



# Member Development

## Annual Report 2016-17

April 2017



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE





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## Foreword

This is my second Annual Report as Chairman of the Member Development Charter Steering Group which I hope captures the progress made in the last year. Moving on last year's focus on new member induction the member development programme aims to support Councillors to respond to the significant challenges facing the authority and make informed decisions for their borough. The effectiveness of elected members remains a key priority for Bracknell Forest Council and the embedded approach towards member development reflects this.

I was pleased to see South East Employers endorse our approach and commitment to Member Development when the interim Charter Plus review was completed.

As acknowledged last year the new Council narrative has been reflected in the revised Member Development Strategy. As a result the development programme incorporates ways to support Councillors with the delivery of the new approach and the Council Plan's strategic themes.

The Council Plan is set in a difficult financial context as is the Member Development Strategy. The proposed revision acknowledges that delivery of member development will be more sustainable and better value by working in collaboration with the Council's partners and finding effective methods of delivery such as increased use of eLearning.

As always, my thanks go to members of the Steering Group and all the officers who have made this progress possible.

**Councillor Nick Allen**  
**Chairman of Member Development Charter Steering Group**



## Message from Executive Member

Bracknell Forest's commitment to providing Members with the support to undertake their roles effectively has again been recognised in the Charter Plus direction of travel assessment.

This commitment will sustain the continued delivery of support to all elected members as they develop an understanding of the challenges the authority faces. Members are learning how these challenges affects the way services are delivered and the impact for residents. The member development programme makes use of multiple sources of information and delivery methods to share understanding and help members effectively engage with the decision-making processes on behalf of the borough's residents.

I continue to encourage all members to engage with the development opportunities and work with officers to maintain and build upon our existing high quality development programme.

**Councillor Iain McCracken**  
**Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection**



## Introduction

The purpose of this report is to appraise all Members of the work and progress on Member Development during the year 2016-2017. The report informs Members of activities and their outcomes and outlines proposed future activities.

## Member Development Charter Steering Group

The Steering Group meets as needed during the year with updates and important matters dealt with via email and Chairman's briefings. This year the Member Development Charter Steering Group has been focused upon the direction of travel assessment, 360 degree feedback project and review of the Member Development Strategy. The Steering Group comprised eight Councillors meeting with appropriate officers.

The Steering Group members in 2016-17 were Councillors Allen (Chairman), Wade (Vice-Chairman), McCracken, Mrs McCracken, Mrs McKenzie, McLean, Ms Merry and Thompson.



## Charter Plus direction of travel assessment

South East Employers confirmed that the Council is continuing to meet the standard of the Charter Plus for Elected Member Development following an interim 18 month review undertaken in September 2016.



Suggested improvements:

- Consideration of a 'Be A Councillor Event' to promote the role of Councillor during 2018 in the run up to the 2019 elections
- use BORIS as a platform to share member knowledge and learning gained through attendance at conferences and seminars

A new Charter Accreditation Framework has been developed and the Council will be fully reassessed against this in January 2018.

### **A number of key strengths and successes were identified including:**

- **A newly developed Member Development Strategy aligned to the Council Plan**
- **A member development programme that supports the approach to transformation**
- **A comprehensive Induction Programme following the 2015 elections and a robust approach to evaluation to measure the success and impact.**
- **The introduction of Portfolio Review Groups to support Councillor succession planning**
- **A continued commitment to a 360 degree review process to be commenced during Autumn 2016. The 360 degree feedback process is now embedded as recognised practice and is an approach that very few other Councils have achieved.**
- **Success in promoting local democracy to schools and having in place candidate briefings.**

**“Bracknell Forest Council continues to set the standard for member development across the region”**

**Mark Palmer,  
South East Employers**

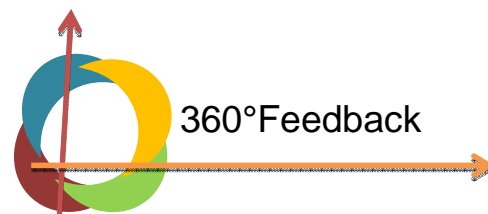
## 360 degree feedback project

The latest round of 360° Feedback was launched in October 2016 to enable Councillors to gain feedback from a range of different sources. The feedback can be used to identify skills and areas for development as well as show hidden strengths and 'blind spots'. As the Council is going through a period of change, the opportunity was also taken to update the Council profiles and questions in light of the Council Plan and ensure the questions were easier to understand. The new role profiles can be viewed here: <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/memberroles>

The process involves asking 10 reviewers to answer questions about how consistently the councillor displays a range of skills. For example, the reviewer could be asked to say how often they "present concise arguments." Each councillor will be asked about their core skills, with additional questions for councillors with additional responsibilities. The final report will be complemented by the Councillor's own assessment profiling each question against the collective responses of the reviewers.

