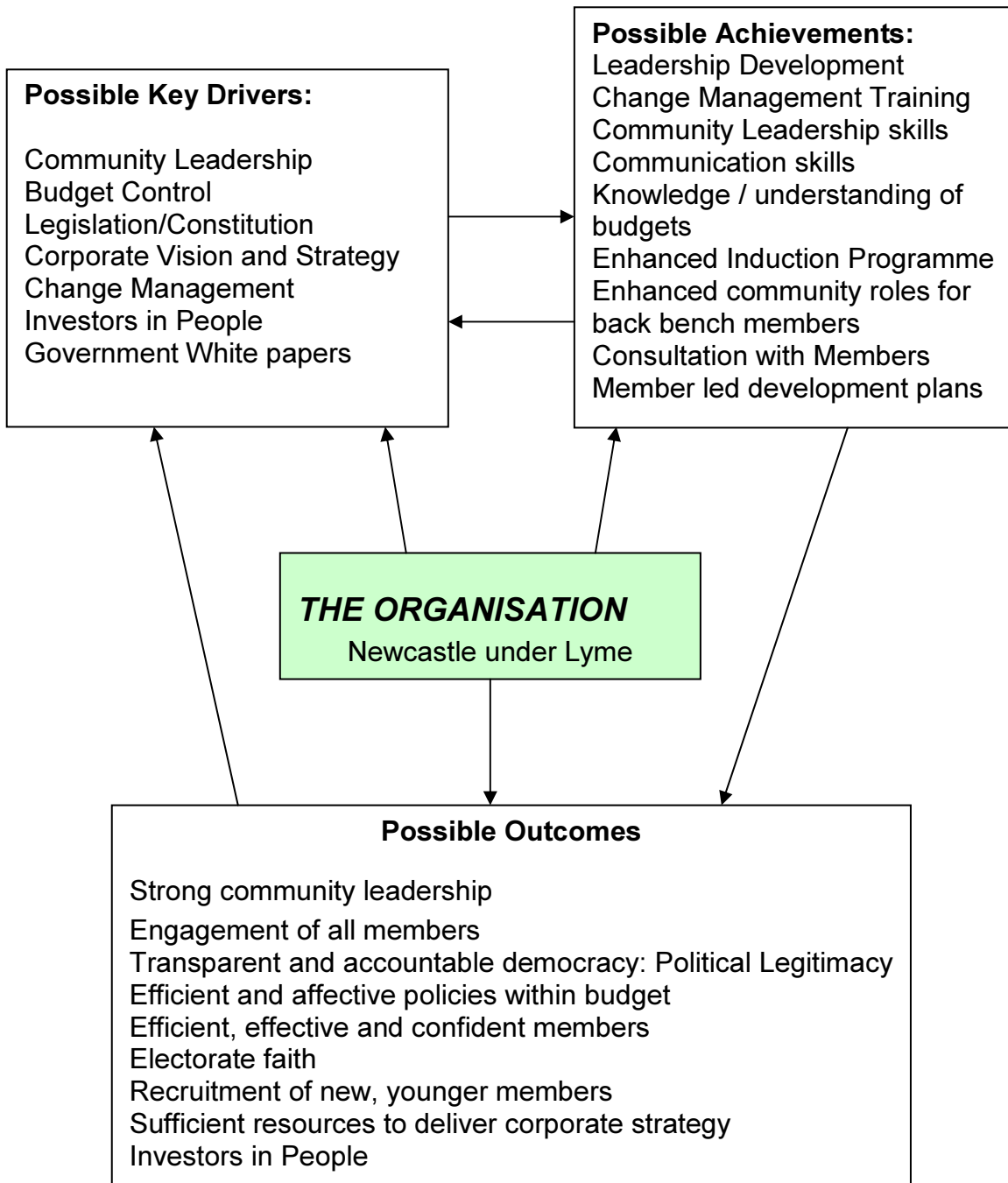
Training needs will be identified based upon the needs of elected Members, the Councils Corporate Priorities and external local and national influences. Any training undertaken will be continuously evaluated and the results used to modify and inform the Annual Training Plan.

Member training and development will be a Member led strategy and will result in:

- A member led PDP process to identify individual training and development needs.
- A strategy for transforming these needs into an annual member development plan.
- The identification of resources (external, in-house or electronic) to ensure that this plan can be implemented.
- A continuous process of feedback and evaluation from members and officers.
- The use of this evaluation to feedback into the next publication of the member development plan.

