Leadership & Talent

for Elected Members

NW EMPLOYERS

People. Leadership. Growth.

STRENGTHENING YOUR ROLE AS A LEADER OF PLACE

To empower communities and organisations to truly flourish, it is essential to have strong leadership that is well-supported and informed by the latest innovative research. As leaders in our field, we are dedicated to providing our member organisations with a comprehensive suite of tailored interventions designed to meet your specific needs.

Our offerings encompass support in political leadership, personal development for councillors, and effective scrutiny and governance. Grounded in national research and enhanced by our esteemed Councillor Development Charter Award and regional networks, our support ensures access to cutting-edge insights and practices.

This brochure outlines the full scope of our community leadership offerings, available both as part of your existing membership and through consultancy services at exclusive member rates.

By partnering with us, you equip your leadership with the tools and knowledge needed to drive meaningful change and sustainable growth.

M If you see this symbol, this service is accessible as part of your existing membership subscription.

OUR OFFER

Councillor Induction & Support for New Councillors Page 3

Neighbourhood and Community Development Page 4

Personal Development Page 5

Senior / Political Leadership Page 9

Organisational Support Page 11

21st Century Councillor Updated Research 2025 Page 12

Every penny you spend with us is invested back in to the local government community.

COUNCILLOR INDUCTION & SUPPORT FOR NEW COUNCILLORS

Councillor Induction Programme (M)

In early 2021, we launched our successful "Life As A Councillor" induction programme, exclusively available to your councillors at no extra cost as part of your existing membership with us. This programme enhances your in-house induction by focusing on practical, hands-on aspects of the role, designed and led by an experienced local councillor. Participants benefit from networking opportunities with peers across the region, sharing best practices, and engaging in mutual mentoring to support their journey.

Modules

Module 1- You've Been Elected, Now What?

In this first module, we'll set the scene for what it means to be a Councillor; starting off with an introduction to local government, the roles, responsibilities and relationships and helping you to think through what kind of a councillor you want to be.

Module 2- Motions & Emotions

Here, we'll look at some of the practicalities around meetings, enabling you to engage and influence and connect and communicate with your audience.

Module 3- Developing as a Community Leader

In the final module, we'll look at understanding and engaging with your communities and how to effectively manage expectations. We'll help you stay connected and build your networks and think about your ongoing development as a councillor.

(M) Free attendance for our membership organisations

NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Leading from Place - Street Wisdom

The system looks different depending on where you are in it. To understand it requires multiple perspectives. This half day session will introduce you to the concept of Street Wisdom – a facilitated event where groups have the opportunity to reflect on an issue or situation and take inspiration from the local place to help think through a solution.

The approach is simple and creates the space for opening up thinking and reflection.

1. First, a street guide helps you and your group tune up your senses so you can pick up much more information from the urban environment than you would normally.

2. Then you're off on a journey by yourself – your street quest – where you ask a question and see what answers present themselves.

3. Finally, you gather together again to share what happened and, more often than not, wonder at how magical an ordinary street can become when you're really aware of those hidden messages, chance meetings and unexpected discoveries.

This three-hour session will take place at a locality of your choice.

Transformative Community Building (TCB)

Transformative Community Building (TCB) invites councillors to embark on a journey beyond traditional community engagement. By adopting an upstream approach, TCB creates fertile ground for profound insights, enabling transformation from within.

Our dynamic one and two-day programmes inspire participants to unlock their infinite potential and channel creative ideas for impactful change in their communities.

Start Where You Live by delving into local resilience and forging human connections.
Start Where You Work to view your surroundings through a fresh lens, transcending conventional perceptions of community dynamics.
Start Where You Are by harnessing a clear mind to achieve the seemingly impossible.

Embrace this opportunity to discover the boundless possibilities inherent in people and places, and lead your community towards a brighter future.

> "Using this time to focus and think on just a single issue, and think in a different way, away from devices and work, gave some clarity on how to approach the issue. Would definitely do this again."

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

We understand the role of the councillor and the challenges faced and have a range of development and support available throughout the life cycle of being a councillor.

We recognise the multifaceted role of a councillor and the challenges encountered, offering a robust range of development and support throughout your journey. Our "Life as a Councillor" programme equips you with essential skills—from foundational to digital, media, and scrutiny - ensuring you have the confidence to make a tangible impact.

