Actions and suggestions from the final workshop

Contacting officers	
Priority actions:	**Other suggestions:**
- Improve the quality of information on People Finder. It should be kept up to date. This should include specific references where officers work in designated Wards. - Named officer contacts for handling queries.	- Staff who work in a Ward or neighbourhood should make themselves known to councillors from the outset. - Pen portraits of councillors and officers as a tool for developing a shared understanding. - Services should share their officer structures and contacts (a simple who does what).

Meeting and working together	
Priority actions:	**Other suggestions:**
- Invite councillors to work with officers to problem-solve Ward issues (Ward Solution Meetings) and be involved in Ward-based service initiatives. - Capture stories where joint working between councillors and officers has been successful. - Senior officers should ensure that their officers are supported / have permission to communicate with Ward councillors. Reduce the hierarchy. - Routine Ward / site visits / Ward walkabouts with officers on a quarterly basis (would need rota approach to be manageable).	- A general wish for more joint officer and councillor sessions. - There were a range of comments relating to the current approach to councillor enquiries which is a barrier to councillors developing relationships with officers. - Use the service redesign / peer review model when inviting councillors in to see what services do. - Create champions for services amongst councillors. - Officers should check the council calendar of meetings when thinking about inviting councillors or setting up meetings.

Meeting and working together (continued)

Priority actions:	Other suggestions:
• Councillors should be more challenging of some of the behaviours of other cllrs within their group. • "Bring Your Councillor to Work Day". • Take opportunities to do "joint" casework. • Develop a Fresher's Fair where councillors can drop in and meet different officers and services. • Councillors understand their communities, ask them for advice and insight. • Officers should attend Council or Cabinet meetings as part of their development. • Hold themed lunch time briefings for councillors and staff. • Staff and Cllrs to volunteer a day working in the ward with a voluntary organisation / community group on a ward based task. • Quarterly Ward-based meetings between councillors and officers. • Explore the use of virtual technology to make it easier for officers to engage with councillors. • Use planned events as an opportunity for councillors and officers to get together on a more routine basis. • Encourage officers to consider "What can a councillor do for you?" Councillors as a resource for officers. • Councillors invited into services and team meetings. Hold service open days for councillors. • Provide a more tailored service – officers to know more about Wards and the personalities of councillors. • Increase the opportunities for shadowing councillors in their Wards. • Spotlight on a service or introduction to a service newsletter. • Cabinet portfolio holders should visit services and have an open invitation to other councillors to join them. • Forums for discussion and ideas involving officers, councillors and partners.	• Officers should attend the election count to experience democracy in action.

Information and support for councillors	

Priority actions:	**Other suggestions:**
• Bite size / right size information about Wards – online and through direct contact. A "timely script" on key community issues. • Develop Ward based social media platforms where councillors can access up to date information about their Wards than can be shared with constituents. • Monthly Ward-based newsletter / regular information of forthcoming activity, initiatives and events. • Introduce the new casework management system and end legacy systems. • Request the views and inputs from councillors earlier. • Put timescales to reference numbers e.g. how long will it take to… fix a pot hole? • Develop a "menu of opportunities" to allow councillors to opt into the information they want to receive. This could be updated annually. • Councillors should know which officers are working in their Wards and when. • Have a key officer conduit (who has knowledge of the area, councillors and services) for getting information to councillors. • Senior officers should be contactable by councillors any time to discuss urgent issues and vice versa. • Provide a "family tree" organisation structure for all councillors and officers. • Services host annual open days. • Emails from services (this could be co-ordinated) in respect of what is happening in Wards.	• Provision of more Ward-based intelligence. • Produce monthly success stories for Ward councillors. • Look at how the Councillor Account can be used as a means of providing updates. • Use technology to drip-feed information to councillors e.g. Kompass. • Identify which services are of a higher priority for regular contact and communications with councillors. • Provide more meaningful Ward profiles / insights. • Services should link into existing Ward arrangements e.g. Ward Forums, School Community Hubs. • Ward Facebook group.

• Text councillors to ensure they have facts to stop local misconceptions.	

Learning and development	
Priority actions: • Reinforce the officer / councillor protocol as part of induction and on an ongoing basis. • Induction for new staff should incorporate meeting with councillors. Opportunities to learn and bond together. • Existing "Working in a Political Environment" training needs promoting. • Staff development programme for all new starters at all levels. • Democracy Service officers who are experienced and skilled in working with councillors should be champions who offer advice and guidance. • Simple guidance for officers about the best ways to communicate with councillors. • Provide training and experiences for younger / less experienced officers e.g. senior officers taking them to meetings and encouraging shadowing. • Enhance the councillor wall chart with small biographies of each councillor – humanise them.	**Other suggestions:** • Officers need to understand the "basic rules" of working with councillors. • All management training should include political awareness and officers and councillors working together. • Ensure councillor role profiles are clear and used as part of induction. • Meetings with key Ward-based officers and teams as part of new councillor induction. • 1-1 discussions and appraisals should include discussions about officers and councillors working together. • Create and promote a guide for officers to nurture political awareness and confidence.