



Member Development

Annual Report 2014-15

April 2015



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



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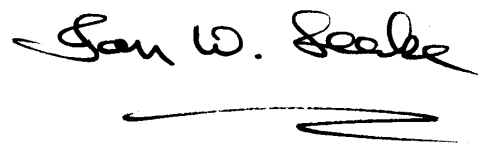
Foreword

The Member Development Charter Steering Group continues to successfully promote and champion member development not only to our members, but our peers, neighbouring authorities and partners. This strong leadership was noted by the Charter assessors in January 2015 when our Member Development processes were freshly assessed. The assessment report recognised that whilst the Council is no longer making progressive step changes, it continues to deliver the member development programme at the Charter Plus Standard, and the quality of the support was considered to be of a national standard.

Bracknell Forest continues to be the leading authority in Berkshire for member development. This is good news for our residents who can have the assurance that their elected members have the skills to deliver first class services.

With the coming local elections in May 2015 I am also confident that we have induction processes in place to support the new Council to remain effective and able to respond to what will doubtless be significant new challenges that lie ahead.

As always, my thanks go to members of the Steering Group and all the officers who have made this progress possible. I wish my successor Steering Group well for the future.



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 2014-2015.

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 2014-15 were:



Councillor Leake
(Chairman)



Councillor Allen
(Vice-Chairman)



Councillor Dr Barnard



Councillor McCracken



Councillor McLean



Councillor Mrs Pile



Councillor Mrs Temperton



Councillor 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 preparation for reaccreditation of the Charter Plus standard and consideration of results from the Members' Survey.

Charter Plus Reaccreditation

The Council was reassessed against the Charter Plus standard in January 2015 for a further three years. The assessment was supported by a portfolio of evidence detailing the Council’s progress since the full assessment in February 2011. The assessment day verified the portfolio and identified the Council’s plans for continuous improvement through a series of interviews.



Assessors:

Mark Palmer, Development Director,
South East Employers
(Lead Assessor)

Councillor John Aldridge, Cabinet Member and
Chair of the Development Panel,
Essex County Council
(Member Assessor)

Mark Wall, Head of Democratic Services,
Brighton & Hove City Council
(Officer Assessor)



“There are positive relations with officers which enable effective decision-making.”

Things the assessors heard

- Partners contributing to process:**
- Inspector Jon Goosey, Deputy Local Policing Area Commander, Thames Valley Police
 - Russell Reeve, Town Clerk, Bracknell Town Council
 - Linda Wells, Housing & Community Services Director, Bracknell Forest Homes
 - Trevor Ferguson, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Royal Borough Fire and Rescue Service
 - Nick Oxborough, Group Manager, Royal Borough Fire and Rescue Service

“Councillors understand their roles and are able to take that understanding into the decision-making process so that meetings are well run and residents’ issues can be dealt with effectively.”

Things the assessors heard

“There’s a greater willingness to work together across agencies for the benefit of the community.”

Things the assessors heard

Suggested areas for improvement were:

- Be a Councillor Event – to be held prior to future elections to complement the high calibre of other support that is provided to Members.
- Succession Planning for future councillors / leadership – this was recognised by the Leader and Member Development Charter Steering Group as an area to be progressed during the next term of the council.
- Developing 'e'-learning package to complement Member Development Programme – Developing the "Networked Councillor" approach.
- Review 360⁰ process – to take on board participants' feedback e.g. deadlines for completion, relevance of questions and the need for an individualised approach for those seeking feedback. Consider having an element of randomised selection of reviewers rather than each participant choosing all of the people to provide feedback.
- Induction 2015 – based on review/evaluation of 2011- to be complemented by joint working with the Town and Parish Councils to develop an induction pack and programme for newly elected Members.
- Engagement and use of BORIS – further encouragement and engagement by Members with them submitting reviews/briefings following attendance at events/conferences so as to inform colleagues and thereby develop learning opportunities.
- Member Development – to enhance shared opportunities across Berkshire (5 other councils) – to proactively lead and share knowledge with others.
- Member Mentor training – to ensure there is a programme for training of mentors and an evidence base for allocation of mentors to mentees.
- Lead on Member Development across Berkshire and share with partners/community groups – to gain the deserved recognition of the high quality of provision and knowledge for Member Development held by Bracknell Forest Council.

As previously South East Employers will evaluate the direction of travel in eighteen months.

"The success of the 360⁰ process is that it has produced positive outcomes for colleagues."

