



London Charter for Elected Member Development

Brent Council

Assessment Date: 8 January 2014



APPENDIX THREE

<p style="text-align: center;">Brent Council</p> <p style="text-align: center;">London Charter for Elected Member Development</p>

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Recommendation of the Assessment Team

Brent Council meets and has achieved the standard of the London Charter for Elected Member Development. The council has been awarded Charter status for three years from 8 January 2014. The council has also committed to a process of continuous improvement over the next three years.

The council will be required to present evidence of continuing progress as part of the direction of travel in eighteen months' time and will be re-assessed in full against the Charter standard in three years.

Councils that have successfully achieved the Charter standard are eligible to apply for Charter Plus accreditation. Full details of the framework and how to apply are available on the South East Employers website (www.seemp.co.uk). This report contains, at pages 17-19, a preliminary indication of additional evidence that the assessors feel would need to be put in place in order to achieve Charter Plus status.

If the council does sign up for Charter Plus, then it will have 18 months from the date of signing up to assessment and the timetable indicated above for re-assessment against the normal Charter in 2017 will no longer apply.

Assessment team

- Councillor Catherine West, London Borough of Islington
- Mark Palmer, Development Director, SEE (Lead Assessor)
- Andrew Davies, Organisational Development Manager, Crawley Borough Council

Charter standards

- Commitment to Councillor development
- Strategic approach to Councillor development
- Learning and development is effective in building capacity
- Supporting Councillors

Assessment

The assessment against the Charter took place on 8 January 2014. The purpose of the assessment visit was to determine whether or not the authority met the Charter standard. The assessment was based on an analysis of a portfolio of evidence submitted in advance by the council, a number of interviews with key personnel and a member workshop to verify the presented evidence and to identify the council's forward plans for continuous improvement.

The following people were seen during the assessment visit:

Interviews (in order conducted):

- ◆ Saskia Woolloff, Mayor's Office and Member Development Manager
- ◆ Councillor Muhammed Butt, Leader of the Council

Member Development Steering Group

- ◆ Councillor James Denselow (Labour) (Chair)
- ◆ Councillor Reg Colwill (Conservative)
- ◆ Councillor Ann Hunter (Liberal Democrat)

- ◆ Fiona Ledden, Director of Legal and Procurement
- ◆ Christine Gilbert, Interim Chief Executive

Leaders of Opposition Parties

- ◆ Councillor Suresh Kansagra (Conservative)
- ◆ NB Councillor Mark Cummins (Liberal Democrats) (Deputy for Councillor Paul Lorber) was interviewed by telephone on 20 December 2013.

Workshop members:

- ◆ Councillor Shafique Choudhary
- ◆ Councillor Patricia Harrison
- ◆ Councillor Jean Hossain
- ◆ Councillor Lesley Jones
- ◆ Councillor Sandra Kabir
- ◆ Councillor Janice Long
- ◆ Councillor Tayo Oladapo

Brent Council originally achieved Charter recognition in October 2010 and made a commitment to retaining the London Boroughs Charter for Elected Member Development in November 2013.

The project management and officer support of the Charter was assigned to Saskia Woolloff, Mayor's Office and Member Development Manager, who supports the Member Development Steering Group. Saskia took on this responsibility whilst covering a period of maternity leave and many of the members interviewed were complimentary about her role in supporting member development. The council's approach ensures that there is effective support to the members responsible for promoting and leading improvement in member development. All Councillors interviewed as part of the assessment process spoke of how much they recognised and valued the officer support available to them.

The council provided the assessment team with a portfolio of evidence to support its Charter application. The evidence presented in the portfolio was drawn from a wide range of sources and gave a good overview of the council's member development activities. It was linked to the four Charter standards, with each section having some introductory text to set the context, before highlighting specific examples of where different elements of the Charter standard were met.

The planning and co-ordination of the assessment visit was well structured and courteous, enabling the team to acquire the information needed for the assessment to be thorough and representative.

