



Next Generation feedback survey

2017/18



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Summary

During early 2018, the Local Government Association (LGA) conducted an online survey of councillors who had participated in Next Generation in 2017/18, in order to get feedback on the quality, content and outcomes of the programme. The results will be used to improve and develop the programme.

Methodology

An online survey was sent to the 69 Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat and Independent councillors who participated in Next Generation in 2017/18, on completion of their course. A total of 38 submitted responses – a response rate of 55 per cent.

Whilst these results should strictly be taken as a snapshot of the views of this particular group of respondents, rather than representative of all councillors who attended Next Generation in 2017/18, this level of response means that the results are likely to provide a good indication of the position of this group more widely.

Results

- **Overall satisfaction with Next Generation:** All (38 respondents) were either very or fairly satisfied with the course.
- **Increased confidence in ability to carry out role:** All (38 respondents) said that the course had increased their confidence to either a great or moderate extent.
- **Objectives:** Nearly all, 95 per cent (36 respondents) said that they wanted to network and learn from other councillors, 87 per cent (33 respondents) aimed to learn more about their personal strengths and weaknesses as a community and political leaders and 84 per cent (32 respondents) wanted to develop their capacity to lead.
- **Achieving objectives:** All (38 respondents) had fully or largely achieved their goals.
- **Practical tools:** Nearly all (97 per cent – 37 respondents) said that they had learnt practical tools that could be put to use in their role as councillor, to either a great or moderate extent.
- **Knowledge and tutor expertise, agenda and venue:** All three of these were rated as either very or fairly good by all respondents (38 people).
- **Access needs/special requirements:** All respondents (excluding those who answered 'not applicable') – 29 people – said that their access needs or special requirements were either very or fairly well met.
- **Recommending the course:** All (38 respondents) said that they would be either very or fairly likely to do so.

Introduction

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Methodology

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A full breakdown of response rate by political party is shown in Table 1.

	Number	Per cent
Conservative	12	60
Labour	10	50
Independent	10	59
Liberal Democrat	6	50
Total	38	55

Please note the following when reading the report:

- Where tables and figures report the base, the description refers to the group of people 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.
- The following conventions are used in tables: ‘*’ - less than 0.5 per cent; ‘0’ – no observations; ‘-’ – category not applicable/data not available.
- Where the response base is less than 50, care should be taken when interpreting percentages, as small differences can seem magnified. Therefore where this is the case in this report, absolute numbers are reported alongside the percentage values.

Feedback on Next Generation

This section provides full results for each survey question.

All respondents were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the Next Generation course that they attended. All (38 respondents) said that they were either very or fairly satisfied.

Table 2: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with Next Generation?		
	Number	Per cent
Very or fairly satisfied	38	100
Very satisfied	36	95
Fairly satisfied	2	5
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	0	0
Fairly dissatisfied	0	0
Very dissatisfied	0	0
Don't know	0	0

Base: all respondents (38 respondents)

All respondents were asked to what extent, if at all, they thought that attending Next Generation had helped them to feel more confident in their ability to carry out their role. All (38 respondents) said that it had helped to either a great or moderate extent.

Table 3: To what extent, if at all, do you feel more confident in your ability to carry out your role having participated in Next Generation?		
	Number	Per cent
Great or moderate extent	38	100
To a great extent	32	84
To a moderate extent	6	16
To a small extent	0	0
Not at all	0	0
Don't know	0	0

Base: all respondents (38 respondents)

All respondents were asked to identify their objectives for taking part in the course. Nearly all, 95 per cent (36 respondents) said that they wanted to network and learn from other councillors, 87 per cent (33 respondents) aimed to learn more about their personal strengths and weaknesses and 84 per cent (32 respondents) wanted to develop their capacity to lead.