Things the assessors heard

"Member Development is embedded within the culture of the organisation"

Things the assessors heard

"All Members spoken to on the day were able to express how Member learning and development had helped them to gain confidence and to play an active part in the wider context in which the council operated."

Extract from Assessor Report

Members' Survey

The Member Development Charter Steering Group surveyed all Members in the Summer of 2014 to draw together feedback on the current services and support provided by Bracknell Forest Council. The survey has been created using the Council's consultation software and the questions were revised in response to feedback from the previous survey. The survey is a significant tool in ensuring that the services provided to Members meet the needs of all Bracknell Forest Councillors.

Key Findings

- 29 out of 42 Members responded which was a 69% response rate.
- The response rate has decreased significantly in comparison to the last survey undertaken in 2011 which was 88% of Councillors.
- The majority of Councillors continue to be either very satisfied or fairly satisfied with all aspects of Member Development e.g. PDP process, access to internal training, access to conferences, procedure for authorising and booking and feedback.
- Overall the response was good in relation to Member Briefing Seminars and training with the majority of Members continuing to be very or fairly satisfied with all aspects of delivery.
- Two Councillors were dissatisfied with the day of delivery of sessions e.g. usually Monday.
- The majority of Members continue to be very or fairly satisfied with all aspects of contact with departments across the Council
- Overall, Members were very or fairly satisfied with the way that information which affects their Ward is relayed to them
- The response was good in relation to production of agendas, minutes and advice from Democratic Services Officers
- A large number of Members were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the Members' pages on BORIS therefore more work needs to be done to promote this under-utilised resource
- Survey results indicated that some Members were not aware of the Dependants' Carers Allowances support available
- Members continued to have concerns about the ICT provision but some specific issues were resolved by the Windows 7 upgrade whilst any outstanding issues would be fed into the Refresh project
- Most Councillors do not receive additional support to carry out their roles and in the main those that do ask for specific help are satisfied with the support received
- There was consistently a very small group of Members who were fairly or very dissatisfied with all aspects of the survey.



Positive feedback was received on the following development sessions:

- Speed reading
- Leadership Academy
- 360 degree feedback
- Planning training
- 'Who lives in Your Ward' – Equalities session
- 'Do you know?' regarding Looked After Children

Some respondents did not think these sessions were useful:

- ICT
- Community campaigning
- Non-interactive sessions
- 360 degree
- Speed reading
- 'Who lives in Your Ward' – Equalities session

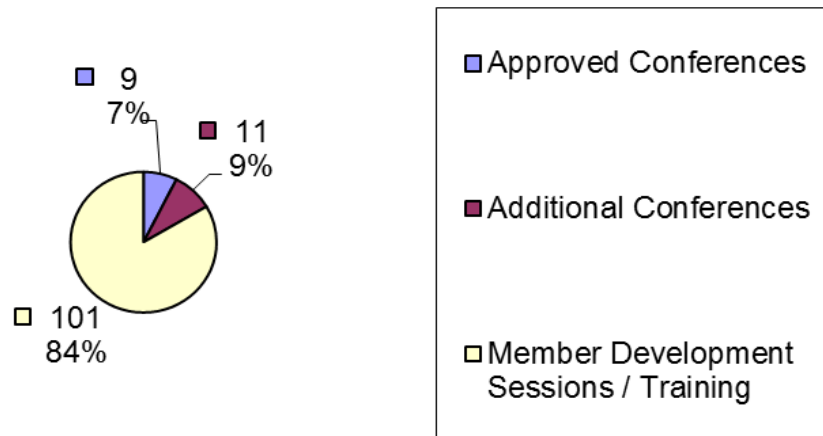
Key actions:

- Dissatisfied Councillors will be contacted for better understanding of their concerns
- Topic suggestions will be included in future plans for Member Development Programme
- The contents of the Member pages on BORIS and the Dependants' Carers Allowances will be promoted further
- Evaluation strategy will be reviewed
- Relevant feedback has been provided to Head of Overview and Scrutiny, Chief Executive and Borough Solicitor

Access to Development

- For 5 Approved Conferences there were 9 attendances
- For 11 additional conferences there were 11 attendances
- For 9 member training opportunities, including externally facilitated sessions and briefing seminars, there were 101 attendances

Member attendance for different training types



Appendix A details all the approved conferences, training, briefing seminars and additional conferences delivered in 2014-15.

