



Member Development

Annual Report 2018-19

June 2019



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



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Foreword

We had a very successful start to the year when the Council's Charter Plus status was reaccredited in April 2018. This demonstrates our committed and strategic approach to the professional development of all Members, and recognises the effectiveness of Governance and Scrutiny and officers across the organisation in supporting new capabilities. This is no small accomplishment and I would like to thank everyone involved in achieving and maintaining this standard.



The Member Development Charter Steering Group also began the year by reconfirming our current strategy. We have continued to focus on this throughout the year, against a background of new ways of working for Councillors and committees, a change of location to Time Square and some structural changes within Governance and Scrutiny. This required an openness to change and a willingness to adapt current approaches and try new things. I know that these behaviours are evident in both Members and officers and we shall continue to move forward with these changes, learning as we go.

The Steering Group recognise that the final year of an administration is often quieter from a development point of view, but we closed the year very much looking to the future with new appointments and new plans to support the election and induction in May 2019. The early induction was extended to all prospective candidates to provide greater context about the Council, and the activities and commitment required for various committees were circulated early to help with quick decision making following the election.

Finally, as a result of Member feedback, all induction material is now provided in a more manageable form via an electronic newsletter, called Democracy Snapshot, which I hope all Members are reading regularly.

Councillor Nick Allen
Chairman of Member Development Charter Steering Group

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to appraise all Members of the work and progress on Member Development during the year 2018-2019. The report informs Members of activities and their outcomes and outlines proposed future activities.

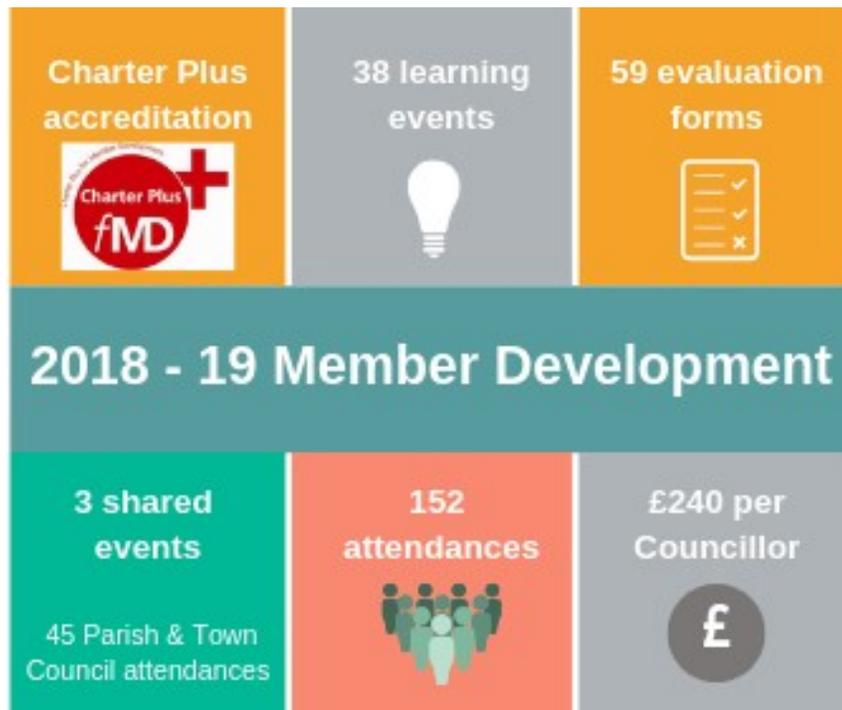
Member Development Charter Steering Group

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 preparing for the induction in 2019. The Steering Group comprised eight Councillors meeting with appropriate officers.

The Steering Group members in 2018-19 were Councillors Allen (Chairman), Wade (Vice-Chairman), McCracken, Mrs McCracken, Mrs McKenzie, McLean, Ms Merry and Thompson.



