



Member Development

Annual Report 2013-14

April 2014



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



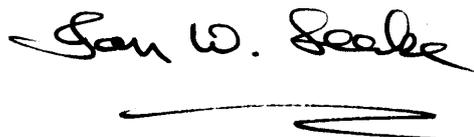
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Foreword

Steady progress has been the main feature of this years work. Last year we started on the implementation of the 360 degree feedback process and it is pleasing to note that nearly 80% of members have now taken advantage of this opportunity. Appropriate Personal Development Plans (PDPs) have been agreed with Members and are being followed through. Members have been able to translate the benefit of this process into increased awareness of how to review the operation of Council services in increasingly challenging financial times. The impact has also shown itself in the increasing sophistication of the scrutiny work that has been done.

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



Councillor Ian Leake
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 2013-2014.

The report informs Members of activities and their outcomes and outlines proposed future activities.

Member Development Charter Steering Group

The Steering Group comprised eight Councillors meeting with appropriate officers.
The Members in 2013-14 were:



Councillor Leake
(Chairman)



Councillor Allen
(Vice-Chairman)



Cllr Dr Barnard



Cllr McCracken



Cllr McLean



Cllr Mrs Pile



Cllr Mrs Temperton



Cllr Turrell

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 completing the roll out of the 360 degree feedback programme to all Councillors and preparation for reaccreditation of the Charter Plus standard.

Charter Plus Reaccreditation

The Council is being assessed fully against the Charter Plus standard in June 2014 in order to retain its Charter Plus status. The assessment will be supported by a submission detailing the Council's progress since the full assessment in February 2011. The Council's direction of travel assessment in September 2012 confirmed that Bracknell Forest continued to meet and exceed the Charter Plus standard and that the Council had addressed all of the areas for improvement that were identified during the original assessment.

Members of the Steering Group, Leaders of political groups and a group of Councillors will be invited to discuss member development at Bracknell Forest with the assessment team.



360 degree feedback programme



The 360 degree feedback process was expanded to all Members who had not yet taken part. Further tranches of Councillors were formed to follow the pilot group in 2010, the Executive in 2011 and the first tranche who completed the process in January 2013.

A technical support organisation, three60degree, who developed the online tool to help Members identify their skills and areas for development have continued to support the project free of charge.

All Members have now been offered the opportunity to assess their own skills in relation to the Political Skills Framework and compare this to feedback from a range of partners, colleagues and officers with whom they work.

Personal Development Planning paperwork has been streamlined to rationalise the feedback process.

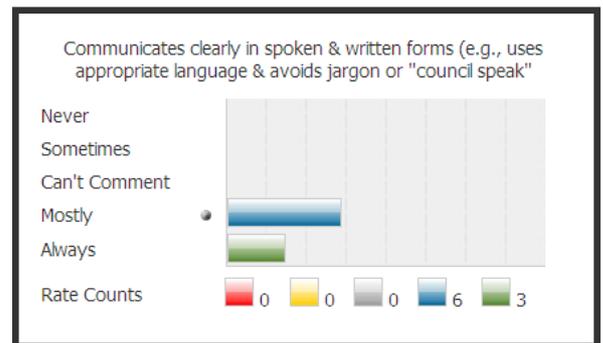
Members' Survey

The biennial Members' Survey has been created using the Council's consultation software and circulated to all Members. The questions were revised in response to feedback from the previous survey. The Steering Group agreed to act as a pilot group to fully test the survey before it was circulated to all Members.

Previously there has been a high response rate and the survey is a significant tool in ensuring that the services provided to Members meet the needs of all Bracknell Forest Councillors.

Once completed the results of the survey will be shared with the Member Development Charter Steering Group, although individual responses and comments will be anonymised and a summary of the results will be published on BORIS.

Extract from example feedback report



33 Councillors have completed the process and taken the opportunity to discuss the report. Three completed the survey process alone meaning **78.5%** (36 Councillors) have taken part.

Five Councillors declined to take part and one newly elected Councillor has not yet been offered the opportunity.

Members Survey Spring 2014

Bracknell Forest Council
The Borough of Opportunity

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey on Member Services. The survey will help us to identify any issues and inform the development of our services.

The survey should take no more than ten minutes to complete. The results of the survey will be shared with the Member Development Charter Steering Group. Individual comments will be anonymised.