In 2014-15 £135 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.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Delivered on 26 January 2015 and attended by 13 Councillors and 2 Parish Councillors

Facilitated by officers from the Children, Young People and Learning department and Thames Valley Police this session was designed to provide Members with information regarding Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

By the end of the session participants were able to:

- develop their understanding of CSE (in light of the issues identified recently in the case at Rotherham)
- understand definitions of CSE
- understand how Bracknell Forest address and monitor CSE
- discuss CSE risk assessments
- develop learning from recent local authority high profile cases

Health

Delivered on 22 July 2014 and attended by 22 Councillors and 2 Parish Councillors

Facilitated by officers from the Adult Social Care, Health and Housing department the objective of this session was to:

- *reflect on the changes in the Health Service*
- *update Members on current developments within the NHS that would impact on Bracknell Forest residents*

By the end of the session participants were able to understand the NHS role in provision of primary care, including GP surgeries, in terms of new developments.

Looked After Children in Bracknell Forest

Delivered on 15 July 2014 and attended by 19 Councillors and 1 Parish Councillor

Facilitated by officers from the Children, Young People and Learning department the objective of this session was to provide Members with an overview of the profile of Bracknell Forest's Looked after Children and Young People, and to inform Members of their role and responsibilities of Corporate Parenting.

The session also included case studies looking at the journey of children through care and messages directly from Looked After Children.

Feedback from Residents' Survey

Delivered on 16 March 2015 and attended by 9 Councillors

Facilitated by officers from the Corporate Services department the objective of this session was to provide Members an opportunity to discuss the actions they Council may take following consideration

The session included a reminder of all the easily accessible statistical resources available such as the JSNA website, Stat share and how they can help Councillors to identify who lives in their area.

Business Process Review

Delivered on 11 December 2014 and attended by 15 Councillors

Facilitated by Caroline Stanger, Stanger Consulting; Director of Corporate Services; Chief Officer: Customer Services and Chief Officer: Housing.

Many areas of the Council have been the subject of a business process review to improve performance, reduce costs or to improve efficiency. The objective of this session was to:

- *provide Members with information on:*
 - *what is a business process review*
 - *what the outcomes of process reviews would look like*
 - *the different types of business process review methodologies*
- *demonstrate where business processes have been used across the Council*
- *explain the outcomes and benefits of these processes.*

Promoting Local Democracy

Bracknell and Wokingham College, October 2014



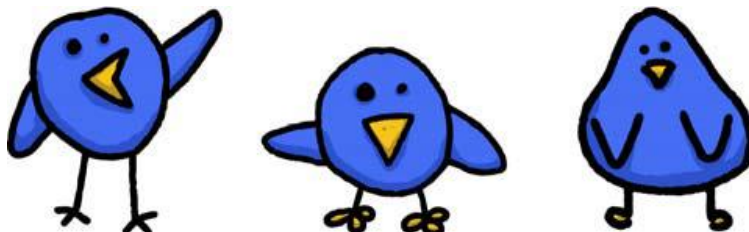
Students at Wokingham and Bracknell College welcomed Councillor Dale Birch, Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing, for a question and answer session on how Local Government works and what life is like as a Borough Councillor.

Councillor Birch gave the students a brief history of local democracy and explained how his own interest in politics developed. He also outlined the difference between different tiers of Local Government and their different responsibilities, and how councils today are operating in a climate of increased need but smaller budgets.

Students had the opportunity to challenge Councillor Birch on issues close to their own hearts and their questions included what the council was doing to help first-time buyers and how young people with mental health problems were being supported.

Tweets from Planning Committee, October 2014

Residents of Bracknell Forest were able to keep track of decisions affecting their local area from the comfort of their own home when live tweets were sent from the Planning Committee on 16 October as part of Local Democracy Week 2014.



Sandhurst School Helps Welcome New British Citizens to Bracknell Forest, October 2014

Students from Sandhurst School were given the opportunity to participate in a Citizenship Ceremony at Easthampstead Park Conference Centre. They joined Deputy Mayor Councillor Blatchford, the Deputy Mayoress and Lady Catherine Stevenson, Deputy Lord Lieutenant in welcoming people who have recently been granted British Citizenship. The new citizens who swore an oath of allegiance to the Queen were from Zimbabwe, the Phillipines, China, Bulgaria, Malaysia, Pakistan, India and South Africa.