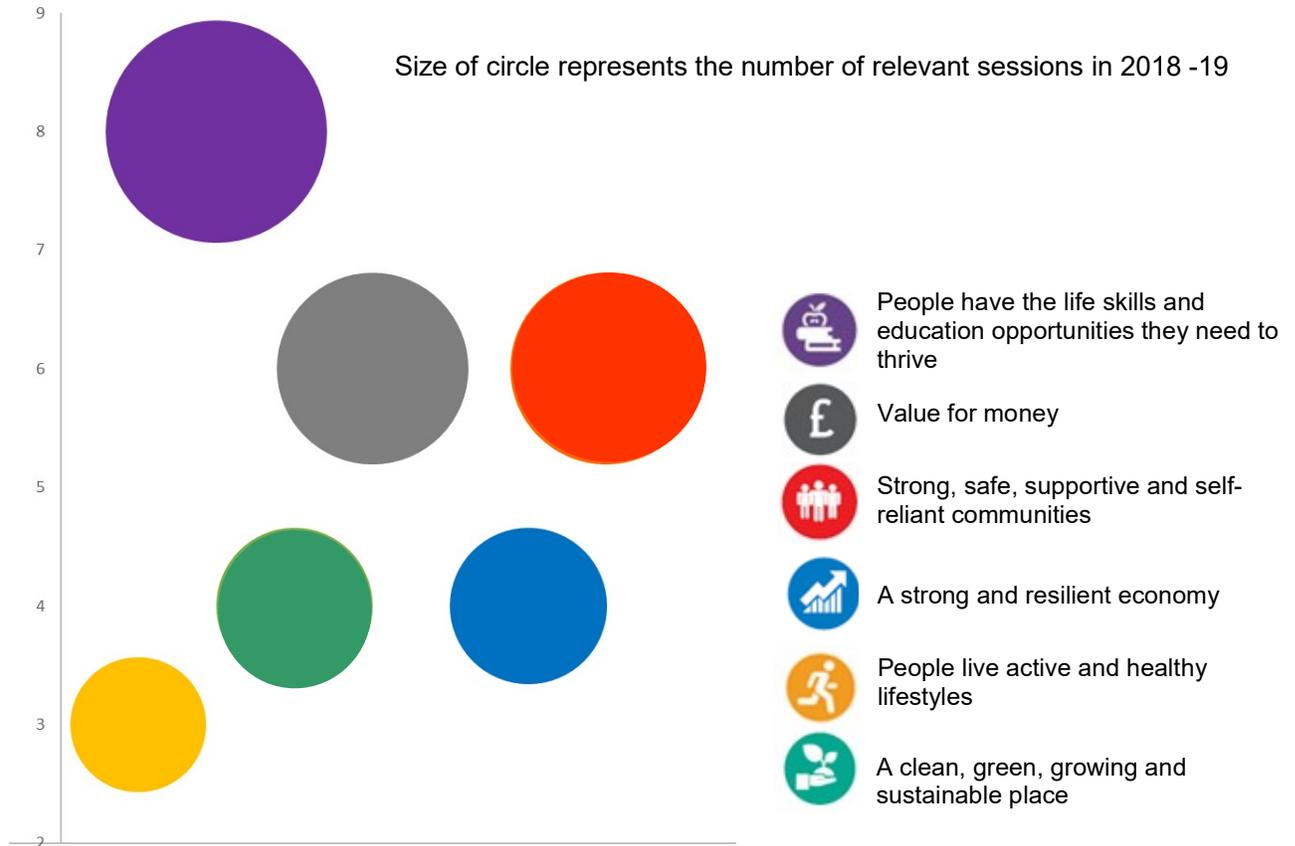
Member Development and Strategic Themes



38 learning events took place, including 15 member development briefings or training sessions, 20 additional conferences and 3 approved conferences.

£240 was spent per Councillor on Member Development. This calculation excludes travel costs or officer time to prepare and deliver Member Development sessions.

How Member development supports the Council's strategic themes



Session Details

Understanding Universal Credit

Delivered on 9 May 2018 and attended by 19 Councillors

Lucy Bowman, Department for Work and Pensions partnership manager for Bracknell and Slough

In preparation for the full Universal Credit service being introduced for families and couples in Bracknell Forest, Lucy Bowman delivered a briefing plus Q&A to give an overview of Universal Credit and allow Councillors to explore what it may mean for their communities.

Strategic themes supported: Strong, safe, supportive and self-reliant communities

“The whole subject was very useful. It is so important in much of our case work and our overall awareness as a Ward Councillor”

“I now have a greater understanding of our young people who need support and the support for their families.”