A demonstration of the system is given in the initial briefing and full support is available from Member Services.

Ten Councillors have already completed the feedback process so far and four more councillors are part way through the process. There are a further two tranches with all Members having the opportunity to take part by the end of December 2017.



**"Smooth process,  
clear and  
intuitive"**

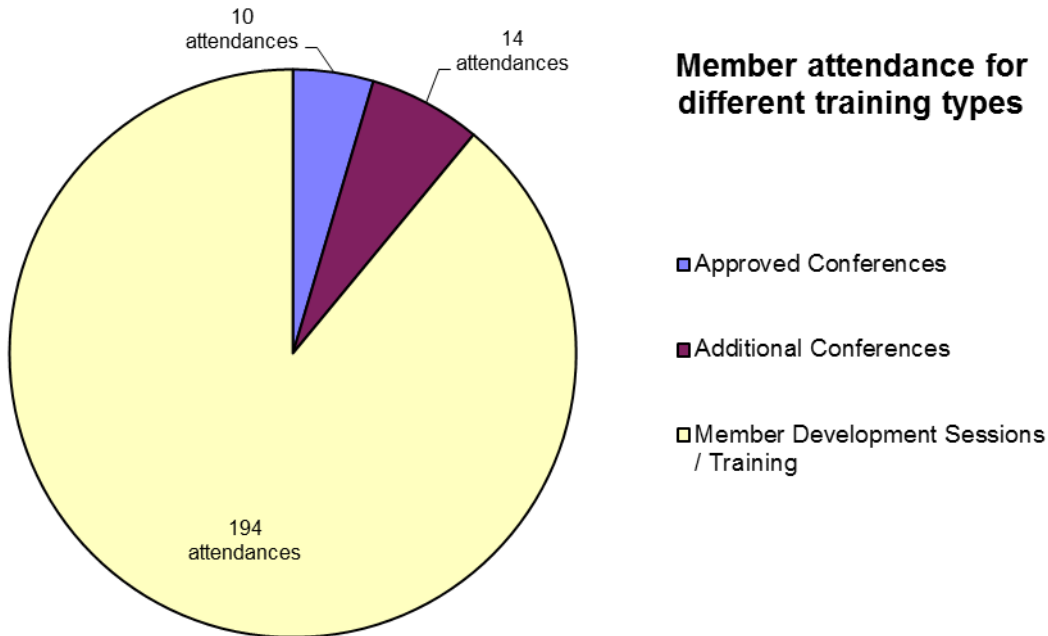
**"I really valued the feedback  
I received and would take  
part in the process again. I  
recommend that everyone  
should take part - it is so  
helpful"**

**"On a personal level,  
this was one of the  
easiest Competency  
questionnaires I have  
ever experienced for an  
appraisal and the  
process is simple and  
intuitive."**

**"I thought the report  
reflected me really well  
and I appreciate  
Councillors taking the  
time to complete  
feedback for me"**

## Access to Development

- For 5 approved conferences there were 10 attendances
- For 13 additional conferences there were 16 attendances
- For 19 member development sessions, including externally facilitated sessions and briefing seminars, there were 194 attendances



In 2016-17 £405 was spent per Councillor on Member Development. This calculation excludes officer time to prepare and deliver Member Development sessions.

Charter Plus best practice suggests opportunities should be taken to share the cost of development activities with neighbouring authorities and where appropriate Parish and Town Councils. It is hoped that this will make it possible to run popular sessions on multiple occasions which would benefit Bracknell Forest Council Councillors through:

- a) Offering multiple dates (therefore increasing the chances of being able to attend)
- b) Sharing knowledge with other councils
- c) Networking with peers
- d) Recognition of Bracknell Forest as a leading member development authority.

The Strategy has been revised to include reference to working collaboratively to share costs and widen development opportunities.



## Adult Social Care – Key challenges and vision for the future

Delivered on 5 December 2016 and attended by 17 Councillors

Facilitated by senior members of staff from Adult Social Care, Health and Housing Department

The objective of the session was to update Members on key issues in adult social care. The aim was to explore current challenges and consider how Bracknell Forest Council can continue to create a resilient system of support for our residents that promotes health, well-being and independence.