Table 4: What were your objectives in taking part in Next Generation?		
	Number	Per cent
To network and learn from other councillors within my own political group or as an independent councillor	36	95
To learn more about my own personal strengths and weaknesses	33	87
To develop my capacity to lead	32	84
To refresh or sharpen my communication and media skills	28	74
To explore different styles and approaches to political leadership	25	66
To explore and test new ways of working	21	55
To increase my understanding of the practical strategies to policy making and best practice	21	55
To define my personal and political leadership vision for my council/ward/group	18	47
To work with others on the big issues facing local government	15	39
To take the opportunity to raise my profile at a local and national level	13	34
To take advantage of alumni opportunities after completing the programme	11	29
To better understand my party's distinctive approach to policy and governance	7	18
Other	0	0
Don't know	0	0

Base: all respondents (38 respondents)

Note: Percentages total to more than 100, since respondents could select a range of objectives.

All respondents were asked to what extent, if at all, they had achieved their objectives. All (38 respondents) had fully or largely achieved their goals.

Table 5: Were the objectives that you had for taking part in Next Generation achieved?		
	Number	Per cent
Fully or largely achieved	38	100
Fully achieved (met all goals)	21	55
Largely achieved (met most goals)	17	45
Partially achieved (met some goals)	0	0
Not achieved (met none of the goals)	0	0
Don't know	0	0

Base: all respondents (38 respondents)

All respondents were asked to what extent, if at all, they had learnt practical tools that could be put to use in their role as a councillor. Nearly all (97 per cent – 37 respondents) said that this was the case to either a great or moderate extent.¹

Table 6: To what extent, if at all, did you learn practical tools you can put to use in your role as a councillor?

	Number	Per cent
Great or moderate extent	37	97
To a great extent	31	82
To a moderate extent	6	16
To a small extent	1	3
Not at all	0	0
Don't know	0	0

Base: all respondents (38 respondents)

All respondents were asked to rate the overall knowledge and expertise of the tutors, the overall agenda and content of the programme and the venue. All (38 respondents) rated all three as either very or fairly good.

Table 7: How would you rate the following?

	Very good		Fairly good		Not very good		Not good at all		Don't know	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
The overall knowledge and expertise of the tutors	36	95	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
The overall agenda and content of the programme	31	82	7	18	0	0	0	0	0	0
The venue(s)	34	89	4	11	0	0	0	0	0	0

Base: all respondents (38 respondents)

Respondents were asked if they had any other comments about the knowledge and expertise of the tutors, the agenda and programme content or the venue. Twelve responses were received and a summary of the key themes is provided below:

- **The knowledge and expertise of the tutors:** Several respondents praised the course tutors, describing them as both excellent and knowledgeable.

"I found the tutors very knowledgeable and skilful." Independent councillor

"The tutors really knew their brief and I found them all excellent" Conservative councillor

¹ Whilst the individual 'great' and 'moderate' answer options displayed in Table 6 appear to sum to 98 per cent, this is due to the fact the figures in the table have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Please note that this may also occur in other parts of the report where answer categories are combined.

- **The agenda and content of the programme:** The programme was described as excellent, providing useful practical exercises and as being beneficial in developing skills. Some respondents offered individual suggestions for improvements or changes to the content and these included; providing some longer sessions with more practical work, more on communications and media training, more training around dealing with difficult political situations and having a session on how to run an effective portfolio or office.

“Excellent programme for personal and political development, and I have improved massively since partaking in it.” Labour councillor

- **The venue:** The course venues were praised by most of those who answered this question, describing them as good and as meeting their needs.

“Ideal venue and location.” Independent councillor

All respondents were asked how well the course met their access needs and/or special requirements. All respondents (29 excluding those who answered ‘not applicable’) said that these were either very or fairly well met.

Table 8: How well did the programme meet your access needs and/or special requirements?		
	Number	Per cent
Very or Fairly well	29	100
Very well	26	90
Fairly well	3	10
Not very well	0	0
Not at all well	0	0
Don't know	0	0

Base: all respondents excluding those who answered “not applicable” (29 respondents)

Respondents were asked what aspects of the overall Next Generation programme they had found most useful. Thirty-five responses were received and a summary of the key themes is provided below:

- **Networking:** Around half of respondents identified as beneficial, the opportunity for networking and learning from the practices and experiences of colleagues from other councils. The chance that this gave respondents to connect and to develop a support network of contacts for the future was also mentioned.