Education Leadership - Statutory Duties (Vulnerable Children)

Delivered on 1 October 2018 and attended by 14 Councillors

Interactive group discussion led by officers from CYPL.

The third of three sessions looking at education, covering Vulnerable Children with a particular focus on SEN, Pupil Premium and Looked after children.

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

Inaugural CIPFA and CfPS Councillors Conference



Delivered on 13 September 2018



Attended by 2 Councillors

Conference focussing on Council finances and the challenges facing all Councils, including the new regime for business rates, the pressures of effective treasury management and the need to have the finances in place to continue to deliver sustainable local services. Scrutiny has a critical role to play in ensuring that councils have realistic plans that take account of their financial constraints and challenges.

Strategic themes supported: Value for money

Education Leadership - Statutory Duties (HR & Finance)

“Very effective to make discussion part of the evening”

Delivered on 4 June 2018 and attended by 14 Councillors

Interactive group discussion led by officers from CYPL, supported by Finance and HR

The second of three sessions looking at education which covered the statutory duties of the LA with a particular focus on HR and Finance

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

Modern Slavery and Exploitation Input for Councillors

Delivered on 3 December 2018 and attended by 14 Councillors.

Facilitated by April McCoig, Anti-Slavery Co-ordinator, Thames Valley Police, and Nicola Bell, Programme Manager, Victims' First – Willow Project

Modern Slavery and exploitation is happening across Bracknell Forest. The facilitators provided an overview of Modern Slavery, including current issues across Bracknell Forest and the wider Thames Valley, the support that is available for potential victims and the role of local authorities in providing an effective response.

Strategic themes supported: Strong, safe, supportive and self-reliant communities

Organised following the Community safety presentation at the O&S Commission in July

Motivational Interviewing

Delivered on 14 December 2018 and attended by 9 Councillors.

Facilitated by Interface Enterprises

Motivational Interviewing is a person-centred, goal-orientated counselling style for addressing the common problem of ambivalence about change. Members had heard presentations from Bracknell Forest's social workers about its impact and recognised that this could be a useful skill for conversations with residents.

Strategic themes supported: Strong, safe, supportive and self-reliant communities

Organised following presentations to O&S Panels regarding the new approach to social care

Heathrow Expansion

Delivered on 28 February 2019 and attended by 18 BFC Councillors and 6 P&TC Councillors.

Delivered by Members of the Heathrow Expansion Team and BFC Transport Strategy and Implementation Manager. Briefing plus Q&A

An update on the latest consultation on Airspace and Future Operations linked to the expansion of Heathrow Airport. The consultation helped Heathrow develop the proposals for the operation of three runways and helped them to understand what should be considered in different geographic areas when designing future flight paths. Heathrow were also consulting on proposals to make better use of the two existing runways, which would help to reduce the number of flights running late into the night which are disruptive to local communities.

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

Promoting Local Democracy

As 2018 saw the centenary of the first votes for women many of Members' local engagement activities celebrated the suffragettes and their campaigns.

Celebration flowerbeds in Jubilee Gardens

Councillors and Officers planted two flowerbeds in Jubilee Gardens. The flowers were in the suffrage colours of purple, green and white and the gardens were used for several local events celebrating the centenary, including by the Women's Institute. The new gardens were featured in local press and on Facebook.



National Democracy Week

Councillors visited Uplands Primary School to talk to the children about democracy and the suffragettes. During the visit they also raised the suffragette flag.



Raising the suffragette flag

Female councillors and officers dressed in purple, green and white and raised the suffragette flag in Bracknell Town Centre, outside Time Square and in Crowthorne to mark the centenary.



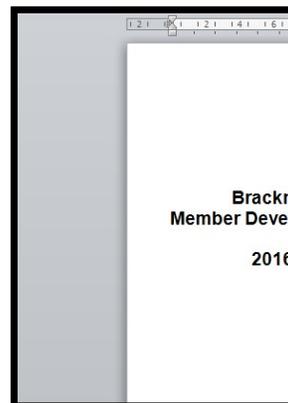
Empowering adults with additional needs

The Empower course for adults with additional needs visited the Council chamber and delegates had a Q&A session with local Councillors. This was educational for both the visitors and the Councillors.