The closing date for the survey is **(2 weeks from launch)**.

For further information, please contact Kirsty Hunt, Principal Democratic Services Officer (Governance) on 01344 353108 or kirsty.hunt@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

You might be contacted to clarify some of the comments you have made.

[Start Survey](#)

Event Information

Access: No login required

Status: open (From 04/03/14 13:00 to 08/04/14 23:59)

Privacy: If you take part your name will not be shown, your answers will not be shown, your town/city will not be shown

Description: Survey to ensure that the services provided meet the needs of all our Councillors

Organisation: Bracknell Forest Council

Contact Name: Kirsty Hunt

Contact Email: kirsty.hunt@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Contact Telephone: 01344 353108

Other Contact Information: Easthampstead House Town Square Bracknell RG12 1AQ

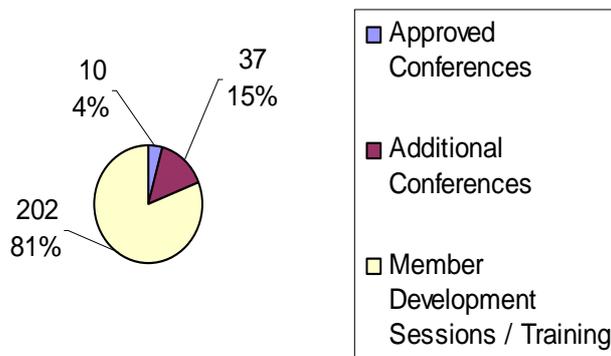
Subject: Housing, Planning, Adult Social Care, Customer Service, Cultural Activities, Business, Economy and Development

Access to Development

There is a strong commitment to ensuring that Members' individual training and development needs are identified and addressed to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to fulfil their roles.

- For 8 Approved Conferences there were 10 attendances
- For 30 additional conferences there were 37 attendances
- For 20 member training opportunities, including externally facilitated sessions and briefing seminars, there were 202 attendances

Member attendance for different training types



Appendix A details all the approved conferences, training, briefing seminars and additional conferences delivered in 2013-14.

In 2013-14 £445 was spent per Councillor on Member Development. This calculation excludes travel expenses and officer time to prepare and deliver Member Development sessions.

A reduction of £2k to the Member Development Budget was agreed based on an undertaking to deliver more training sessions in-house and in conjunction with staff training, where possible. Sharing costs with other Authorities and encouraging greater use of e-learning will also support delivery of this saving.

Neighbourhood Planning

Delivered on 13 June 2013 and was attended by 16 Councillors and 17 Parish Councillors

Delivered by a Senior Planning Policy Officer from Mole Valley District Council the objective of this session was to ensure that Members had an understanding of the scope of Neighbourhood Planning and how it is working in practice. The session covered:

- *The Planning Context*
- *How Neighbourhood Plans fit in the new system*
- *Neighbourhood planning tools*
- *What is a Neighbourhood Plan*
- *The steps involved*
- *Case Study of the Bookham Neighbourhood Plan*
- *Challenges and Lessons Learnt*

Transformation and building capacity workshop

Delivered on 13 November 2013 and was attended by 22 Councillors

This was a facilitated interactive group discussion led by iESE team facilitators which provided Members with an opportunity to understand current achievements and review Transformation progress to date. The objective of the workshop was to consider and capture Members' ideas about 'Where Next' with a focus on Community Capacity and create an Transformation Action Plan to take these ideas forward.

Treasury Management

Delivered on 2 December 2013 and was attended by 17 Councillors

Facilitated by LG Futures this seminar was designed to give members a better understanding of how treasury management is undertaken by the council and how they could more effectively scrutinise such activities.

By the end of the session, participants were able to:

- *Understand what is meant by treasury management*
- *Understand both national and local policies, regulations and procedures relating to how the council organises and carries out its treasury management activities*
- *More effectively challenge and scrutinise the treasury management function and activity*

Social Media Support

Delivered on 6 June 2013 and was attended by 7 Councillors

The objective of this session was to help provide Members with the skills and knowledge to confidently manage their own social media tools. The briefing session was designed to address which would be the right tool and include some hints and tips about using social media, use of plain English and advice on when not to engage with comments/queries being posted.

Following the sessions Members were signed up to attend one to one practical sessions depending on each Member's interest and knowledge.

