

Guidance note for Members not re-elected

This guidance note is intended to support and advise Members who do not regain their seat at local elections.

After the dust has settled following the elections, there will be issues you want to consider relating to your ICT data, equipment and email. This guidance note provides information and advice to make the transition as simple as possible. You will also find some general advice provided by councillors who have been in the same position, along with details of the officers you will need to contact.

ICT data, equipment and email

1. Files and data stored on your PC or laptop

Please note that there is no provision to keep or purchase Council equipment. Within two weeks of the elections you will be contacted by Democratic Services officers to arrange a convenient time for your equipment to be collected.

After the elections, please spend some time looking at your computer files and data and consider what you want to keep, what you want to destroy and what you want to pass on to other Members or to your Group Office.

If you have been a councillor for a number of years, you may have a large amount of paperwork and electronic data so you may need support from ICT or your Group Office. The following questions may help with this process:

- What Council equipment do you have? Make a list of what you will need to return (PC/laptop, printer, filing cabinet etc) and consider whether you need to replace it.
- What files and data do you need to keep? ICT can help you to transfer computer files from your Council PC to your own computer and can also advise on suitable storage devices.
- What course of action will you take with your casework, particularly any ongoing cases? Depending on your circumstances, you will need to discuss handover arrangements with a former ward colleague or your Group Office.

If you are unsure about what you should do regarding disposal of personal information you hold about individuals or cases, please refer to the Council's Data Protection Act – Guidance for Members (contact Member Development for a copy).

2. Email

It is likely that constituents, officers and other contacts will continue to send you emails for a period of time. In order to make them aware of your change of circumstances you may want to create an individual 'Out of Office' message. **If you decide to do this, please ensure that this is in place within two weeks of the elections.**

The following is an example of the kind of Out Of Office message you may want to create:

“Thank you for your email. Please note that as of xx date xx I am no longer a councillor. Please contact one of the following people who will be able to assist you with your query... [insert contact details for the relevant new Member and/or ward colleague].

If you decide to include personal contact details in your message, please be aware that **anyone** who emails you will receive it. For this reason you may want to email key contacts separately and inform them of your future contact details privately.

If you do not create your own message, an automated one will be created for you and applied to your email account, using the following wording:

“Thank you for your email. Please note that Cllr xxx is no longer a councillor. If there are any outstanding matters that need to be dealt with please contact the xxx Group Office on xxxx.”

Any Out of Office messages will remain in place for a period of three months.

General advice and support

Losing a seat can come as a shock, even when you feel you have considered the risks and prepared for it. You may experience a sense of loss, particularly if you have been a councillor for many years. The following tips have been provided by former councillors who have found themselves in a similar position:

1. Consider putting together a book (use a scrapbook or similar) which charts your achievements and key memories from your time in office. This is an important way of acknowledging the significant impact you have made on the lives of the citizens of Leeds and will provide an opportunity to reflect and remember what you have achieved.
2. Take up the opportunity offered by Member Development for an exit interview. You can do this at any time, not just immediately after the elections (in fact, this process can be more valuable a few months afterwards, once you have had a chance to consider your position and reflect on your experience).
3. Speak to colleagues who have been in the same position about their experiences and consider ways to continue being involved in the aspects of Council life that you enjoyed.
4. Ask the Member Development team for a copy of your Learning Record (a certificate listing all the learning activities you have undertaken during your time on the Council). This can be used to identify further opportunities for lifelong learning, as evidence of transferable skills for future employers and as evidence of your own learning achievements.

Contact details

In the first instance please raise any general queries with your Group Office Manager. For specific issues please contact the following:

- To arrange the removal of ICT equipment – Projects and Resources team, Democratic Services, 247 6005
- To arrange an exit interview, or for a copy of your individual learning record – Kay Sidebottom, Member Development Officer, 395 0878
- For support with the moving and storage of ICT data and files – Andy Keightley, ICT Services, 279174
- For advice about your Council pension arrangements – Angela Brown, Principal Pensions Officer, 247 5040.