- Setting the scene – key features of the adult social care system
- Current challenges and how we are dealing with them
- Shaping the future of adult social care
- Interactive Discussion: Members' role in supporting adult social care

**Strategic themes supported:** All themes

**Audience:** All Members and offered to Parish and Town Councillors



## Institute of Licensing National Training Conference

Attended on 16 November 2016 by 1 Councillor

The event is three days of training covering all of the major licensing related topics in addition to training on the niche areas of licensing. The days are themed to ensure there is always a training topic that will be of interest to delegates.

**Strategic themes supported:**  
All themes

## Waste Matters in Planning Applications

Delivered on 23 February 2017 and attended by 7 Councillors

Facilitated by officers from Environmental Services, Transport Development and Planning.

This session explained how planning applications are assessed to ensure that suitable facilities are available for the storage and disposal of waste in new developments including access for refuse vehicles.

**Strategic themes supported:**  
A clean, green, growing and sustainable place

**Audience:**  
All Members

## Town Centre Regeneration

Delivered on 9 November 2016 and attended by 21 Councillors

Facilitated by Victor Nicholls, Assistant Chief Executive.

The objective of this session was to update all members on current and future town centre development.

**Strategic themes supported:**  
A strong and resilient economy

**Audience:** All elected members



## LGA Annual Conference

Attended on 5 – 7 July 2016  
by 3 Councillors

Running alongside the main conference programme, the Innovation Zone allowed delegates to take part in a mixture of exciting, inspirational and interactive sessions on political leadership, commercialisation, digitalisation, community action and joint working.

**Strategic themes supported:**  
All themes

## Personal Safety

Delivered on 6 February 2017 and attended by 7 Councillors

Facilitated by Miranda Smythe, LGiU

This session was for Councillors who lone work as part of their role and who want to be more aware of their personal safety and was based on sensible advice and established good practice.

In addition to exploring issues around personal safety, the programme helped participants become more aware about the reasons why people can behave in negative ways, and explores practical ways to avoid situations becoming uncontrollable.

**Strategic themes supported:** People have the life skills and education opportunities they need to thrive

**Audience:** All members and offered to neighbouring authorities and Parish and Town Councils

### Strategies

- Choose to be safe
- Talk and behave carefully
- Walk away from a deteriorating situation
- Run away
- Defend if
- Counter a resort.



# Promoting Local Democracy

## Local Democracy Week 10 – 16 October 2016

Local Democracy week was marked by four events including local schools participating in democracy games, visiting the Council Chamber and finding out what local councillors do.

The School Council at Birch Hill Primary School met four Councillors and the Mayor on Friday 14 October. The children explored what Members of Parliament and Councillors do and the differences which had some surprising answers; this inspired lots more questions about what their job involved and what advice they could give about being a good school Councillor. The children were really interested to see the Mayor's robes and particularly wanted to see what was written on the chains.



This activity was followed by a local democracy game called 'design your perfect school Councillor.' – The children explored what qualities they need to be good school councillors and they thought of some excellent examples including – tolerance, respect for others, being reliable and letting everyone have their say.

**“It was a pleasure meeting and listening to the young school Councillors. They are obviously taking their role in the school seriously and have a lot to contribute. This early involvement in democracy is to be applauded”**

**Councillor Mrs Temperton**

**“It was a wonderful morning – the children asked some insightful questions and were really enthusiastic.”**

**Mayor, Councillor Virgo**

At the end of the session the children were asked if they would like to be a local councillor with lots of them hoping they might get elected when they were older and all of the children agreed they would put the advice given by the local Councillors into practice.

This successful Democracy Games session has been repeated at Crowthorne Church of England Primary School with Years 5 and 6.



The Mayor visited College Town Junior School and Cranbourne Primary School to speak about his role. The children were interested to learn that the Mayor meets lots of local people and volunteers and raises money for charity. The children were also given the opportunity to see a video about the regeneration of Bracknell Town Centre. A teacher at Cranbourne Primary School, Ruyan Donovan, commented “the children were quite inspired and enjoyed asking him lots of questions”.



Brakenhale Academy School Council came to visit the Council Chamber on Thursday 13 October. The students were really engaged and keen to see where the full Council meets. The School Council meeting covered a range of topics from getting more school benches to subject taster sessions and charity fund raising events. Their teacher, Carleen Thomas, said “the students had a fantastic time”.