Member Development Steering Group

The Member Development Steering Group played the key role in ensuring that the Charter accreditation process was member led and was accountable to the council. Its membership is representative of the whole authority:

- Councillor James Denselow (Labour) (Chair)
- Councillor Reg Colwill (Conservative)
- Councillor Ann Hunter (Liberal Democrat)
- Ben Spinks, Assistant Chief Executive
- Fiona Ledden, Director of Legal and Procurement
- Cathy Tyson, Operational Director Corporate Policy
- Saskia Woolloff, Mayor's Office and Member Development Manager

The Member Development Steering Group was established in 2003 and meets on a regular basis. This group is clearly referenced in the "2010 Vision: Taking Training and Development Forward" document and its role was also clearly articulated to the assessors on the assessment day. The aims of the Member Development Steering Group were provided and are:

1. To consider proposals for the development of the Member Development Programme.
2. To consider longer-term strategic objectives for the Member Development Programme.
3. To provide links with the political groups on the council.
4. Co-operation on a cross-party basis regarding how best to manage the programme.
5. To monitor the programme to ensure it continues to cater directly for councillors' needs.

In addition, "the aim of the Member Development Programme is to equip councillors with the skills and knowledge to be able to effectively carry out their roles in the council and in the community."

Evidence presented and demonstrated to support the application

▪ Commitment to Councillor development

The political and managerial leadership was clearly committed to member development and meeting the Charter standard. This was evident from the interviews conducted with a range of members and officers from across the organisation. In addition, there was clear reference to this in minutes from a Member Development and Ward Working Steering Group meeting. There was a clear recognition of the importance of member development and the council has been on a journey of improving its approach to member development over a number of years. Signing up to the Charter again last year provided further impetus to the activities necessary to achieve what the council wanted.

Brent Council has not been immune to the challenges facing local government in recent years; which will continue going forward. Over the past couple of years the council has had changes to the Executive and Corporate Management Team membership. With a new Chief Executive due to be appointed later in 2014 and likely changes to the Executive team following the forthcoming elections, the council will need to remain focused on further developing the capabilities of all of its Councillors. The assessors felt that this would happen.

The council had developed a concise member development strategy through its “2010 Vision: Taking Training and Development Forward” document. This set out the council’s commitments to member development, summarising the main achievements to date and identifying some specific actions about how to take member training and development forward. Its declaration states:

“Brent Council is committed to a development programme which supports and expands members’ abilities to understand and represent their communities and to building training and support according to the expressed desires of front line councillors as they carry out their work. The programme supports member-led partnership working and uses flexible learning methods to continuously improve delivery to members, in accordance with the aims and standards set in the Corporate Strategy 2010-2014.”

The Leader of the Council articulated his commitment to member development and his enthusiasm for the role in supporting member development was clearly evident. The leadership of the two minority political groups also confirmed their commitment to member development. Members interviewed on the assessment day were able to provide examples of how member training is implemented in practice, both within their groups and more widely across the council.

This commitment was supported by a high profile Member Development Steering Group, which comprises members from each political party and is chaired by an Executive member. It was evident that this group is fully committed to member development and it has worked hard, particularly over recent years, to maintain a high profile for member development. The council's approach is genuinely member led but gets a steer from the officers.

Senior management commitment to member development was evidenced through the provision of officer and budget support. The council has over a number of years provided a dedicated budget for member training and development. From 2010-11 to 2013-14 a member development budget of £16,852 has been available to support member training across the council. This was fully spent in the first two years of the current council, following the elections in May 2010 and the need to support a range of new members. The council believes that it has sufficient budget to deliver an effective range of member development activities. The budget has been primarily deployed to support members attending external seminars and to fund bringing in external expertise to deliver specialist training sessions and support the council's Personal Development Planning (PDP) activity. Some development activities have been resourced through utilising internal officer support to provide practical workshops. The Member Development Steering Group monitors budget expenditure and discusses it during regular meetings, with key issues being documented in the subsequent meeting minutes.