Networking Opportunities (M)

Our networks present a valuable space to connect with peers and exchange innovative ideas. Featuring guest speakers, group discussions, and time for reflection, our networks encourage dynamic dialogue and networking. Additionally, our online communities offer continuous peer support and resource sharing. Notable networks supporting community leadership include the North West Regional Leaders Board, Women in Political Leadership Forum, and Scrutiny and Portfolio Holders meetings.

Speech Writing & Public Speaking

Public speaking is a crucial aspect of a councillor's role, often accompanied by nerves. In this session, we'll delve into effective strategies for conveying your message to diverse audiences. Beyond the Council chamber, you'll engage in community events, public meetings, scrutiny committees, planning/licensing committees, and, at times, with the media. Our aim is to equip you with top tips to articulate your message confidently and effectively, using all the tools in your kitbag - including AI!

Political Awareness

This session is meticulously crafted to offer a comprehensive understanding of Council structures, decision-making processes, committees, and consultations. We will explore the inherent challenges and barriers, while also delivering valuable tips on fostering positive relationships within the council environment.

Led by a seasoned councillor from the North West, this interactive session provides ample opportunities for questions and engagement, using real-life examples from local case studies.

Supporting Councillors Personal Development Conversations

We know and understand how time consuming it is to meet with all your councillors to complete personal development conversations, so we have put together a package to support the process. You can choose the whole package or individual elements.

1. Design a bespoke template to meet current research and practice that will provide:

- Skills audit / analysis of current expertise, knowledge and experience.
- Key objectives / priorities.
- Aspirations – to support political group succession planning.
- Development needs and expected impact / outcomes.
- Gathering of any further information to support and enhance councillor development.

2. Facilitate one to one development conversations (PDP) for all Councillors

- Produce a final report of our findings and recommendations
- Scope out your councillor's development programme, using our in-depth knowledge and experience of working with other councils and partners.

Telling Your Story & Influencing as a Councillor

As a Councillor, you will need to effectively communicate with and influence a diverse range of audiences. This includes the residents you represent at the ward level, officers in Council meeting settings, businesses, voluntary and community sectors, and numerous other organisations. Your success will largely hinge on your communication style and your ability to adapt it to suit different audiences. It will also rely on the narrative you craft, how you craft it, and your method of delivery.

This module is designed to help you evaluate your communication style, enhance your listening skills, and tailor your approach to meet the needs of your audience. The aim of the session is to support Councillors in developing a confident approach to public speaking and identifying key influencing skills and styles.

Strength Based Approaches

As leaders of place, we understand the important role of councillors in bringing together capabilities, assets, people and resources to achieve the best possible outcomes for the local community.

In this workshop, we'll explore the tools to interact with citizens in a different way, focusing on strengths, understanding people within the context of their family and neighbourhood and enabling families to make positive changes to their lives so they are more aspirational, more resilient and less dependent on services.

Underpinned by the concept of coaching, this workshop will enable participants to further develop the skills to engage in healthy conversations, develop personal responsibility in others and maximise their potential. The programme will be highly practical and include live skills practice.

Media Skills

During this full day session we aim to help you gain an understanding of how the media works and to increase your confidence when dealing with them. You will learn how to deal with the media in a professional and effective manner and how to avoid media 'traps'. We will develop your skills in preparing for a media interview and how to take control of media interviews, especially during a crisis.

Code of Conduct Using Social Media

In this 2.5-hour virtual workshop, participants will gain a clear understanding of how to use social media responsibly, avoid potential pitfalls, and effectively engage with their communities. They will also learn how to adhere to the code of conduct and ensure they meet their legal and ethical responsibilities as councillors.

Social Media and AI - how to connect with your communities

Councillors will learn the basics of how to safely connect with their communities online and stay on the right side of the Law. This practical, two-hour session designed to help councillors communicate with confidence while managing risk in an evolving digital landscape.— it is grounded in the Nolan Principles and focuses on clear, respectful and responsible communication. The workshop covers key areas including AI tools, the Online Safety Act, handling online abuse, reputational risk, and creating engaging content that resonates with residents.

Managing Effective Surgeries and Casework

Enhance your efficiency in managing case work and surgeries with our expert guidance. Our session is designed to help you identify and utilise the most suitable support mechanisms, ensuring you respond effectively to your casework. Additionally, we will equip you with essential skills to safely handle challenging situations and interactions with difficult individuals, maximising your productivity and success.