“A great opportunity to network with like-minded colleagues. A brilliant experience!”
Conservative councillor

“Networking with councillors across the country - great support group.” Liberal Democrat councillor

- **Media and communications training:** Around half of all respondents said that they had benefitted from the media training that they had received. Some described this element of the course as helping with public speaking, communication, leadership style and debating skills.

“The media programme at Elstree was invaluable for my confidence and I have since presented to an audience of 300.” Conservative councillor

“The Rada training with Sandy was excellent. I am using techniques I learnt for day to day

speeches and presentations.” Labour councillor

- **Personality analysis:** The Myers Briggs and 360 degree elements of the course were described as useful in providing methods to evaluate strengths and weaknesses, by some respondents.

“The early MBTI was useful and so were the early presentations.” Conservative councillor

- **Developing local government knowledge:** A few respondents said that they valued the local government presentations as these gave them more in-depth understanding.

“I really valued Gary Porter’s speech and finally laid my mind to rest that local government was for me and not being an MP! I will be taking so much away with me!” Conservative councillor

“More in depth knowledge and understanding about the work of local government and the LGA.” Labour councillor

- **Tutors:** The high quality and availability of the speakers on the course was mentioned by a few respondents.

“The chance to pursue some of the session work informally with the presenters helped me get even more out of the course.” Conservative councillor

“I found the tutors very knowledgeable and skilful and the venue provided the ideal environment for our needs.” Independent councillor

Respondents were asked what about the course could have been different or improved, and how. Several respondents stated that no improvement was needed, whilst 23 made some suggestions. The key themes are provided below:

- **Structure:** Suggestions on structure were varied and included: a session at the beginning and end of the course to consider the expectations and impact of the learning from the three modules on attendees, more on communications, more on leadership, more on strategic council work, staging the modules closer together, replacing some presentation sessions with training/practical sessions and providing more time for personal plans.

“Some days had a lot of presentations: possible to turn some of these into training type sessions? - more “political” training e.g. media skills, political problems.” Labour councillor

“I guess the modules could have been staged closer together. Focus more on role play interactive council meeting/chamber scenarios.” Independent councillor

“..a Dunford Council type session at the beginning as well as at the end would show very clearly the impact the three modules have on attendees.” Conservative councillor

- **Timing:** A few respondents said that the programme needed to be longer and identified occasions when it had felt slightly rushed.

“It’s just a shame there wasn’t more time overall.” Independent councillor

Respondents were asked if they had any specific comments about the three modules.

Module one

Eleven responses were received and these were largely positive. Sessions on MBTI, wicked problems, and the overview on leadership styles and the political journeys exercise were all highlighted as useful.

"The personality types, I'm now using the MBTI traits more for people I interact with. Group leadership and how to prepare for running a council. Leadership styles and how to deal with 'wicked' problems was very insightful." Conservative councillor

"A positive start, the political journeys exercise helped solidify a disparate group, build trust and a positive working atmosphere." Independent councillor

"The RADA training was excellent and getting to know people was great. The hotel in London was lovely. The food wasn't that great though and the queues for breakfast not great." Labour councillor

"... The section on working with the press turned out to have a big impact as I had previously avoided the press and they are now a key part of my thinking when I make a plan." Liberal Democrat councillor

Module two

Eleven responses were provided and these were mainly positive describing the module as useful, challenging and helpful.

"RADA and TV Interview were perfect combination and really build confidence." Conservative councillor

"This challenged me the most, as it was the furthest from what I undertake most weeks, but have already taken action to work in this area to improve my personal performance." Conservative councillor

"Probably the module I enjoyed most. There was so much to do in a day I wonder if it could be better run over two days. Lord Scriven's comment about the role of opposition really struck a chord with me (be a guerrilla)." Liberal Democrat councillor

Module three

Fourteen responses were given and these were largely positive describing the module as valuable, useful and enjoyable. One or two comments mentioned that the module felt a little rushed and that it would have been useful for the group to have more time to prepare.