The Director of Legal and Procurement as well as the Mayor's Office and Member Development Manager are responsible for member training and this is reflected in their job descriptions. The assessment team were told that the recently appointed Assistant Chief Executive will have responsibility for member development. Member development is managed solely within the Member Service function, with no involvement from the central Human Resources team. Management commitment to member development was clear and it was evident that there were excellent member and officer relationships across the organisation, which contributed to the effective development of members.

There was evidence that members had been consulted about member development and that they were aware of the strategy and resultant actions. The question "Do you feel that political and managerial leadership is committed to the development of councillors and have strategies in place to improve councillor and council performance? Please provide examples" was included in the 'Member Development Programme 2010-2014 Questionnaire', issued to members.

The visible commitment to member development was further demonstrated through the annual Council Calendar. This includes all member development programme dates, taking account of cultural and personal circumstances as well as providing different approaches to developing members' knowledge and skills.

It was clear that the Member Development Steering Group has worked hard to maintain member development as a high profile activity across the Council. The

members and officers interviewed seemed keen to build on the council's work to date and take on board feedback received in order to improve the provision of member development activities for 2014-18.

Comments that we heard:

"The member development budget was fully spent in the early years due to developing PDPs and the training support from external providers."

"We have a clear cross-party member development group which does not have any political issues."

"I see attendance at the Member Development Steering Group as a priority."

"I recognise the importance of engaging with back bench Councillors so they have a voice within the council."

"I feel there is cross-party support for member development."

"We need to spread the load for responsibility for member development."

"The Member Development Steering Group needs to be re-invigorated so it is more member-led."

"It's disappointing that more of the newer Councillors do not attend more training."

▪ **Strategic approach to Councillor development**

Members, whether directly involved in leading development improvements or not, were clear that it is members and not officers who determine which member learning activities are offered at the council. Similarly, officers described their roles as those of facilitators and emphasised that they listen to member feedback and adapt their approaches in the light of this. The assessors were clear that the Member Development Steering Group is involved in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of member development activities and that it has a high profile amongst all members; being recognised as the driving strategic force. These factors, combined with the "2010 Vision: Taking Training and Development Forward" document, help reinforce the council's strategic approach.

The council's Member Development Programme includes a range of development activities designed to address members' individual development needs as well as meeting priorities and emerging issues outlined in the council's Corporate Plan.

Learning needs are identified using an individual Personal Development Planning process. This involves members having a one-to-one discussion with an external facilitator, the output of which is a Personal Development Plan (PDP). This is a voluntary process for members, and 36 members had taken the opportunity in 2010-11 to complete a Personal Development Plan. The assessors felt that this approach could be maintained following the May 2014 elections, with a 70% completion rate being a realistic target.

These PDPs are not the only mechanism used to establish member development needs. Corporate issues such as the need to increase members' IT skills following the council's move to its new Civic Centre in 2013 and the adoption of new ways of working; highlighted the importance of providing members with devices such as iPads to manage their responsibilities more effectively. A strategic approach has also been used to develop the induction programme for new Councillors. Whilst the 2010 programme covered a variety of topics felt to be beneficial to members, the assessors felt that the council would benefit from taking a more strategic approach to the 2014 induction programme; seeking input from more stakeholders and taking account of the changing council environment to provide a programme that will equip members with the knowledge and skills for the 2014-18 council term.

The council invested in a leadership development programme in late 2013. This LGA facilitated programme included individual session with the Executive and Corporate Management Team; which were followed by a joint event. The assessors believe the council would benefit from further joint leadership development events. Also, whilst there are examples of individual members attending some of the targeted Leadership Academy sessions, there will be benefit in the council investing in some individual leadership development for key members, such as new Executive members, which will improve the capability of the Executive.

The council has clear role descriptions for members, including those in leadership roles, such as Executive members and committee Chairs. These are available on the council's intranet and the strategic and operation responsibilities of members are outlined in the Members' Handbook, which will be updated prior to the elections this year.