Member Development Strategy 2016 - 2020

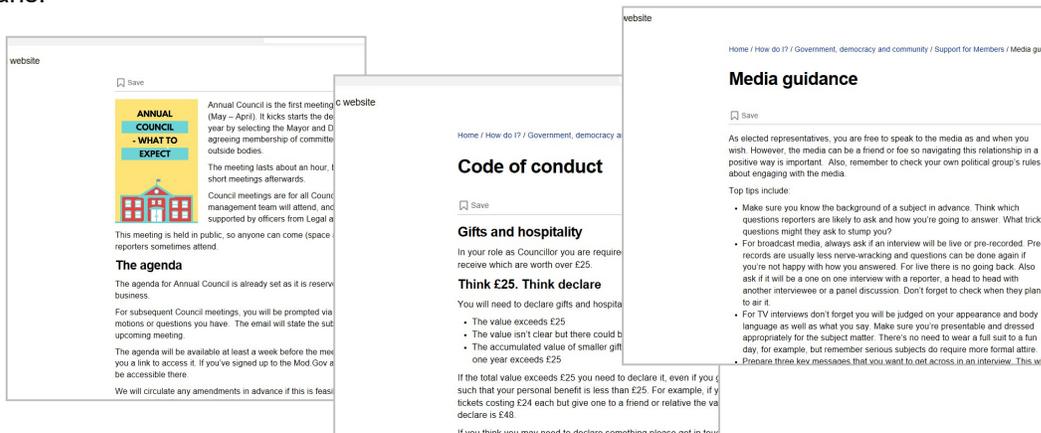
The Strategy which reflects the narrative of the Council Plan and supports the Council's priorities was adopted by the Council in April 2016. The Steering Group undertook its annual review to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. The Steering Group considered that the strategy prepared the Council for the 2019 election so no changes were proposed. A revised strategy is expected once the new Council Plan is finalised later in 2019.



The Strategy is appended to this report as Annex B.

Member Development Programme 2019 - 2020

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. The Group supports the Member Development Programme which is being developed for 2019 - 2020. This programme will focus on inducting members into any new roles, and on confirming and supporting existing Continual Development Plans.



All induction materials have been provided via DORIS and signposted through the electronic newsletter, Democracy Snapshot. The induction and ongoing development programme events and briefing information will be highlighted to all Members via Democracy Snapshot.



Annex A

Events Delivered 2018 – 2019

Additional Conferences	Facilitators	Number of CILrs attended
UK Transport Infrastructure Summit	Transport Times	1
Inaugural CIPFA and CfPS Councillors' Conference	Centre for Public Scrutiny	2
Good SEND Practice: Regional Workshops for Councils	Local Government Association / ISOS	1
Centre for Public Scrutiny National Health Scrutiny and Assurance Conference	Centre for Public Scrutiny	3
Inclusion Conference	Primary Headteachers' Association, Bracknell	1
APSE Highways & Street Lighting Advisory Group (Southern Region)	Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE)	2
Leadership Programme – Effective Opposition	Local Government Association	1
Achievement Awards for Children and Young People Looked After	Bracknell Forest Council	4
Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism (SIGCE) Seminar	Local Government Association	1
Centre for Public Scrutiny Annual Conference	Centre for Public Scrutiny	1
Annual Local Government Finance Conference: Moving the conference on	Local Government Association	1
Understanding Health Finance for Scrutiny	Centre for Public Scrutiny	1
Annual Licensing Conference	Local Government Association	1
UK Bus Summit 2019	Transport Times	1
Next steps for reducing homelessness: policy priorities, housing first and the Homelessness Reduction Act	Westminster Forum	1
Governor's Conference	Bracknell Forest Council	1
TCPA conference: A new future for New Towns	Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA)	1
Housing, Planning and Infrastructure Conference 2019	Local Government Association	1
Annual School Leaders' Conference	Bracknell Forest Council	2
Life Chances Team Annual Conference	Bracknell Forest Council	1

Excellence in Local Government	Oscar Krane	1
Sub Total – Attended		28
Sub Total – Cost		£3,836
Sub Total (event, accommodation, subsistence and travel) – Cost		£4,093.55