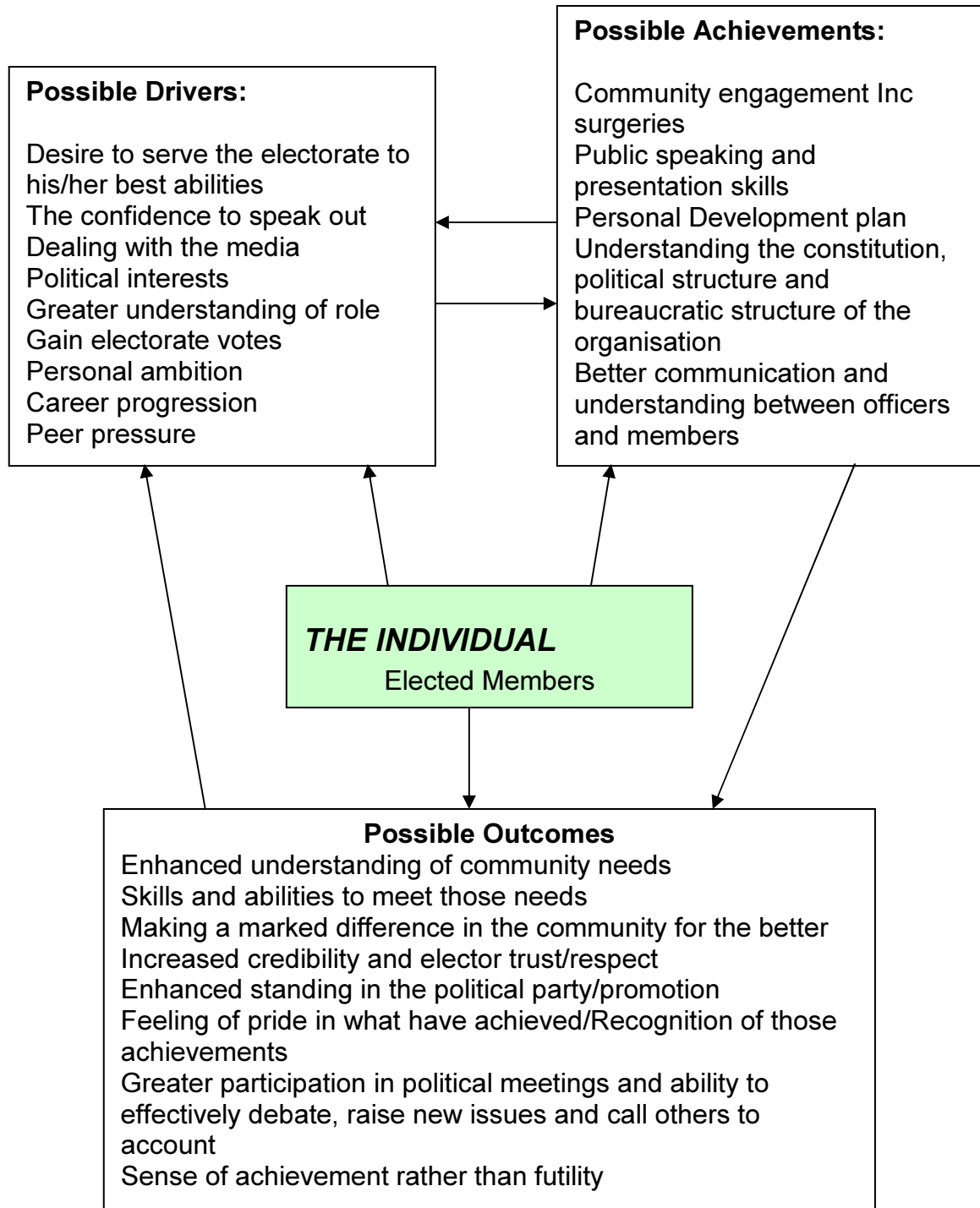
# Member Development Strategic Model

Key Driver = The Organisation



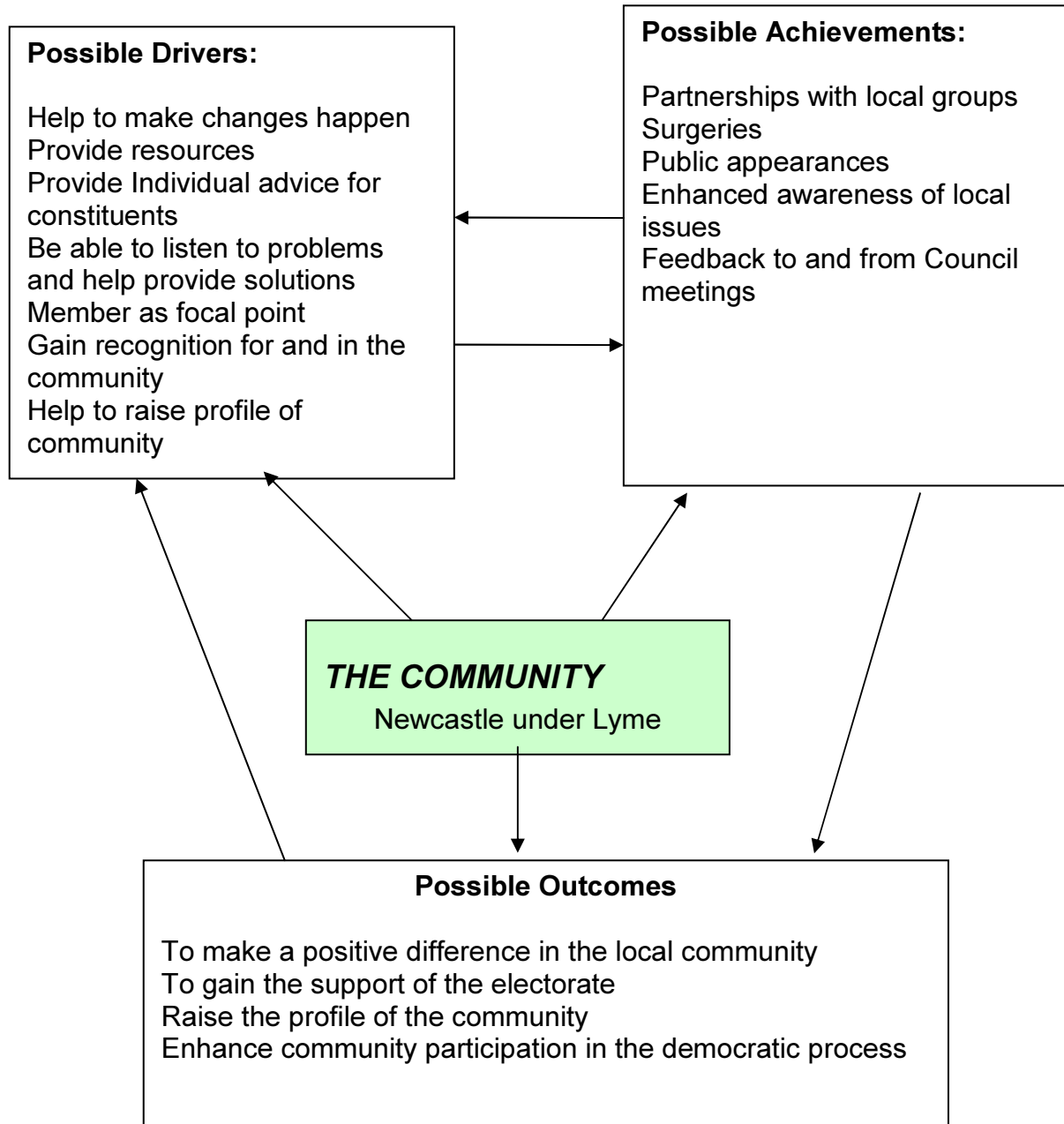
# Member Development Strategic Model

Key Driver = The Individual



# Member Development Strategic Model

Key Driver = The Community





## Elected Member Training and Development Plan 2014/15

Month	Events	Training Event	Training Event
<b>May</b>	Newly Elected Members	New Members Induction packs	New Members Induction Day
	Specific Training for quasi-judicial committees*.		PDP/ questionnaires sent/advised new Members website
<b>June</b>			IT Training for new members – given usernames etc.
<b>July</b>	Analysis of feedback from all questionnaires by Member Development Working Group	Sessions by Executive Management Team giving a broad overview of their Service	
<b>August</b>	Sourcing of training events by Officers		
<b>September</b>		2 training days to be arranged	
<b>October</b>		2 training days to be arranged	
<b>November</b>		2 training days to be arranged	
<b>December</b>		1 training day to be arranged	
<b>January</b>		1 training day to be arranged	
<b>February</b>	Info for prospective candidates	2 training days to be arranged	Open Event for prospective candidates
<b>March</b>		2 training days to be arranged	
<b>April</b>	Nomination packs sent to prospective Councillors		

**\*Training Session prior to 1<sup>st</sup> Audit and Risk meeting**  
**Training Session prior to 1<sup>st</sup> Planning meeting**  
**Training Session prior to 1<sup>st</sup> Licensing Meeting**  
**Training Session prior to 1<sup>st</sup> Public Protection meeting**