The council demonstrated that it operates a structured and timely approach to promoting development opportunities. This is via the Member Development Programme and regular updates to members. Members that the assessors met confirmed that they receive sufficient notice of training sessions to allow them to plan their attendance. The council has already undertaken some learning activities with other authorities, for example the joint Leadership Skills session

with Harrow Council, in September 2013. Whilst this event was not well attended, the council would benefit from pursuing further opportunities for joint working with neighbouring councils to both share learning / good practice and increase value for money from the member development budget. An early opportunity may be in working with some neighbouring authorities on joint member induction events.

Comments that we heard:

“The Member Development Steering Group is well regarded within their political groups.”

“Member development needs are linked to corporate priorities, for example when there’s a change such as housing reforms, when some training is set up.”

“We do get asked about what we want from member development.”

“One of the things I found useful, as we can be quite inward looking, was attending the London Councils Summit.”

“One example I’ve seen, with IT training, is where we’ve turned it round to consider what the need was and why it was (the training) not so successful.”

“There will be a new Borough Plan, with member training linked to that.”

“We’ve tried to bring some more collaboration to member development activities.”

“The training that’s provided locally is quite flexible.”

“Rather than being in silos, we have the opportunity to learn from best practice.”
(Regarding attending external events)

“Commitment is really strong and we just need to shape up a better programme.”

“I think we haven’t opened up (in terms of cross-authority working).”

“Safeguarding is a very big job and is a regular item on meeting agendas.”

- **Learning and development is effective in building capacity**

The demands placed on Councillors in recent years has increased, as has the need for robust support for member development. The council records attendance at development events and there is a clear approach to evaluation in place to help demonstrate the benefits of member development. Post training feedback is collected from participants and the initial responses to development activities have generally been positive. The Member Development Steering Group reviews feedback from training events which are organised or facilitated by the council and draws conclusions from these to highlight improvements for the future.

The council's officers and members were clear that member development has improved the performance of individual members and functions. Examples of completed feedback for the 'Tackling Violence Against Women' and 'Smarter Working' sessions were included as part of the council's portfolio of evidence. A 'Review of the Member Development Programme and Members Expenses May 2012 – December 2013' report was produced for the standards Committee, which referred to some of the benefits derived from member development activities.

The council completed an evaluation of its 2010-14 Member Development Programme; which covered general member training events, the induction programme for new Councillors and the benefits of the Personal Development Planning activity. The Member Development Steering Group reacted to some low attendance at some development events, such as the pilot joint event held in September with Harrow Council. The group has been considering ways to increase member participation, although acknowledged that this was partly an issue towards the end of the current council's term as members became more experienced. Low attendance had been less of an issue in the first years of the Member Development Programme. The assessors discussed the importance of the Member Development Steering Group placing more emphasis on increasing attendance, particularly at more business critical topics. It would help that this is initiated and re-emphasised during the new induction programme.

The assessors saw examples in the portfolio of evidence as we'll as heard examples from members on the day about the benefits of some of the development activities. The assessors noted that a strong focus on IT training which had allowed for more effective communication between Councillors and members of the public. There were numerous positive references to the IT training and support received.

Some of the benefits of member development that members felt they'd personally gained included: greater confidence in understanding the ways committees worked and how to contribute to them effectively; better skills in using IT and public speaking; and better understanding how local authorities operate and their responsibilities as Councillors. In terms of benefits to the council, members felt: they understand more and are better able to contribute to issues such as safe

guarding, as well as current issues such as welfare reform, licensing and planning. In terms of some benefits to their communities, they felt: better able to manage their case work and deal with residents' concerns / issues; better skilled at dealing with any complaints; and more aware of specific issues within the borough, such as the levels of violence against women.