Approved Conferences	Facilitators	Number of Councillors Attended
Local Government Association Annual Conference	Local Government Association	3
Institute of Licensing: 'Annual Training Conference for 2017'	Institute of Licensing	1
The National Children's and Adult Services Conference	Local Government Association / Directors of Adult Social Services	4
Sub Total – Attended		8
Sub Total – Cost		£4,007
Sub Total (event, accommodation, subsistence and travel) – Cost		£5,878.56

Member Development Sessions	Facilitators	Number of Councillors Attended
Independent Person Workshop	Hoey Ainscough	1
ICT Drop-in Session x 2	Bracknell Forest Council	??
Universal Credit	Bracknell Forest Council	19
Education Leadership - Statutory Duties (HR and Finance)	Bracknell Forest Council	14

Social Media Training Session (P&TC Cllrs)	IODA	2
Social Media Training Session (BFC Cllrs)	IODA	11
Education and Vulnerable Children	Bracknell Forest Council	11
Licensing Training	TLT Solicitors	7
National Planning Policy Framework	Bracknell Forest Council	9
Targeted Multi Agency Safeguarding Children and Young People Training	Bracknell Forest Council	1
Modern Slavery and Exploitation Input for Councillors	Thames Valley Police / Victims' First - Willow Project	14
Motivational Interviewing	Interface Enterprises	9
Heathrow Expansion	Bracknell Forest Council / Heathrow Expansion Team	18
Sub Total – Attended		116
Sub Total (event only) – Cost		£2,254.75
Sub Total (event, accommodation, subsistence and travel) – Cost		£2,254.75
Overall Total - Attended		152
Overall Total (event only) - Cost		£10,097.75
Overall Total (event, accommodation, subsistence and travel) - Cost		£12,226.86



Bracknell Forest Member Development Strategy

2016 – 2020



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



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Introduction

Bracknell Forest Council has always recognised the importance of learning and development for all those who work to deliver good public services and has sought to continuously improve Member learning and development, in the knowledge that organisations with effective learning and development are open, accountable and make better decisions. The Member Development Strategy provides a framework for the Council to deliver effective Member learning and development.

This is Bracknell Forest Council's third Member Development Strategy. The first strategy culminated in the award of the South East Charter for Elected Member Development; the first Council in the South East to achieve the accreditation. This commitment to Member learning and development enabled the Council to build on its strong tradition of providing Members with appropriate learning and development opportunities and commitment to the Charter's principles enhanced the Council's ability to strengthen and improve its arrangements through additional advice and robust external assessment.

The second strategy took this work forward and enabled the Council to achieve Charter Plus accreditation in January 2015; again, the first Council in the South East to do so. Charter Plus is based on the same criteria as the Charter although the evidence requirements and assessment processes are more rigorous.

This is the third strategy and spans the four year period from 2016 to 2020. The strategy builds on the work that has gone before and provides a robust framework within which Members will be given access to a high standard of development opportunities, support and information to drive forward the Council's goals. These strong foundations were recognised by the successful reaccreditation of the Council's Charter Plus status in April 2018. The strategy will be delivered in the context of achieving excellent value for money and responding to the changing priorities of the organisation resulting from the impacts of economic challenges facing the Council. The focus in the final year will be on the induction of Members following the Borough elections in May 2019.

The Strategy Vision

Bracknell Forest's vision for Member development is for all Members to be engaged in the learning and development programme, taking advantage of learning opportunities and accessing support that will assist them in fulfilling their roles and helping the Council to deliver its services and objectives for the benefit of the Borough and its residents.

The Aim of the Strategy

The Strategy outlines the principles and key themes for Member learning and development over the four years 2016 – 2020 and aims to maintain an embedded culture whereby Member development is considered to be a key factor in Bracknell Forest Council's success. It provides a framework for the provision of support that enables Members to acquire the necessary skills, information and knowledge required to fulfil their roles effectively. Members will be better equipped to balance conflicting and competing priorities and to work constructively with officers to achieve the best outcomes for Bracknell Forest residents.

Member development is defined as any learning or development activity, training programme, or provision of information specifically designed to improve the skills, knowledge and ability of Members in their varied roles.

The Strategic Context

The Council currently faces an unprecedented financial challenge which means it is more important than ever that Members are provided with the information and development opportunities they need to respond effectively. In response the Council has agreed an ambitious transformation programme aimed at identifying significant savings that can be incorporated into the 2017/2018 budget and beyond.