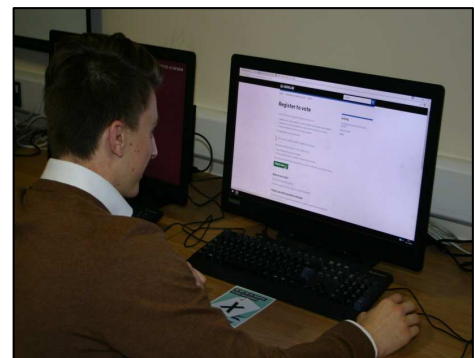
The School Council from Uplands Primary School also held their meeting in the Council chamber in January.

**Brakenhale School**

Brakenhale School held a ‘Why Vote’ session with their 6<sup>th</sup> form. Only 34% of people aged between 18-24 voted in the last general election, so this session was aimed at helping them think about the impact their vote could have.

The first activity was called – “Vote with your feet” and involved the students moving to a side of the room whether they agreed or disagreed with a statement. Half of the students were given stickers to represent the young people who don’t vote and were asked to step aside which sometimes changed the result of the vote.

For the next activity, they were asked to divide the government’s budget between 8 government departments; defence, education, health, international aid, welfare and benefits, police and security, culture and sport and environment and justify why they had given different departments the amount of money they had. Then the students were given a different scenario; the country is in recession so you need to cut your budget which gave some interesting results. Some students cut all areas whilst others protected ‘essential’ services such as health and education with some really persuasive arguments for their decisions.





**National 'Takeover' Day**

On Friday 18 November, young people from across the borough took part in a national 'Takeover Day'. This year, as well as youth council members, students from the borough's secondary schools there were young people from SiLSiP (Say it loud, say it proud) participating in the event, supported by the Bracknell Forest youth service team. Young people were partnered with executive members, directors or chief officers, to have the opportunity to understand how public figures make decisions and to catch a glimpse of their day-to-day work. The participants were able to attend meetings and visit the many sites and offices the council is involved with and were encouraged to share their perspective and opinions on council matters.



**“The young people always commit wholeheartedly to their roles for the day and enjoy getting involved with local government, learning why democracy is important and understanding how the council’s decisions can impact their day-to-day lives. It was a very enjoyable and thought-provoking day. Thank you to everyone who took part.”**

**Councillor McCracken**

**Promotion of the Office of Mayor**

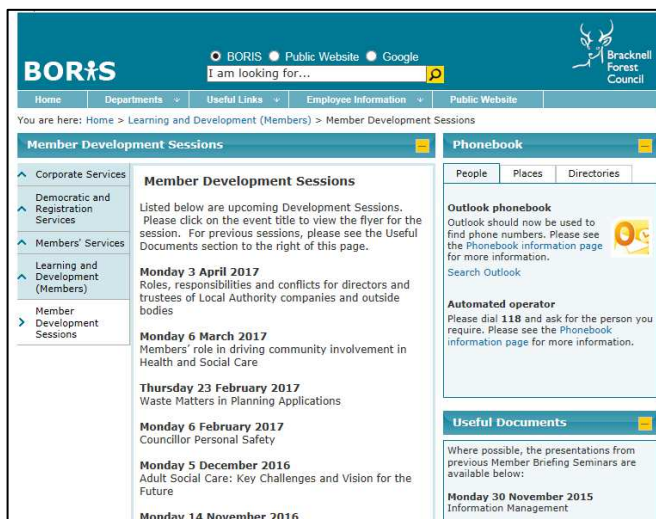
The Bracknell Forest Mayor Twitter account was taken over by the incumbent Mayor, Councillor Virgo and the civic office continues to tweet about upcoming events and report activity which are regularly re-tweeted by followers and the local press. Followers are increasing with 685 at the time of writing. Follow Bracknell Forest’s Mayor at [www.twitter.com/MayorBFC](http://www.twitter.com/MayorBFC)



## Members' Pages on Boris

The Members' pages on BORIS, the Council's intranet site, continue to be maintained to signpost Members to advice, guidance and various resources such as policy documents, briefing notes and previous Member Development presentations.