The council is increasingly using technology to share learning; for example, copies of training slides and materials are included on the members' pages of the intranet and on the 'BoardPad' facility, providing greater access to these materials for all members. The use of a variety of development approaches, such as role play, audience participation, mock scenarios and question and answer sessions, as well as more traditional PowerPoint presentations and conference attendance, has been welcomed by members and should be maintained to ensure training is effective.

Whilst the council completes initial post training reviews, it could consider using a more formal evaluation framework. This might include completing some follow-up work three to six months after an event or an approach that measures knowledge/skills at the start and end of development activities and afterwards to more specifically identify the benefits gained.

The assessors heard about internal political group peer mentoring arrangements for new members within at least one political group that has proved beneficial. The council should consider how it can introduce a corporate mentoring programme to provide this development opportunity to all new Councillors. Some mentoring training for appropriate members would be beneficial in providing a consistent quality of mentoring to new councillors across all political groups.

Comments that we heard:

"We seek feedback from sessions and feed this into the Member Development Steering Group."

"We encourage attendance at external seminars to better understand the national picture."

"When we did the training for public speaking the role plays did improve my confidence with the public it helped a lot."

"I never thought that I'd be happy using IT / iPhones. I feel more confident."

"There is the opportunity for us to feed in ideas for training sessions."

"Next time we will do PDPs to span four years not two."

“We need to be looking more at reviewing training on a more regular basis.”

“We need to be more ‘fleet of foot’ about the benefits of development and focus more on regular feedback following events rather than annually, so we have a constant form of assessment.”

“We need to encourage colleagues to deliver some of the training to members.”

“We need training on financial matters and reading budgets, so Councillors can do their jobs more effectively.”

“Let’s not just have PowerPoint presentations let’s have more ways that are accessible for members.”

“One of the weaknesses is the lack of Councillor assessment.

▪ **Supporting Councillors**

The council recognises the importance of supporting Councillors in their role as community leaders as well as encouraging more people from across the community to consider becoming Councillors. Prior to the 2010 elections the council sent detailed information to prospective Councillors and the same is being planned for 2014. Information will include a letter to all prospective Councillors in addition to an outline of the Member Induction Programme and other background details such as: member training, political group offices, member allowances, civic life, members’ legal duty, Code of Conduct, standards and background details about local government. These are detailed more fully in the Members’ Handbook.

The Council recognises the importance of community engagement and helping to make it and its Councillors more accessible to the community. For Local Democracy Week in 2013, the council arranged a programme of events including activities such as: Brent Question Time, visits to schools, Brent Connects meetings for young people and the launch of the Mayor’s Twitter account. There is also a Brent Youth Parliament. Minutes from the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee (10 October 2013) provided further evidence of the council supporting Councillors and its community.

The annual Council Calendar includes all Member Development Programme dates, taking account of cultural and personal circumstances through providing both daytime and evening training sessions. This is also reinforced through the regular member development ‘Programme of Events’ document, which is issued to members on a regular basis and provides details about forthcoming events. An example of where the council had provided tailored support to a partially sighted member was in providing a large print version of the Member

Development Programme and details about the Personal Development Plan activity. The 'Smarter Working' training session was designed to help members with their use of social media and the internet to support them to work more effectively with and engage more widely with their communities.

To further support members engage with their communities more effectively, specifically regarding their approach to communication, each member has been provided with iPads and iPhones. This allows instant access to email, the internet, council papers and social media applications. Training has been provided and members have a dedicated officer to provide IT support.

Comments that we heard:

"We provide repeat sessions where needed."

"We see that if members want to attend training they receive this – particularly external courses."

"Minority groups' members regularly attend courses / external courses."

"I believe that all of the groups' members have equality of access to training."

"The council brought in the idea of afternoon sessions, which has been better."

"It's so important that relationships between members and officers are established from the start - from induction."