The Council Plan sets out the approach being taken to address the financial challenges ahead and to deliver the commitments made in the 2015 election manifesto, and latterly the 2019 version. This approach is expressed in a new narrative for the organisation:

- Bracknell Forest is a good place to live with a mainly affluent, well educated and independent population
- the council will provide leadership and work with others to keep the Borough a place where all residents can thrive and benefit from core services. What we do ourselves we aim to do well, but we must prioritise to live within our means
- we will provide an essential safety net, and target this to people and areas with greatest need. In targeting our services, we will continue to prioritise early help and prevention so struggling or vulnerable people can maximise their opportunities to become independent

This narrative is supported by six strategic themes which are underpinned by a number of key measures of success:

- value for money
- a strong and resilient economy
- people have the life skills and education opportunities they need to thrive
- people live active and healthy lives
- a clean, green, growing and sustainable place
- strong, safe, supportive and self-reliant communities

To underpin the Council's identity as a transforming and forward thinking organisation an Organisational Development Strategy has been created with a stronger emphasis on the organisation's values and on the qualities employees will be required to display in order to embrace transformation and create an adaptable and flexible organisational culture.

Elected Members are responsible for ensuring the delivery of the Council's goals which is dependent on them having the key skills and knowledge to help to provide the best possible services to its residents.

Key Principles and Objectives

The principles of the South East Charter Plus for Elected Member Development form the core of this strategy and set out below are the actions required to support these principles:

- To maintain a clear commitment to Member development
- To foster a strategic approach to Member development
- To ensure that Member learning and development is effective in building capacity
- To support councillors in their various roles (detailed Member roles can be found at <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/your-council/yc-members-of-the-council/yc-members-roles.htm>)

These principles are underpinned by the requirement to sustain a Member Development Programme.

What we will do to maintain a clear commitment to Member development

- seek commitment to and approval of the strategy and our approach to Member development from Members and officers
- make planning and delivery of Member development the responsibility of Members and officers
- support the Member Development Charter Steering Group to oversee Member development and monitor the implementation of this strategy
- manage the Member development budget effectively
- ensure equality of opportunity and access for all learning and development activities
- provide appropriate training to Members Services staff

What we will do to foster a strategic approach to Member development

- oversee the Member Development Programme and additional briefings and activities with the Member Development Charter Steering Group – to include consultation, communication and monitoring and evaluation
- annually refresh the Member Development Programme based on Member need
- champion and promote learning and development activities within political groups through representatives on the Member Development Charter Steering Group
- deliver an Induction Programme to all newly elected Members
- provide appropriate training to Members dependent upon their roles and responsibilities
- involve external partners in relevant learning and development activities

What we will do to ensure that Member learning and development is effective in building capacity

- ensure that Members are clear about the outcomes and benefits of learning and development activities for them as individuals and for the Council
- develop Members' skills and capabilities across a range of areas including personal development, leadership skills, communication skills and ICT competencies
- develop Members' knowledge of particular issues or legislation
- develop Members' awareness of local and national issues
- develop Members' understanding of key issues, for example community development, community cohesion and equalities and diversity
- utilise a range of methods to deliver the Member Development Programme
- provide opportunities for Members to network with each other, other authorities, other partners and the community
- evaluate the outcomes and benefits of learning and development activities through participants' feedback
- monitor and record attendance at learning and development activities

- report annually to Council as part of the Member Development Annual Report

What we will do to support Councillors in their various roles

- schedule learning and development activities into the Council diary and publicise forthcoming activities
- schedule learning and development at appropriate times and offer multiple sessions where possible
- provide assistance for those with caring responsibilities to attend learning events
- endeavour to meet individual identified development needs in the way that is most appropriate for the Member concerned
- make the best use of technology and resources to support Members
- actively promote local democracy, the role of councillor and civic life
- promote and improve the work/life balance of members

What we will do to sustain a Member Learning and Development Programme

- develop a varied Member Development Programme covering induction; core knowledge and skills; service specific issues; Council and Committee issues; and individual needs
- support Members in identifying their own learning and development needs
- encourage Members to complete a Personal Development Plan (PDP)
- encourage Members to complete 360° self assessments at least once each four year Council term
- provide Members with the opportunity to identify and take into account their own preferred learning style
- ensure that learning and development opportunities, including PDPs link back to the one of the Council's six strategic themes

Responsibility for delivery

The following Members and officers have a direct involvement in Member learning and development.