The pages can be found at <http://boris.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/corporate-services/democratic-and-registration-services/democratic-and-registration-members-services.htm>



The screenshot shows the BORIS intranet interface. At the top, there is a search bar with the text "I am looking for..." and a search icon. Below the search bar, there are navigation tabs for "Home", "Departments", "Useful Links", "Employee Information", and "Public Website". The main content area is titled "Member Development Sessions" and lists several upcoming sessions:

- Monday 3 April 2017**: Roles, responsibilities and conflicts for directors and trustees of Local Authority companies and outside bodies
- Monday 6 March 2017**: Members' role in driving community involvement in Health and Social Care
- Thursday 23 February 2017**: Waste Matters in Planning Applications
- Monday 6 February 2017**: Councillor Personal Safety
- Monday 5 December 2016**: Adult Social Care: Key Challenges and Vision for the Future
- Monday 14 November 2016**: Information Management

On the right side of the page, there is a "Phonebook" section with a search bar and a "Useful Documents" section with a search bar. The "Useful Documents" section lists "Where possible, the presentations from previous Member Briefing Seminars are available below:" and "Monday 30 November 2015 Information Management".

## Member Development Strategy 2016 - 2020

The Strategy which reflects the new narrative of the Council Plan and supports the Council's priorities was adopted by the Council in April 2016. The Steering Group has undertaken its annual review to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. As a result of the review the Strategy has been updated to incorporate the approach towards cost sharing with other authorities, to highlight the evaluation process and to refer to the development of an organisational development strategy. The Strategy is appended to this report as Annex B.



## Member Development Programme 2017 - 2018

The Member Development Charter Steering Group continues to be committed to improving Member Development at Bracknell Forest to ensure that its Members are equipped to provide the best possible services to its residents and supports the Member Development Programme which is being developed for 2017-2018.

Members have been canvassed for proposals for development sessions. Once finalised the development programme will be circulated to all Members and published on Boris.

## Annex A

### Events Delivered 2016 – 2017

Additional Conferences	Facilitators	Number of Councillors Attended
Air quality in England and Wales: policy priorities, best practice and industry engagement	Westminster Forum Projects	1
Assessing Local Parking Enforcement: Evaluating Implementation, Impact and Innovation	Public Policy Exchange	1
Better, Cleaner, Safer: Reducing Uncollected Dog Waste Through DNA Registration	London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	1
Centre for Public Scrutiny Annual Conference	Centre for Public Scrutiny	1
Crisis Management Seminar	iESE	1
Heathrow Jobs & Careers Fair	Heathrow	1
Leadership Academy	Local Government Association	1
Leadership Essentials: Cultural Services	Local Government Association	1
LGA Annual Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference	Local Government Association	1
Life Chances Team Conference 2017	Bracknell Forest Council	3
Planning Advisory Service (PAS) Peer Conference	Planning Advisory Service	1
Resources Portfolio Forum: The future of business rates retention for local government	Local Government Association	1
Unit 4 Connect Executive Conference	Connect 4	1
<b>Sub Total – Attended</b>		<b>14</b>

<b>Approved Conferences</b>	<b>Facilitators</b>	<b>Number of Councillors Attended</b>
Centre for Public Scrutiny Annual Conference 2016	Centre for Public Scrutiny	1
Education Conference	Bracknell Forest Council	1
Institute of Licensing: 'Annual Training Conference for 2016'	Institute of Licensing	1
LGA Annual Conference	Local Government Association	3
The National Children's and Adult Services Conference	Local Government Association / Directors of Adult Social Services	4
<b>Sub Total – Attended</b>		<b>10</b>



<b>Member Development Sessions</b>	<b>Facilitators</b>	<b>Number of Councillors Attended</b>
Adult Social Care: Key Challenges and Vision for the Future	Bracknell Forest Council	17
Code of Conduct	Bracknell Forest Council	3
Councillor Personal Safety	Local Government Information Unit	7
Green Belt	Bracknell Forest Council	19
Health Overview & Scrutiny Training	Centre for Public Scrutiny	11
iPad Training x 2	Bracknell Forest Council	5
Licensing Panel Training	Bracknell Forest Council	5
Love Food Hate Waste Training Session	Reading Borough Council	1
Member Development Session: New Parking Standards SPD	Bracknell Forest Council	17
Members' role in driving community involvement in Health and Social Care	Bracknell Forest Council	16
Mentoring	Local Government Association	1
Minerals and Waste Plan	Reading Borough Council	2
Planning Committee - Trees	Bracknell Forest Council	19
Social Media Introduction	Bracknell Forest Council	9
The Work of Children's Social Care and Corporate Parenting	Bracknell Forest Council	16
Town Centre Regeneration	Bracknell Forest Council	21
Waste and Recycling plus the Council's response to emergency situations	Bracknell Forest Council	18
Waste Matters in Planning Applications	Bracknell Forest Council	7
<b>Sub Total – Attended</b>		<b>194</b>