"Maybe didn't hang together as well as the other modules and felt a little rushed but still really valuable" Independent councillor

"Loved the democracy review presentations I thought that this was really useful and entertaining." Labour councillor

"The leadership training was really good." Liberal Democrat councillor

"David Holdstock's session on communications was really good." Independent councillor

All respondents were asked how likely they would be to recommend Next Generation to fellow councillors if they were asked about it. All (38 respondents) said that they would be either very or fairly likely to do so.

Table 9: Taking everything into consideration, how likely would you be to recommend Next Generation to fellow councillors if asked about it?

	Number	Per cent
Very or Fairly likely	38	100
Very likely	37	97
Fairly likely	1	3
Not very likely	0	0
Not at all likely	0	0
Don't know	0	0

Base: all respondents (38 respondents)

Respondents were asked to provide any comments that could be used to help promote Next Generation to future participants. The full list of responses are contained in Annex B.

Respondents were asked if they had any further comments about Next Generation. The full list of responses can be found in Annex C and these included:

- *“Thanks for the opportunity to take part in this course. It's really boosted my confidence as a councillor, and helped to extend my network outside of my local area. It's been great to meet everyone who's taken part in the course and understand more about my role. I now feel I have lots more ideas and practical tips to help me lead change in my local area.”* Independent councillor
- *“The team were brilliant and attentive. I thoroughly enjoyed it and renewed my quest for learning and development. I have been able to utilise much of what we learnt in everyday practice and would recommend this course all day long and have already done so to others.”* Conservative councillor
- *“It was a great course ran by great people, I gained a massive amount from it! Thanks for the allowing me that opportunity.”* Liberal Democrat councillor
- *“Thank you! It has helped me to see that local government is my future, which given some of the turbulence, was not clear to me prior to the course. I have been able to refocus and redouble my energies towards delivering better outcomes for our communities in a marginal and challenging political environment.”* Labour councillor

Annex A: Questionnaire

The questions in this section ask for your views of the overall Next Generation programme. There will be an opportunity later in the survey to provide any feedback you might have on any of the three specific modules.

1. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with Next Generation?

Very satisfied
Fairly satisfied
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
Fairly dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied
Don't know

2. To what extent, if at all, do you feel more confident in your ability to carry out your role, having participated in Next Generation?

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

3. What were your objectives in taking part in Next Generation?

Please tick all that apply

To develop my capacity to lead
To explore different styles and approaches to political leadership
To define my personal and political leadership vision for my council/ward/group
To refresh or sharpen my communication and media skills
To learn more about my own personal strengths and weaknesses as a community and political leader
To network and learn from other councillors within my own political group or as an independent councillor
To better understand my party's distinctive approach to policy and governance
To work with others on the big issues facing local government
To take the opportunity to raise my profile at a local and national level
To increase my understanding of the practical strategies to policy making and best practice
To take advantage of alumni opportunities after completing the programme
To explore and test new ways of working
Other (please specify)
Don't know

To everyone apart from those who selected 'don't know':

4. Were the objectives that you had for taking part in Next Generation achieved?

Fully achieved (met all goals)
Largely achieved (met most goals)
Partially achieved (met some goals)
Not achieved (met none of the goals)
Don't know

To all:

5. To what extent, if at all, did you learn practical tools you can put to use in your role as a councillor?

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

6. How would you rate the following?

Please tick one option for each row

	Very good	Fairly good	Not very good	Not good at all	Don't know
The overall knowledge and expertise of the tutors					
The overall agenda and content of the programme					
The venue(s)					

7. If you have comments on any of the above, please use the space below:

8. How well did the programme meet your access needs and/or special requirements?

Very well
Fairly well
Not very well (please give details)
Not at all well (please give details)
Don't know
Not applicable

9. What aspects of the overall Next Generation programme did you find most useful?

10. What could have been different or improved, and how?

11. If you have any specific comments about any of the modules, please use the space below:

	Comments
Module 1	
Module 2	
Module 3	

12. Taking everything in to consideration, how likely would you be to recommend Next Generation to fellow councillors if asked about it?