Continuous improvement and direction of travel

Brent Council has been successful in retaining the Charter through continuing to meet the Charter standard. The Council has a solid foundation on which to build during 2014 and in the future. The following areas were felt by the assessors to be particular strengths:

- There is top political and management commitment to member development. The Leader clearly demonstrated an enthusiasm for and commitment to member development. This was echoed by other Group Leaders. All the members we met demonstrated a strong level of commitment and consequent understanding of the importance and need for member development. The recently appointed Assistant Chief Executive has responsibility for member development.
- There is a cross-party Member Development Steering Group, which has a clear remit for leading member development. The assessors were impressed at the level of engagement and commitment from this group as a whole. It is clear that the council is committed to the ongoing development of all its members.
- There is dedicated officer support and the assessors want to compliment Saskia Woolloff on her contribution to member development over recent months, whilst covering the post holder's maternity leave.
- The council has a sustainable budget of £16, 852, which has been maintained for a number of years and which has been utilised, particularly in the early years of the 2010-14 Member Development Programme.
- There is a clear and structured policy, laid down in the "2010 Vision: Taking Training and Development Forward." This is supported with some clear aims for the Member Development Steering Group. There was a comprehensive and structured induction programme developed for new Councillors in 2010; which will be built on prior to the May 2014 elections.
- There is a Personal Development Plan (PDP) process in place, which had a good response rate in 2010-11; helping to identify priority member development needs.
- There has been some external leadership development provided; specifically by the Local Government Association which provided a programme in October and November 2013. This was for the Executive and Corporate Management Team (CMT) and this programme incorporated both separate and joint sessions.

- The council has an evaluation process in place.

- **Assessors' suggested improvement areas**

The following are areas that the council could work towards over the next three years. They will act as a focus for the direction of travel to take forward member development. The council may also identify further key areas for improvement during this time to reflect the changing and emerging priorities of the council; particularly following the May 2014 elections, revising the Corporate Plan and appointment of a new Chief Executive later in the year.

- The council will benefit from having a more focused approach to joining up member development priorities with corporate priorities.
- Member development will be enhanced through raising the profile of the Member Development Steering Group, particularly leading up to and following the forthcoming elections. Reviewing and strengthening the working group's 'terms of reference' and aims; along with identifying how wider support can be provided for member development may help with this.
- Whilst the induction programme for new Councillors in 2010 was beneficial; the council would benefit from completing a comprehensive review of its draft Induction Programme for 2014. Following internal and external changes / influences over the past two years, the council is in a different position and the next induction programme will benefit from incorporating these factors, rather than just repeating the previous programme. The induction programme might also want to develop some joint activities with neighbouring councils to increase value for money from the member development budget.
- With recent changes in the Cabinet and CMT, as well as likely Cabinet changes following the next elections, the council needs to consider further Executive development activities. These could include individuals attending external events to learn from and interact with others; as well as further joint Executive and CMT events.
- The Council would benefit from being less inward looking and to seek opportunities to learn from good practice from other London councils and external organisations.
- Whilst the council completes some initial review of member development activities' effectiveness; the approach would be enhanced through having a more rigorous approach. This could be achieved through completing some follow-up review activities and developing case studies of effective Councillor learning. These may also help sell the benefits of member development more widely to help increase take of up development

opportunities.

- The council would benefit from increasing the roll-out of PDPs for Councillors to increase the quality and quantity of member development needs. A target of a 70% response rate would be challenging and the PDPs would benefit from being more focused on performance. The assessors recommend that the council continues to use an external facilitator to lead this activity.
- The resultant Member Development Programme for 2014-18 will benefit from responding to PDP priorities, corporate priorities as well as a political skills audit.
- Exit interviews with those Councillors that choose to stand down at the May 2014 elections should help to provide some useful feedback to further improve the member development offering at the council.
- Whilst the assessors heard about informal mentoring within at least one political group, the council, and particularly its new Councillors, would benefit from having a corporate mentoring programme. This could be rolled out via political groups. The assessors recommend that some mentor training is provided in advance of the forthcoming elections and delivered to those members that are keen to take on some mentoring responsibilities.
- To consider an application for Charter Plus, to build on the solid foundations laid for member development over recent years and recognised by this successful re-accreditation.