As part of the ceremony two students from the school, Lucy Hurford and Alfie Day, gave entertaining and informative speeches about what it means to be a British citizen and a resident of Bracknell Forest, covering a wide range of topics from the freedom and democracy that British citizens enjoy, the nation's favourite dish of fish and chips and what makes Bracknell Forest a unique place to live.

Primary School Q&A, October 2014



Schoolchildren from Holly Spring Infants, Winkfield St Mary's, College Town Junior, Crown Wood Primary and Binfield CofE Primary took part in a question and answer session with Councillor Dr Gareth Barnard, Executive Member for children, young people and learning. Question topics ranged from Bracknell town centre regeneration to speed bumps and school playing fields. Councillor Dr Barnard explained to the children his portfolio role, that his aim was for all schools in Bracknell Forest to be great places to learn and how important the opinions of young people were in Bracknell Forest.

Youth Council, October 2014

Twelve members of the Bracknell Forest Youth Council met with members of the Council's Executive to discuss issues affecting young people in the Borough. Councillors Marc Brunel-Walker, Executive Member for Economic Development and Regeneration; Councillor Iain McCracken, Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection; Councillor Chris Turrell, Executive Member for Planning and Transport; and Councillor Dr Gareth Barnard, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning, represented the Executive.

Members of the Youth Council had the opportunity to question the Executive Members on a wide range of issues relevant to young people in the Borough, as well as sharing their views on how provision in the Borough for young people could be improved. The discussion covered a wide range of topics including making work experience more effective, improving awareness of mental health issues in young people and involving young people in the regeneration of Bracknell Town Centre. The questions had been informed by the results of the Make Your Mark ballot, an initiative held by the UK Youth Parliament inviting all 11-19 year olds to choose from a list of 10 issues the one that they believed affected them the most.



Q&A Session at Easthampstead Park School, October 2014

Councillor Dale Birch Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing (Deputy Leader of the Council) was invited to talk to A Level Government and Politics students at Easthampstead Park School about decision making from national to local level. Councillor Birch advised the students on the differences between Metropolitan, County and Unitary councils. National decision making versus local decision making was also discussed in terms of whose responsibility it was to deliver a wide range of services in the UK. Councillor Birch explained the role of Bracknell Forest Council and where the finances came from to deliver local services. Councillor Birch was questioned on business rates, how the Council makes decisions on the priorities for Bracknell Forest, the Localism Act, where Council money is spent and the current voting age of young people. A lively discussion was held which showed the students to be knowledgeable and engaged on a wide range of subjects.

Take Over Day, November 2014

The Council has been supporting the Children's Commissioner's Takeover Day for a number of years, with officers and councillors involving their new recruits in meetings, planning activities and seeing the council in action.

Five executive members supported the day together with senior officers and this year 11 students were welcomed during Friday 21 November 2014 to see how the Council works.

Activities included Max Ranger from Garth Hill College and Lauren Mitchener from Brakenhale School working in Customer Services to design a new online form for missing pets. The duo came up with the idea and working with officers, designed and built the web-based form. Bobby Mulheir, Chief Officer for Customer Services said "We thoroughly enjoyed the day with our young people. Max and Lauren were full of enthusiasm and came up with a great idea for a service improvement that I'm sure our customers will love. It was a great opportunity to capture the creativity of young people and I would encourage colleagues to get involved next year."

Other officers who took part in the event were Janette Karklins – Director of Children, Young People and Learning; Alison Sanders – Director of Corporate Services; Pat Keane - Chief Officer for Information Services and Mira Haynes – Chief Officer for Older People.



Feedback from young people involved:

- Made to feel very welcome, were listed to and felt they had contributed in some way to that day's work
- Extremely interesting and exciting to visit sites around the Borough and local business
- Loved being given the opportunity to given the opportunity to be involved in practical tasks
- Interesting to get a thorough look behind the scenes in department
- Great to be involved and participate in real meetings



Promotion of the Office of Mayor

The following schools learnt more about Civic life and local democracy:

- School Council from Winkfield St Mary Primary School visited the Council Chambers (April 2014)
- Mayor visited to School Council from Ascot Heath Junior or Infant School (April 2014)
- Bracknell Forest's Member of Youth Parliament and two Deputy Members of Youth Parliament attended a Citizenship Ceremony (November 2014)

The Bracknell Forest Mayor Twitter account was taken over by the incumbent Mayor, Councillor Blatchford 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 479 at the time of writing.