Turbocharge Your Reading Skills

It is a proven fact that slow readers understand less than those who read quickly. Speed reading is not a trick or a gimmick - it will actually make you a more effective reader. And in this Information century that could mean the difference between business success and business failure. Speed reading is not a gimmick, it is a proven technique that is quick and easy to learn. We guarantee to double the reading speed of every participant by the time they leave the course.

Mentoring & Coaching Skills

Mentoring and coaching skills can significantly enhance your ability to tackle the diverse challenges associated with your role. This session will provide you with a comprehensive understanding of the various 'mechanics' involved in the roles of a coach and mentor. You will develop an appreciation for these skills and begin to cultivate a repertoire of models and approaches designed to support the coach-coachee and mentor-mentee relationships.

Personal Resilience

Resilience is about empowering individuals to handle adversity without compromising performance. But what exactly is resilience? Can everyone cultivate it? And how does it impact performance, wellbeing, and happiness? In this workshop, we will tap into our experience with councillors, senior managers, and public sector staff, alongside the latest research, to help you enhance your personal resilience. We'll offer practical tips, ideas, and strategies for making small changes that support resilience and guide you in creating a realistic action plan.

Personal Safety and Wellbeing

According to the LGA's 2022 councillor census, 70% of councillors reported experiencing abuse or intimidation in the past year. It is crucial that everyone, irrespective of their background or political affiliation, feels safe to become a councillor and takes pride in representing their community. Indeed, it is essential to encourage individuals from diverse backgrounds to champion local democracy. However, the rising levels of abuse and intimidation directed at local politicians are hindering elected members from effectively serving their communities, deterring individuals from running for office, and undermining the very foundation of local democracy. This interactive session will equip delegates with advice, information, and guidance on how to seek help and support.

Equality Diversity & Inclusion

Working across wards with many different cultural identities, how do you as councillors embrace cultural diversity and ensure you are as effective as possible in representing your wards? In this interactive session, we'll provide the space for you to have facilitated conversations about how to engage with different communities, including those who are Neurodivergent, and how you personally can value and celebrate difference in your communities.

Appeals Panel Training

This focused session will enable Members to participate effectively and reach fair decisions when participating in appeal hearing panels. Combining consideration of the key principles with practical application, the session will quickly enhance participants' knowledge and skills, ensuring that Members conduct appeal hearings in a fair, consistent and legally compliant way.

The Principles of Public Office

As a councillor you will be required to adhere to your council's individual code of conduct for councillors. Each council adopts its own code, but it must be based on the Committee on Standards in Public Life's seven principles of public life, publicly known as the 'Nolan principles'. The principles apply to anyone who works as a public office holder.

This two-hour session will provide an opportunity to discuss in detail the seven principles and how they are applied in your role as a Councillor.

Effective Overview & Scrutiny

This half day workshop has been designed to bring together scrutiny councillors to undertake an overview on the key elements of scrutiny, including roles and key processes. It will then move on to provide the opportunity to look at key skills important to the success of these roles.

SENIOR / POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

Councillor+ Programme

This innovative programme has been crafted in partnership with Councillors and Officers from across the North West. Councillor+ builds on the success of our well-regarded Life as a Councillor Induction programme, offering enhanced support to Councillors as they advance in their political leadership journey.

The programme's main objective is to furnish Councillors with valuable insights into the wide array of responsibilities they, and their colleagues, manage. By achieving a thorough understanding of these roles and their interconnections, whether direct or indirect, the programme aspires to empower Councillors to excel in their duties and realise their full potential.

The programme will be highly interactive and will be delivered virtually through Microsoft Teams. To attend, Councillors must be committed to attend all 2.5hr modules.

To run the Councillor+ programme in-house, contact us: patw@nwemployers.org.uk

Modules covered in the programme:

Module 1 : Effective Community Leadership

Module 2 : Councillor and Officer Relationships – Collaborative Working

Module 3 : Community Working – Asset-Based Community Development

Module 4 : Unconscious Bias & Inclusivity

Module 5 : Financial Awareness

Module 6 : Presenting with Impact

Module 7 : ICBs and ICPs – What are they for? How do they work? What does that mean in my Council?

Women in Political Leadership Programme

These four two-hour modules, are aimed at women Councillors who want to connect with peers to share experiences, develop a peer support network and hone their leadership skills and vision.