Improvement areas identified by the Council's officers and members

- Have more short and timely briefing sessions for members on topical issues, such as policy, scrutiny and changes to legislation, for example in education.
- 'Spread the load' for member development so that responsibility doesn't just sit with the Leader and Member Development Steering Group. Other senior members and officers will have an important role to play in promoting the Member Development Programme and its benefits.
- Complete a short strategic review of the draft induction programme for 2014, to ensure that it's effective in equipping new Councillors with the knowledge and skills to perform their role in the context of the changes required at the council.

- Increase the take up from members for development activities so that development opportunities are provided to a broader base of members.
- Build on the importance of members that sit on Planning and Licensing Committees needing to attend training to encourage greater attendance on selected other topics, such as Chairing skills and new Councillors attending Induction programme events.
- Look more outside of the council to learn from others and help avoid becoming too inward looking.
- More IT training, preferably on a one-to-one basis.

South East Employers would like to discuss with the council in eighteen months to evaluate the programme of continuous improvement and direction of travel and in three years for a reassessment. We look forward to the council supporting South East Employers in promoting the benefits of the Charter to councils across the London region. The council may continue to use the national elected member development charter logo.

The process of assessment undertaken in the council may be subject to a quality assurance review by the Local Government Association.

Charter Plus

All councils that have successfully achieved the Charter Standard are eligible to apply for Charter Plus. Full details of the framework and how to apply are available on the South East Employers website (www.seemp.co.uk) and I would be happy to discuss this in more detail at any time. I have set out below a preliminary indication of those additional steps that the Council would need evidence under each standard in order to achieve Charter Plus status.

Commitment to Councillor development:

- Examples can be provided of how learning is shared with other authorities across the tiers of local government.
- Member development / support staff have access to their own ongoing professional development.
- Member development and support staff are involved in regional and national learning networks.

Strategic approach to Councillor development:

- Robust evaluation process is in place and can be evidenced.
- Evidence that evaluation feedback contributes to review and further development of strategy.
- Evidence that a review and discussion takes place with Executive and CMT at least once per year (to ensure ongoing linkage to corporate plan).
- Member role descriptions exist and are maintained for all key roles including ward councillor, and those role descriptions are used to help identify development needs.
- Evidence that members are clear about the role of partner bodies (e.g. LSPs), other stakeholder bodies (e.g. Primary Care Trust), their own role on partner bodies and their own role in relation to other stakeholder bodies.
- Council has successfully piloted a 360° diagnostic and 70% of Member's have a Personal Development Plan in place that is regularly reviewed.
- Evidence that briefing sessions and materials are provided and publicised on emerging issues (e.g. legislative changes, government white papers).
- At least 90% of all councillors feel they have adequate access to development opportunities.
- External partners are involved in relevant development sessions.
- Evidence of a programme to develop the next generation of leaders and to support succession planning.
- Some form of impact assessment at the community level exists and is used (e.g. by asking for feedback from partners).

Learning and development is effective in building capacity:

- Clear process showing how end of event evaluation feeds into impact evaluation and to review development of the training programme.
- Evidence of post event follow-up evaluation to assess performance change (e.g. through PDP process).
- Members report back to group on conferences and external development opportunities.

Supporting Councillors:

- Evidence that council reviews its arrangements and timings of meetings and the way it conducts its business to take account of cultural, faith, travel needs and family commitments of Councillors and open up the role to as many people as possible including those in employment.
- Council is building links with local businesses and employers to promote the role of councillor.

- Council is building links with young people's groups to promote the role of Councillor.
- Councillors are a source of knowledge, both internally and externally, and share their perspectives on new initiatives and Government policies to update others.

Congratulations on achieving the Charter standard!

**Mark Palmer
Development Director
South East Employers for and on behalf of the Assessment Team**

January 2014