Follow Bracknell Forest's Mayor at www.twitter.com/MayorBFC

Since Bracknell Forest received the Civic Office of the Year 2013 award from the National Association of Civic Officers the Mayoral Support Officer has joined the NACO Executive. The Mayoral Support Officer has lead a workshop at the NACO Annual Conference to focus on the criteria for the award e.g. quality and innovation; linking the mayoralty to the Council's aims and objectives and delivering value for money.



Members' Pages on Boris

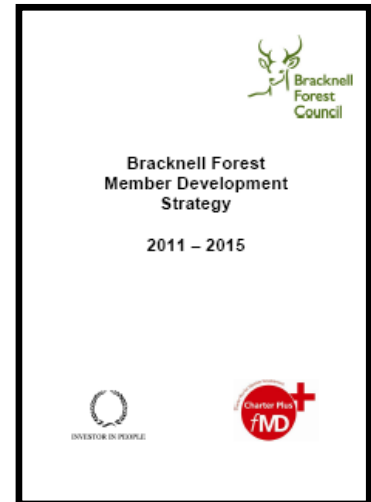
The Members' pages on BORIS, the Council's intranet site, continue to be maintained to signpost Members to advice, guidance and various resources such as policy documents, briefing notes and previous Member Briefing Seminar presentations.

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 Strategy will be revised following the election to support the new Council's priorities. The intention is to update the approach to respond to feedback received during 2014-15 and as part of the evaluation of the 2015 Induction programme. This will be brought to a future Council meeting for consideration.

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 until the adoption of the Strategy for 2015-19.



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. The induction programme is under development to support the new Council in May 2015 – with a programme for new and returning Councillors.

Members have been canvassed for proposals for development sessions and among the proposed topics for 2015/16 are:

- Child Sexual Exploitation
- New Care Bill
- Speed Reading
- Social media and engaging with residents
- Role of Members and the Council with partnership/boards
- Mentoring
- Peer-group training
- Council officer and member engagement regarding services and how problems are resolved for residents

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

Annex A

Events Delivered 2014 – 2015

Additional Conferences	Facilitators	Number of Councillors Attending
Anti-Trafficking & Slavery Partnership Seminar	South East Strategic Partnership for Migration	1
Applying the Social Value Act - One Year On	ITW Networks	1
Never Give Up on a Child - Child Sexual Exploitation Learning Day	Oxfordshire County Council	1
Promoting Independence – Using the Better Care Fund to keep older people well	Berkshire Shared Public Health Service working with Public Health England	1
Leadership Academy	IDeA	1
Criminal Justice Management Conference	GovNet Communications	1
Leadership Essentials: Planning - Supporting the delivery of local plans	Local Government Association	1
Leadership Essentials: Planning and Delivering Economic Growth Programme	Local Government Association	1
Education Conference	Bracknell Forest Council	1
Identifying Barriers to Success	Bracknell Forest Council	2
Planning Advisory Service Spring Conference 2015	Planning Advisory Service	2
Sub Total – Attended		13
Sub Total – Cost		£1,673.00

Approved Conferences	Facilitators	Number of Councillors Attending
Centre for Public Scrutiny Annual Conference	Centre for Public Scrutiny	1
CIPFA Annual Conference	CIPFA	1
LGA Annual Conference	Local Government Association	3
The National Children's and Adult Services Conference	Local Government Association / ADASS	3
Institute of Licensing: 'Annual Training Conference for 2014'	Institute of Licensing	1
Sub Total – Attended		9
Sub Total – Cost		£4,015.00

Member Development Sessions	Facilitators	Number of Councillors Attending
Children's Society Survey	Bracknell Forest Council	10
Looked After Children in Bracknell Forest	Bracknell Forest Council	20
Briefing on Health	Bracknell Forest Council	22
Business Process Review	Bracknell Forest Council	15
Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)	Bracknell Forest Council	14
Feedback from Residents' Survey	Bracknell Forest Council	9
Sub Total – Attended		90

Development Opportunities	Facilitators	Number of Councillors Attending
Peer Support	Improvement & Development Agency for Local Government	1
Mentoring	Improvement & Development Agency for Local Government	1
Health Overview & Scrutiny Training	Bracknell Forest Council	7
Independent Advisory Group Stop and Search Presentation	Thames Valley Police	3
	Sub Total – Attended	12
	Sub Total – Cost	£0.00
	Overall Total – Attended	136
	Overall Total – Cost	£5688.00