

The Member Development Charter and Charter Plus

Supporting continuing professional
development for councillors

Produced in conjunction with the following organisations



Foreword



The environment in which we work is ever changing and if we're to continue to meet our residents' expectations we've got to keep pace with it. That means recognising that the role of the councillor is different to what it was five, 10, even 20 years ago.

We're wardens of places, leaders who represent the interest of our residents, protectors who mitigate the impact of funding constraints, facilitators who help partners and communities work together and develop new possibilities for their local areas.

Our roles are being redefined and we need to make sure we have the skills and expertise to continue delivering for our communities.

The Member Development Charter and Charter Plus has provided councils with a robust framework and has encouraged member development across the sector. This year we've reviewed the charter to make sure we're capturing current and future challenges so that councillors are able to shape debate whilst continuing to fulfil their role as the community representatives.

I would strongly encourage local areas to adopt the Member Development Charter and Charter Plus as a guide and a benchmark as part of your improvement journey. Every profession has continuing professional development at the heart of their improvement and so should we. The Member Development Charter and Charter Plus supports this continuing professional development for councillors by being a contract between the council and its councillors that commits to invest in councillors' growth and development.

Lord Gary Porter
LGA Chairman

Guidelines

There are three essential criteria to achieving the charter:

1. There is a clear commitment to councillor development and support
2. The council has a strategic approach to councillor development
3. Learning and development is effective in building councillor capacity.

Within each of these there are a number elements and requirements to demonstrate that the criteria are being met. These do not dictate what should be in the strategy, the nature of the content or the delivery mechanisms that should be used. The emphasis is on ensuring that all councillors are appropriately developed and supported so that they can be effective in their roles.

The following lists are intended to indicate the sorts of evidence that can be used to show that the council's approach to member development meets the charter criteria. Note that:

- There is no need to show all the evidence listed.
- This does not preclude the use of other evidence that may not be listed. The emphasis is on a local approach to a national framework.
- Some are likely to be stronger indicators than others.
- Some pieces of evidence may be applicable to more than one element and criteria.

Member Development Charter and Charter Plus: examples of evidence

Criterion 1. There is a clear commitment to councillor development and support

	Elements	Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter Plus	Examples of evidence
1.1.	Political and managerial leadership is committed to the development of councillors	• Clear commitment from the top political and managerial leadership • Established cross party councillor development task group (CDTG) that meets regularly • There is a clear councillor development strategy which is embedded into practice and regularly reviewed • Named councillor(s) and officer(s) responsible for councillor development	• Clear commitment from top political and managerial leadership to share development opportunities across local government tiers (including with parish and town councils) • Of a strategic approach to forward planning of councillor development	• Signed commitment to achieving the charter • Councillors are included in any liP Award questioning process • Strategies are in place to support councillor development • Cross party councillor development task group showing active involvement of councillors in the learning and development process

Criterion 1. There is a clear commitment to councillor development and support

	Elements	Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter Plus	Examples of evidence
1.2	The council actively encourages citizenship and publicises the role of councillors as community leaders as part of promoting local democracy so as to encourage under-represented groups to become a councillor	The council holds a range of activities and events to encourage people to become councillors	- The council takes action to encourage people to become councillors, particularly from under-represented groups and evaluates the impact and success of the activities - Council provides information on the electoral process - The council builds links with local businesses and employers to promote the role of the councillor	- Local democracy week action plan, programme of activities and review - Youth council - Supports the LGA “Be a Councillor” campaign - Citizenship links with local schools, colleges and universities - Presentations at community forum events, and targeting under-represented groups, to promote the role of councillors - Prospective councillor events, materials, role descriptions – recruitment packs ‘Day in the life of a councillor’ feature in newsletters

Criterion 1. There is a clear commitment to councillor development and support

	Elements	Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter Plus	Examples of evidence
1.3	The council is committed to ensuring equal access to learning and development for all councillors	- Statistical analysis of cultural and personal circumstances - Timing of councillor development takes account of cultural and personal circumstances - All councillors have equal access to councillor development - The development programme includes a range of delivery methods to meet the different learning styles of councillors - Councillors are regularly updated on councillor development activities	Impact of analysis of access is monitored, reviewed and actioned	- Statistical evidence of attendance - A range of learning and development options to meet individual needs are provided and promoted - A range of communication methods eg internet/ intranet/ social media is used to inform of development opportunities - Councillors confirm that action is taken to respond and to accommodate diversity of need - The councillor development plan evidences flexibility and consideration of the timing of development events
1.4	The council has a designated budget for councillor development which is adequate to meet priority development needs	Budget is explicit and clearly identified and monitored	The budget is properly reviewed, set and prioritised by the cross party councillor development task group	- Budget reports - Information that informs councillors of the existence of the budget - Minutes of meetings that shows councillors' involvement in setting and monitoring the budget - Councillors confirm that the budget is sufficient to meet priority current and future development needs