Sessions will be held a week apart, and include:
Session one - Let's talk local government
Session two - Your political vision and telling your story.
Session three - The art of compelling speech
Session four - Leading through relationships

*Full module details available on our website or on request via email - click here to view on our website.

Chairing Skills

Remote meetings will still be a reality of the work of elected representatives even though we are through COVID and will need to be well chaired. In any meeting either face to face or on line, participants must be made to feel they are part of a democratic process and that the decisions they make are made with transparency, inclusivity and accountability.

During this module we will explore how to equip Councillors in developing a confident approach to chairing meetings both face to face and online, This module covers these topics as well as many others with interactive examples of good and bad practice.

Developing Your Leadership Style

In this two hour taster session on leadership we will explore how to think of yourself as a leader. and why we need different approaches. We will explore qualities and values of influential leaders and examine some examples of historic leadership.

Delegates will explore their visions, values and use individual examples of an issue they want to resolve and provide leadership on. We will also discuss things to avoid as a successful leader.

Cabinet 360 Feedback

Our new online 360 tool provides detailed feedback from invited peers, residents, partners, leaders and self. At the end of the process a confidential electronic report is produced, purely for your own use and development.

To maximise the report's value, a meeting between each councillor and a trained facilitator then takes place to explain and digest the information. On completion of the meeting a personal action plan is produced.

ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT

Our organisational support service uses good governance as a tool for growth. We can take a holistic approach to support councillors and work with you to find solutions to current challenges.

We do this by focusing on what good scrutiny looks like, recognising and celebrating good practice, providing clarity around policies and procedures, supporting councillors and officers to work well together to improve service delivery, and through Cabinet development to aid effective leadership.

Councillor Development Network (M)

The role of the councillor is changing; this network has been setup as part of our core membership offer to enable you to share knowledge with other organisations and generate ideas to support best practice.

Suitable for any councillors or officers who are involved in councillor development for your organisation and are interested in hearing national and regional initiatives to support you in this work.

Women in Political Leadership Network (M)

The Women in Political Leadership Forum is an integral part of our core membership offering, thoughtfully crafted to support women in politics and their aspirations. Our aims include creating a robust network for women from across political parties to unite, share experiences, and actively promote peer support.

We support an agenda that embraces the entire lifecycle of political leadership, from entering politics to excelling in roles and leveraging accumulated experience and expertise. Additionally, we are committed to developing a clear pathway to encourage more women to enter the political arena and promoting a positive culture for women in this field. The forum also serves as a dynamic learning space where experiences and contributions are shared, fostering a culture of mutual learning and growth.

Strategic Scrutiny in Practice Network (M)

The Strategic Scrutiny Network is part of our core membership offer and is designed to support councillors in the development of their scrutiny function and role, share good practice and highlight local and national drivers.

Our aim is to increase collaboration between Councillors, officers and partners whilst helping to develop a strong culture of overview and scrutiny in organisations.

Our Charter Assessment: Excellence in Councillor Development (M)

Our Charter Assessment acknowledges excellence and innovation in councillor development and has flourished since its launch in 2000.

Utilising a well-defined framework, councils engage in a self-assessment to evaluate their effective practices in supporting and developing councillors in their crucial roles within local communities. This is followed by a formal assessment conducted by a member of our team alongside a member of our Executive Board.

Scrutiny Reviews

We can assist you in evaluating your Scrutiny function by employing a blend of methods, including observing meetings, conducting focus groups, and facilitating one-on-one discussions.

Together, we will analyse and provide feedback on what is functioning effectively and identify opportunities to enhance your approach or skills for delivering impactful scrutiny.