Member Development Charter Steering Group

The Member Development Charter Steering Group will lead and innovate the Council's approach to Member development, in conjunction with the Executive Member who has responsibility for Member Development.

The terms of reference of the Steering Group are:

- To monitor the progress of the Member Development Strategy
- To advise officers and the Council on Member development activities
- To report annually to the Council on progress with Member Development

Councillors

All councillors will be responsible for:

- Identifying their own learning and development needs and engaging in the personal development plan and 360° self-assessment process

- Engaging in the Member Development Programme
- Sharing learning with others
- Accessing learning opportunities

Directors and senior officers

Relevant officers will:

- Provide briefings to Members on key areas of service delivery and development
- Positively contribute to the development and delivery of the Member Development Programme
- Support the work of the Member Development Charter Steering Group

Democratic and Registration Services

The Head of Democratic and Registration Services and Principal Democratic Services Officer (Governance) will be responsible for working with the Member Development Charter Steering Group to:

- Develop and evaluate the Member Development Strategy
- Maintain the Charter Plus Standard
- Identify Member learning and development requirements and work collaboratively to facilitate their delivery
- Promote the Member Development Programme
- Ensure a suitable infrastructure is in place to support Member learning and development
- Represent the Council at relevant regional and national network meetings

Support and Resources

In addition to officer time there is a dedicated budget for Member learning and development. The budget holder is the Head of Democratic and Registration Services. There will usually be a mixture of internally and externally provided sessions with costs contained within the allocated budget. There is also provision for Member attendance at agreed conferences.

Any request to attend a conference or seminar that is not on the approved list, or any other individual training activity, will be considered in line with the procedure set out in the Members' Allowances Scheme, and authorised attendances will be funded from the Member Services budget.

Individual Members' needs will be considered once the core work programme has been determined and may need to be prioritised if there are insufficient funds to meet demand. Priority will be given to those training needs identified through the PDP and 360° self-assessment processes.

The Head of Democratic and Registration Services will bid for additional funding for specific initiatives if opportunities arise.

In order for Members to be able to carry out their roles effectively, they will be provided with the most up to date and relevant information from both internal and external sources. Each Member will be given support to access ICT facilities in the home, within the Council and, where applicable, on the move. The Council's intranet system, DORIS, will contain the most topical information regarding the Council's services and democratic issues. It will also include information and presentations provided at briefing seminars.

Equality

Access to training and development will be equitable, based upon individual and Council needs. In practice this means making sure that there are no physical, social, religious or cultural barriers to Members wishing to take advantage of development opportunities.

Access

Learning and development will be delivered in ways which allow the greatest take-up, taking into account different personal and domestic circumstances and preferred learning styles. A number of methods will be used in a positive attempt to address Members' needs including;

- Briefing notes, learning manuals and literature
- E-learning packages
- External conferences, seminars and network meetings
- In-house briefings, seminars and workshops presented by senior and specialist officers
- Joint Member and officer sessions
- Peer coaching and mentoring
- Sharing knowledge and best practice using the Members' pages on the Council's intranet site DORIS
- Training with partner organisations and neighbouring authorities
- Visits to other authorities

Sharing Learning

In order to ensure that the learning and development programme offers the best support for Members to feel confident in implementing the Council Plan objectives every learning session will be evaluated. Feedback will be sought on the content and quality of each learning session and will be analysed and used to further develop the programme. Feedback will also be shared with the facilitator. The learning and development cycle, including the evaluation strategy is set out in Annex A.

Parish and Town Councillors will be invited to Member Briefing Seminars when the content is considered to be of relevance to them. In order to be able to run more sessions of interest to Members places on sessions delivered by an external facilitator may be offered to neighbouring authorities and charged at a level to at least fully cover the cost. Parish and Town councillors who are not also Borough councillors will be invited to attend at a discounted rate.

Monitoring the Strategy

The Member Development Charter Steering Group will review the Strategy at least annually and update it as appropriate to ensure that it reflects changes and continues to meet Members' needs.