Very likely
Fairly likely
Not very likely
Not at all likely
Don't know

13. We would welcome any comments that we could use to help promote Next Generation to future participants. Please use the space below.

14. Please indicate below whether you would like your comment to be used anonymously, whether you would be happy for us to include your name alongside it, or whether you'd be happy for us to also include your photograph (either from the council website or the one you provided to us for the booklet).

I would like my quote to be anonymised
I am happy for my quote to be used alongside my name
I am happy for my photograph to also be included

15. Finally, if you have any further comments about Next Generation, please use the space below.

Many thanks for taking the time to complete this survey. Your feedback will be used to improve and develop the programme.

Annex B: “We would welcome any comments that we could use to help promote Next Generation to future participants”

“The Next Generation programme is a fantastic opportunity to expand your leadership skills, knowledge of local government and in turn greatly increase your effectiveness as an elected Councillor. Taking place in high-quality venues with numerous networking opportunities, I would highly recommend the Next Generation programme to all.” Conservative

“The calibre of the speakers was superb. It was fantastic to network and be in a same room with fellow conservatives and learning from their own experiences. I have learnt more about me, media training was nerve wracking and exciting. I now feel more confident to go for a leadership position. Beautifully organised. Would like to do it again!” Conservative

“One of the most unique courses I have ever taken in local government. If you want to network with passionate councillors from around the country, learn from leading experts and make your mark as part of the next generation - this course is for you.” Conservative

“For anyone with Leadership ambition, I would suggest “Next Gen” is a must attend program.” Conservative

“I would certainly recommend this course to any councillor who wanted to improve their performance as a councillor and progress in local government.” Conservative

“I would definitely recommend this programme for anyone that wants to progress their political career. It builds confidence and gives you the tools you will need to fulfil a role in public life. It is an ideal way to meet likeminded people with whom you can share experiences with and create a support network for the future.” Conservative

“The entire course was a fantastic experience from start to finish. Not only did I gain a huge amount of knowledge and skills that will definitely help with my duties as a Councillor, but also met a fantastic group of people many whom I now consider friends. I would [wholeheartedly] recommended the LGA Next Generation to any Councillor who can go”. Conservative

“If you are given the opportunity to participate don't delay please grab the chance with both hands, embrace the new thinking and techniques you will be exposed to and really challenged by and which help equip you to be an even better councillor.” Conservative

“I was made a Cabinet Member at both a very young age and in my first term as a Councillor. I therefore had very little time to focus on my personal development as I had to cope with what was a baptism of fire. The Next Generation Programme provided an opportunity for me to reflect, learn and develop in the surroundings of fellow Conservatives and I honestly believe that I have developed skills that will hopefully in time make me a better Councillor and Lead Member. I could not be more grateful for the LGA Conservative Group for pulling together such a comprehensive and beneficial programme.” Conservative

“This course was very worthwhile and all the participants learned new skills and the interaction between the participants was one of the most useful and enjoyable aspects of the Next Generation Programme.” Independent

"The next generation is a very valuable learning tool to find out who you are to where you fit in to your role and learn new ways of working to benefit councils councillors and residents." Independent

"I would recommend the course to those councillors with motivation to become more self-aware and effective." Independent

"I started Next Generation not knowing really what to expect but feeling very lucky to have been successful in my application. Especially as an independent councillor, I felt very isolated and ill-prepared for my role. I left having met a wonderful group of people and felt thoroughly prepared for the future challenges I know I will face and feeling very supported in my role by the LGA independent group." Independent

"Do this course. Make the most of this opportunity. It's not often as a councillor you can get that time and space to reflect, learn, and progress in a peer environment." Independent

"Next generation is an extremely valuable learning tool for both new and experienced councillors to improve all aspects of skill set that is required in the councillor role." Independent

"Thank you for allowing me to attend and thank you to all the organisers. It was a good learning experience. Already putting into practice what I have learnt." Independent

"Next Generation was life changing for me. It has given me so much confidence in the political arena. The course helped me to identify good practice in other local authorities whilst building up a network of colleagues whom I can call on for support and advice. I'd urge any councillor to sign up to this programme if they want to progress to a leadership role or improve in their current role." Labour