Planning Policy

Delivered on 7 October 2013 and was attended by 16 Councillors

The objective of this session was to brief all Members on:

- *The Development Plan and what it currently comprises*
- *The Site Allocations Local Plan and its application*
- *The National Planning Policy Framework and its local application*
- *Green Belt Policy - NPPF and BFC policies*
- *Forward Look - Upcoming policy work*

Who lives in your ward?

Delivered on 5 February 2014 and was attended by 26 Councillors and 6 Parish Councillors

Facilitated by IODA and Dr Lisa McNally, Consultant in Public Health the objective of this session was to provide an update on the demographic profile of each ward in Bracknell Forest based on ward profiles produced using Census 2011 results. It was also to cover how to engage with diverse communities in each Councillor's ward in the run up to the next local elections in 2015.

Promoting Local Democracy

A number of activities and events have been undertaken throughout the year to promote awareness of local democracy. This included working with schools to raise awareness of the role of the Council and local decision making; to promote civic roles and to increase understanding of citizenship ceremonies.

The Bracknell Forest Local Democracy blog promotes the activities described below. Short articles are included to report on the success of activities such as school council elections to encourage more schools and groups to get involved. It also displays profiles previously reported in the annual reports such as 'day in the life' and Councillor profiles and can be viewed at <http://bfclocaldemocracy.wordpress.com/>



National Take Over Day

Young politicians from across the borough have stepped into the shoes of their older colleagues. A Member of the Youth Parliament, two deputy Members of Youth Parliament and two members of the Youth Council, spent a day in November shadowing Bracknell Forest councillors.

They had the opportunity to see first hand and understand how public figures make decisions and a glimpse of their day to day work. The Councillors invited the young people to meetings and encouraged them to put forward ideas about the decisions they would make. The day included a meeting with Bracknell MP Dr Phillip Lee.

Another member of the Youth Council shadowed the Mayor and attended a Citizenship Ceremony.



"I would recommend National Take Over Day to any young person who has an interest in their community, as you learn a lot seeing things through the eyes of a councillor"

Bradley Austin, Youth Council Member



"It was a fantastic day all round...our 'shadows' also found the day interesting and gained an insight into the work local politicians do. I hope they will think about taking an even more active role in local political life in the future"

Councillor Dr Barnard, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning

Youth Council

Following their elections the Bracknell Forest Youth Council held one of their meetings in the Council Chamber in December 2012 including a question and answer session with the Mayor. It was such a success that the event was repeated and expanded in November 2013 to also involve members of the Executive.



Citizenship Ceremony

In October 2013 Edgbarrow School took part in a Citizenship Ceremony at Easthampstead Park Conference Centre and read out pieces about what it means to be a citizen of Britain and why Bracknell Forest is a good place to live.



Promotion of the Office of Mayor

The Bracknell Forest Mayor Twitter account was taken over by the incumbent Mayor, Councillor Mrs Angell and the civic office continues to tweet about upcoming events and report activity.

Twitter posts are regularly re-tweeted by followers and the local press. This has encouraged new community groups to invite the Mayor to their events. Followers are increasing with 362 at the time of writing. Follow Bracknell Forest's Mayor at www.twitter.com/MayorBFC

Bracknell Forest received the Civic Office of the Year 2013 award from the National Association of Civic Officers. The submission was praised for the work that had been undertaken to engage with all groups within the community, the established links with local schools and engaging young people.



School Visits

The Mayor has invited all schools in Bracknell Forest to visit the Council Chamber to discuss not only civic life but the role of Councillors and particular topics of interest for each school. The opportunities are tailored to each school's curriculum needs and also vary depending on the age of those attending. Capturing the imagination of young people's discussions encourages an understanding of how a Council works, its impact on the students, their families, their schools and the wider community.

This is in addition to annual attendance at borough-wide sporting and cultural activities which celebrate the talent of Bracknell Forest students such as Tag Rugby tournament, Christmas Carol Concert, Mock Trial competition and Indoor Athletics competition. The Mayor also regularly attends schools' assembly to recognise a whole school, team or individual's achievements.

St. Joseph's Primary School were interested to see the phases of the town centre's regeneration and asked questions about building new schools in the borough.