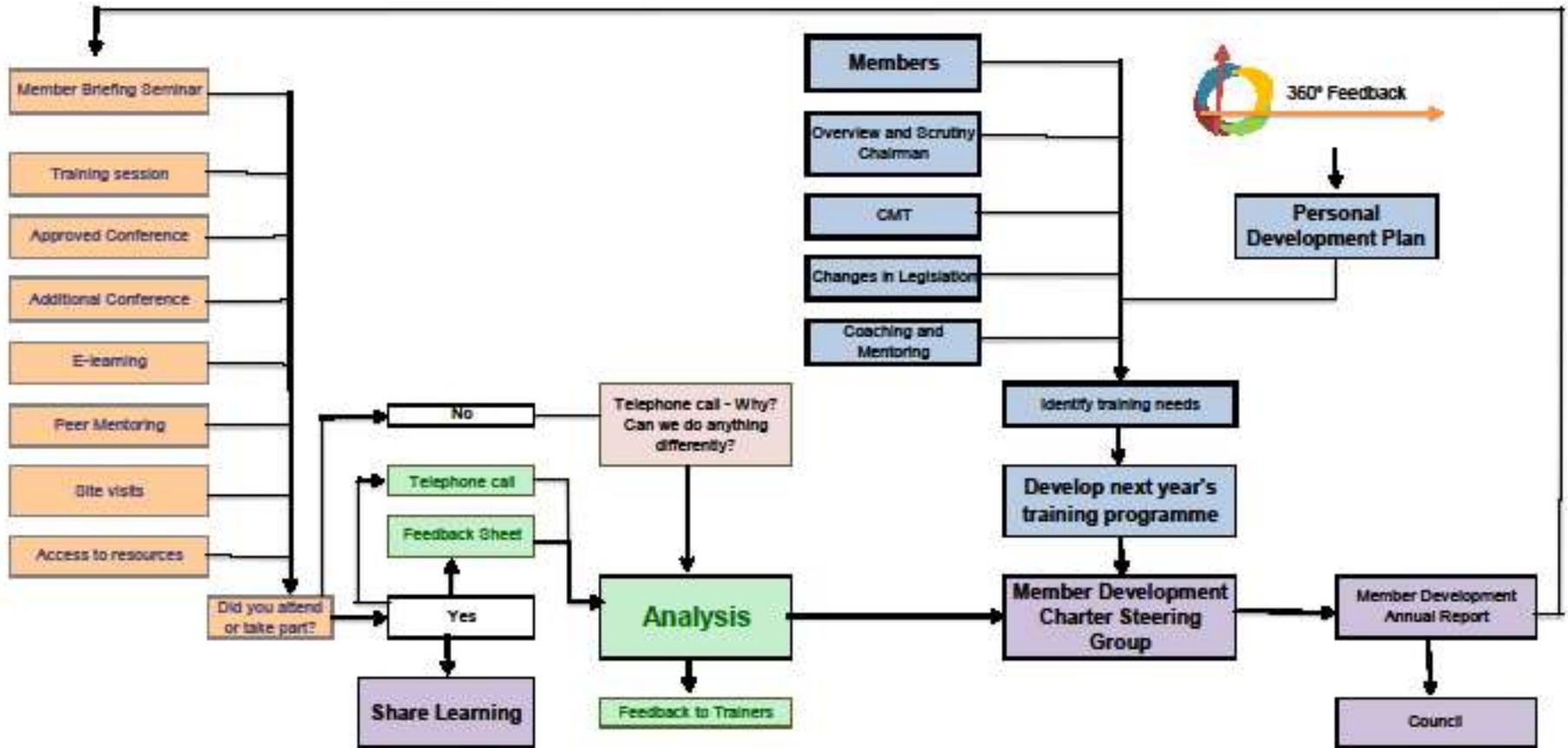
The date, time and location of all learning and development events will be reviewed on a regular basis and recommendations for change will be made if required.

Indicators of success will include:

- Positive feedback in Member Services surveys
- Engagement in the Personal Development Plan and 360° self-assessment processes
- Engagement in the Member Development Programme
- Positive satisfaction rates with learning and development activities
- Positive satisfaction rates with learning and development providers
- Retention of the Charter Plus accreditation

Appendix A

Member Learning and Development Cycle



Key

	Training
	Evaluation
	Shared Learning
	Development of next years programme