"Next Generation was a unique opportunity to meet a fantastic group of Councillors from around the country, all of whom are incredibly passionate about improving their areas. It's rare to be able to spend so much time just to think through challenges with others, get ideas, and learn from people who've been through it all before." Labour

"The course has increased my confidence and made me feel supported and valued within the wider Party. It really is a great learning opportunity." Labour

"The Labour Next Generation Programme has without doubt made me a more effective Deputy Leader. After the first module, members of my group were commenting on the positive impact it had on my performance inside and outside the council chamber. I cannot recommend it highly enough." Labour

"This is an unparalleled opportunity for both political and personal development - CPD for Councillors, within your own political group." Labour

"As a new Deputy Leader I found the Next Generation Programme invaluable, I have gained confidence in my abilities. I manage conflict better and feel generally more competent in my role. I have learnt to manage the demands better and feel more confident in speaking publically." Labour

"Next Generation is an incredible way to stop and think about what's next for you, your area, your group, and your council and what role you want to play in shaping that future. It's a great way to meet other councillors committed to local government and learn about yourself and others. It gave me so much confidence in what I was already doing and what I wanted to achieve and I'm a better councillor for it." Liberal Democrat

Annex C: “Finally, if you have any further comments about Next Generation, please use the space below”

“Thank you very much to the organisers. It was amazing.” Conservative

“Angela & Will put together a fantastic three module program, keep up the good work!!”
Conservative

“Perhaps another course to a higher level for those who become cabinet members/committee chairman.” Conservative

“Excellent opportunity and thank you for allowing me to be on the course, I know it is rare for councillors in opposition to be on such courses. I felt we could give colleagues another perspective too, in how to deal with opposition and what pitfalls to avoid. Certainly feel I am a better councillor for it and my group leader has increasingly relied on me over last few months.” Conservative

“Thank you all for the help and encouragement during the programme.” Conservative

“I look most forward to attending future LGA events.” Conservative

“The team were brilliant and attentive. I thoroughly enjoyed it and renewed my quest for learning and development. I have been able to utilise much of what we learnt in everyday practice and would recommend this course all day long and have already done so to others.”
Conservative

“Well done to all concerned.” Independent

“Thank you!” Independent

“Thank you” Independent

“Virginia and Toby were excellent facilitators, true assets to the LGA.” Independent

“Thanks for the opportunity to take part in this course. It's really boosted my confidence as a councillor, and helped to extend my network outside of my local area. It's been great to meet everyone who's taken part in the course and understand more about my role. I now feel I have lots more ideas and practical tips to help me lead change in my local area.”
Independent

“Thank you to Martin Angus, Paul Wheeler, Helen Holland, Arooj Shah and Jamie Ostrowski for making Next Generation so enjoyable for all those who attended.” Labour

“Thanks it's been a great!” Labour

“Thank you! It has helped me to see that local government is my future, which given some of the turbulence, was not clear to me prior to the course. I have been able to refocus and redouble my energies towards delivering better outcomes for our communities in a marginal and challenging political environment.” Labour

“No it was fantastic and I am so glad I did it!” Labour

“Thank you!” Liberal Democrats

"It was a great course ran by great people, I gained a massive amount from it! Thanks for the allowing me that opportunity." Liberal Democrats

"Ensure you write to all group leaders and ask they think about someone to put on here. Also do consider opposition councillors, sometimes there is just a focus on those in ruling administrations." Conservative

"It was only through my research did I know this existed so definitely a promotion via democratic services or even the CCA when the Cllrs are elected in the first instance"
Conservative

"I would suggest promoting to Green Councillors through Robert Lindsay at the Association of Green Councillors (agc@greenparty.org.uk). More promotion by LGA (via email and in the LGA magazine) of this course and other online courses for councillors - particularly focused at newly elected councillors." Independent

"I heard about Next gen through word of mouth and I am recommending someone to attend a future course on the same basis. I am not sure how widely the course is known about in the wider party?" Liberal Democrats

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