Harmans Water Primary School Council held their School Council meeting in the Council Chamber. They learnt how to use the microphones and practiced taking turns in speaking and passing ideas through the Chairperson. They discussed the merits and feasibility of ideas for the school from fellow pupils.

Holly Spring Junior School Council came to see the Mayor to ask her about the changing face of Bracknell. They saw the demolition work from the top floor of Easthampstead House and asked questions about which shops and facilities would be included in the new town centre. They learnt about the occupations and life of Bracknell people in the 1830s by seeing the earliest births register held by the Council. The visit concluded with the School Council holding a meeting in the Council Chamber about what changes they would like to see in their own school and what they had achieved so far.

*"The School Council was buzzing when we got back to school!
A fantastic experience"*

*A School Council leader from
St. Joseph's Primary School*

"I was impressed with the depth of the debate and the respect the pupils showed to each other whilst sharing their ideas"

*Councillor Jan Angell,
The Mayor*





Wildmoor Heath Primary School borrowed election boxes and a polling booth so the pupils could experience how formal elections are run. The Mayor then visited the school in October 2013 to announce the results. Following the successful election the Mayor invited the new School Council to hold a School Council meeting in the Chamber.



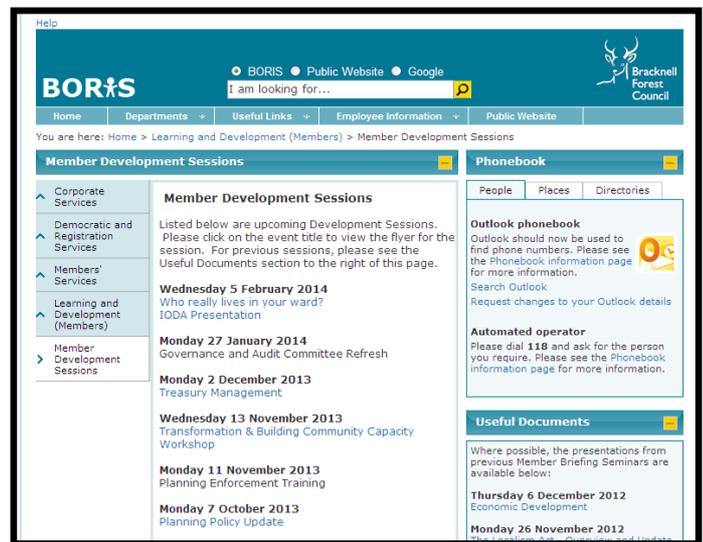
“The children got so much from the visit, and have gained a much deeper understanding of what it means to be on the School Council”

A teacher from Wildmoor Heath Primary School

Members’ Pages on Boris

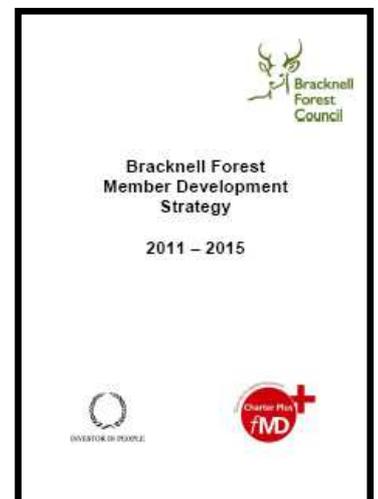
The Members’ pages on BORIS, the Council’s intranet site, continue to be maintained to signpost Members to advice, guidance and various resources such as policy documents, briefing notes and previous Member Briefing Seminar presentations.

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



Member Development Strategy 2011-2015

The Council adopted the Strategy at its meeting on September 2011 and this has been reviewed by the Steering Group and is still fit for purpose and remains unchanged.



Future Developments

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.

Members have been canvassed for proposals for development sessions and among the proposed topics for 2014/15 are:

- Roles and responsibilities of corporate parenting for all Members, including a profile of the borough's looked after children and young people and a discussion on how looked after children and care leavers can participate within the Council
- Children's Society Survey: to discuss the results from the survey, the role of governors and the Local Authority in school improvement and actioning the findings from the survey.
- Sustainable Draining training - briefing on the new statutory duty as the Council will become a SuDS Approving Body under the Flood and Water Management Act.
- Town Centre Redevelopment update
- Implications of changes in Health Service
- Digital Strategy by design
- Fraud and Fraud Prevention – presentation from External Audit with contributions from Housing Benefit. This session will have particular relevance for members of the Governance & Audit Committee.
- Social Media use
- Public Speaking
- Equality & Diversity
- Overview and Scrutiny skills training
- Licensing update
- Chairing Licensing Panels for Licensing and Safety Committee members
- Planning update for all Members to cover general, emerging and strategic planning issues including transport plans
- ICT training for Office 10 and Windows 7
- New e-learning package for the new Code of Conduct for Members and Co-Opted Members and Planning Protocol
- In addition topics identified as part of the 360 degree feedback and Personal Development Plan processes

Once finalised the development programme will be circulated to all Members and published on Boris.