THE 21ST CENTURY COUNCILLOR RESEARCH - UPDATED 2025

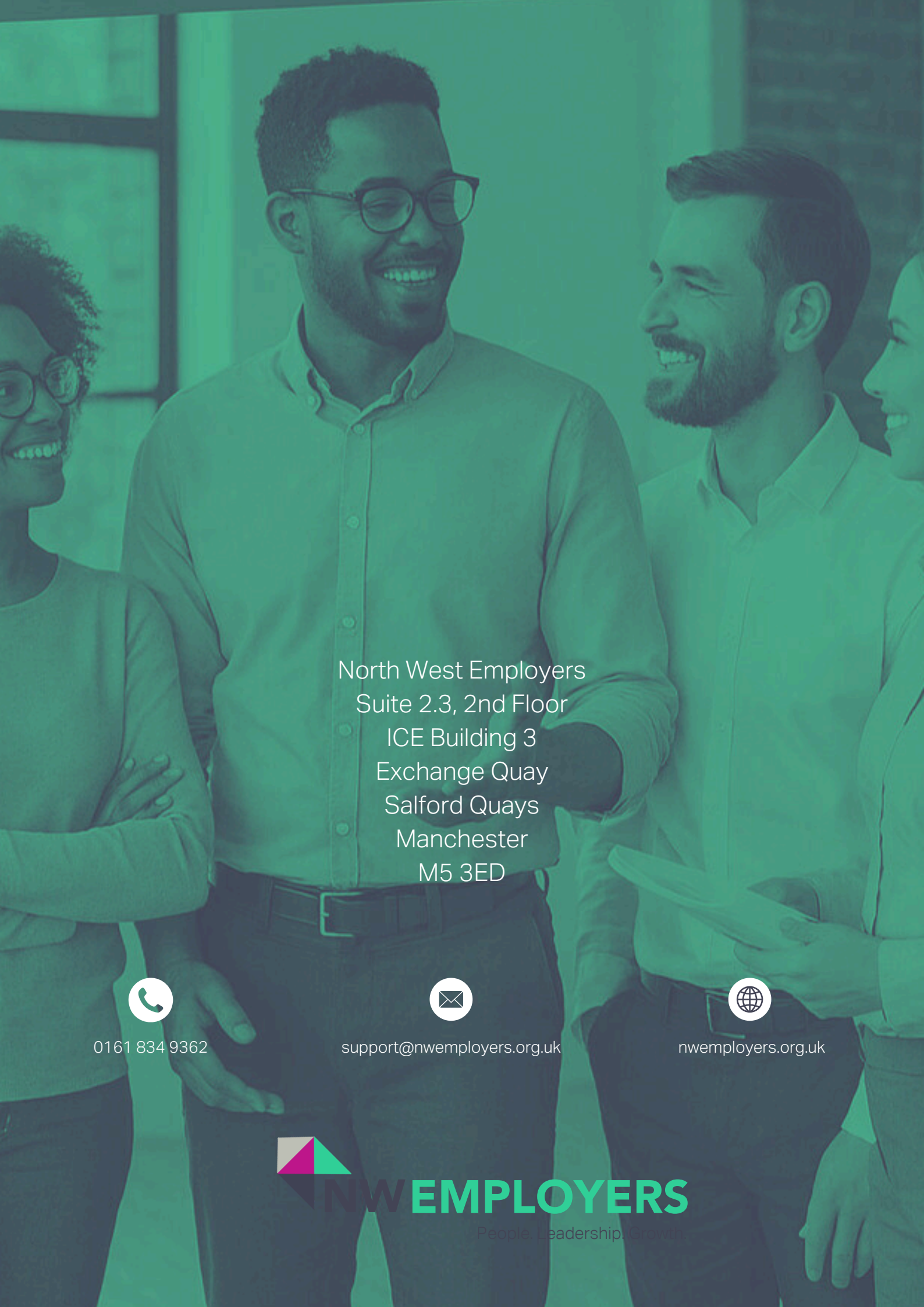
In 2016, following on from the University of Birmingham's research on the 21st Century Public Servant, they looked at the changing roles undertaken by councillors and the associated support and development needs. Nine years on, they have built on and updated that piece of work to take into account the changes of the last decade. The new research by Catherine Needham, Catherine Mangan, Dave Mckenna, Ella Dunne, and Rosanna Marr, draws on interviews with 50 councillors, undertaken in partnership with North West Employers.

The context in which councillors are working is a rapidly changing one. Since the publication of the initial research, several distinctive challenges have emerged. Also, from the interviews, ten characteristics (see image below) of an effective councillors were identified to enable them to thrive in the current context.

The characteristics aim to be useful for councillors for individual and organisational development:

- Individual skills development – councillors can use these to work out which they are already good at, and where they might want to develop. These can be used in mentoring, coaching and appraisals.
- Member development programmes – the characteristics might be used to help structure
- programmes, as the focus for individual sessions, or to inform questions for research and surveys.

The full report and further resources can be accessed here:
https://21stcenturypublicservant.wordpress.com



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