Annex A

Events Delivered 2013 – 2014

Additional Conferences	Facilitators	Number of Councillors Attending
Airports Commission Briefing for Local Government	Airports Commission	1
All Party Parliamentary Group on Local Growth, Local Enterprise Partnerships and Enterprise Zones	APPG Local Growth	1
Annual Licensing Conference	Local Government Association	1
Anti-Trafficking & Slavery Partnership Seminar	South East Strategic Partnership for Migration	1
Developing a Partnering Culture	ITW Public Services Innovation & Best Practice Network	1
Digital Leadership Academy Masterclass	Local Government Association	1
Education Conference 2014	Bracknell Forest Council	1
Government ICT 2.0 Conference	Government ICT 2.0	1
Innovation in Leadership Exchange – for the next generation of public services	iESE	1
Introduction to Local Government Finance	LGiU	1
Leadership Academy - Political Leadership in Children's Services	Local Government Association	1
Leadership Academy - Transforming the delivery of sport in local communities	Local Government Association / Sport England	1
Leadership Academy - Value Added Planning Programme	Local Government Association	1
Leadership Academy: Making Decisions in Line with Policy	Local Government Association	2
Local Countryside Access Forum Regional Conference	Natural England	1
Localis - Where next for local democracy	Localis	1
Policing 2013 Policing, Crime and Commissioning Conference	Connect Conferences	1
Resource Efficiency & Waste Management Solutions Exhibition 2013	RWM with CIWM	2

Rewiring public services in your area : South East, Setting the agenda together	Local Government Association / South East Councils / South East Strategic Leaders	1
South East Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association (SERFCA) AGM	SERFCA	1
The ASB Challenge Conference	Bracknell Forest Partnership	5
The Leadership Academy	Local Government Association	1
Understanding barriers to academic attainment for Looked after Children	Bracknell Forest Council	11
Sub Total – Attended		39
Sub Total – Cost		£2,087

Approved Conferences	Facilitators	Number of Councillors Attending
CIPFA Annual Conference	CIPFA	1
Institute of Licensing: 'Annual Training Conference for 2013'	Institute of Licensing	1
LGA Annual Conference	Local Government Association	3
The National Children's and Adult Services Conference	Local Government Association / ADASS	4
Sub Total – Attended		9
Sub Total – Cost		£4,328

Member Development Sessions	Facilitators	Number of Councillors Attending
Economic & Business Growth Workshop	Local Futures	15
Economic Development	Hammersmith & Fulham Council	8
Local Economic Partnerships	Thames Valley Berkshire Local Economic Partnership	15
Neighbourhood Planning	Mole Valley District Council	16

Planning Enforcement Training	Trevor Roberts Associates	12
Planning Policy Update	Bracknell Forest Council	17
Town Centre Update	Bracknell Forest Council	23
Transformation & Building Community Capacity Workshop	iESE	21
Treasury Management	LG Futures	17
Sub Total – Attended		144
Sub Total – Cost		£2,488

Development Opportunities	Facilitators	Number of Councillors Attending
Commissioning Seminar	University of Birmingham	1
Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel - "Do You Know?"	Bracknell Forest Council	12
Governance & Audit Committee Refresh	LG Futures	10
Gypsy Roma Traveller Cultural Awareness Course	Richard O'Neill	3
Mentoring and Peer Support	Improvement & Development Agency for Local Government	2
Outlook Training	Bracknell Forest Council	1
Social Media Support	Bracknell Forest Council	11
Who Really Lives in Your Ward?	Bracknell Forest Council and IODA	26
Sub Total – Attended		66
Sub Total – Cost		£9,800
Overall Total – Attended		258
Overall Total – Cost		£18,703