Criterion 1. There is a clear commitment to councillor development and support

	Elements	Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter Plus	Examples of evidence
1.5	Designated officer/s of the council have responsibility for coordinating councillor development	• Appropriate and adequate officer resources are in place to support councillor development	• Councillor development and support staff have their own skills development programme • Councillor development and support staff are involved in regional and national learning networks to support CPD	• Officer/s job descriptions • Named officer/s in councillors' handbook or other information source that is distributed to councillors and officers • Councillors are able to name the officer who supports their learning and development • Those responsible for planning learning and development activities for councillors are able to demonstrate their understanding of learning and development in a political context • Cross party member development task group terms of reference and active involvement of councillors in the learning and development process demonstrated

Criterion 2. The council has a strategic approach to councillor development

	Elements	Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter Plus	Examples of evidence
2.1	The council has a councillor development strategy in place	• The strategy is developed and monitored by the cross party member development task group • Strategy identifies priority development needs and makes stated and clear links with council's corporate/strategic objectives • The strategy is regularly reviewed (at least once every three years) by the cross party member development task group • The strategy includes an induction process that is evaluated after each election	• The cross party member development task group leads the evaluation of the strategy and implements improvements	• A strategy is in place • Notes of member development meetings showing monitoring and evaluation of the strategy • Member development task group demonstrates their involvement in formulating the strategy • Overview and scrutiny review of the effectiveness of the strategy • Those involved in formulating the strategy can demonstrate how it links to the corporate/strategic objectives and the rationale behind stated priorities
2.2	The council has a structured process for regularly assessing councillors' individual learning and development needs based on focused objectives	• A process exists to identify individual development needs in the form of a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) or Personal Development Plans (PDPs) and is working effectively	• All councillors are offered PDPs and more than half of councillors take them up • Council has a process for individual councillor reviews to reflect on strengths and support progression	• Councillor role descriptions • Training needs analysis • Personal development plans • Use of the LGA Political Skills Framework

Criterion 2. The council has a strategic approach to councillor development

	Elements	Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter Plus	Examples of evidence
2.3	The various councillor roles are clearly defined and outline how they contribute to the achievement of community, political and council objectives	- Councillors demonstrate an understanding of the skills and knowledge required in their ward and council wide roles - Councillor role descriptions exist and are maintained for all key roles including the ward councillor - Councillors are clear about what the council is trying to achieve and the key role they play in this as councillors	- Role descriptions are used for the recruitment and selection of candidates and to identify and prioritise development needs - Role descriptions are used to support succession planning - Evidence that councillors are clear about: - the role of partner bodies - the role of other stakeholders - their own role on partner bodies - their own role in relation to other stakeholder bodies	- Systems are in place to identify individual development and support needs - Learning styles and training needs analysis - Personal Development Plans link to function and corporate objectives - Councillors are able to describe how learning and development activities have helped them to carry out their role and contribute to the achievement of the council's objectives

Criterion 2. The council has a strategic approach to councillor development

	Elements	Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter Plus	Examples of evidence
2.4.	The council has a structured process for assessing current and future leadership and executive team development needs	• Structured process to assess current and future leadership development needs • A development plan is in place that supports the top political and management teams in learning about each other and working effectively together • Leadership development is used to support future succession planning	• Leaders, cabinet members and chairs have identified and undertaken development appropriate to their responsible area • A programme to develop the next generation of leaders is in place as part of the council's approach to succession planning	• Process in place to identify leadership requirements • Leadership Development Plans • 360 Degree Leadership Audits • Political leadership development programmes eg LGA Leadership Academy • Events that support councillor/officer team building • Joint events with executive and senior management • Succession planning strategies • Community leadership development programmes • The political leadership can describe actions taken to develop political leadership capacity • The political and managerial leadership can give examples of how they work together as a team

Criterion 2. The council has a strategic approach to councillor development

	Elements	Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter Plus	Examples of evidence
2.5	There is a corporate councillor learning and development plan in place	• Councillor learning and development plan links to council's corporate objectives and the development of councillors • The councillor learning and development plan includes individuals, committees and political leadership needs	• The councillor development plan clearly prioritises learning and development that supports the corporate objectives	• Corporate councillor learning and development plan • The cross party councillor development task group are able to explain how learning and development activities are prioritised

Criterion 3. Learning and development is effective in building capacity

	Elements	Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter Plus	Examples of evidence
3.1	Investment in learning and development is regularly evaluated in terms of the cost benefit and impact	• Evaluation strategy is in place to analyse the cost and benefits of councillor development • Political and managerial leadership display a good understanding of both the costs and benefits of development activities • Councillors can describe why they did certain activities, what they learnt and what difference it has made to them carrying out their various roles as councillors	• Evaluation strategy is in place to analyse the impact of councillor development activities • Some form of impact assessment at the corporate and community level exists and is used to evaluate the impact of development (eg feedback from partners is actively sought) • Case studies of how learning and development has impacted on individual and corporate performance	• Evaluation strategy is in place and is effective • Analysis of costs and benefits to the council from councillor learning and development • Case studies of how learning and development has impacted on individual and corporate performance • Notes of meetings, focus groups, questionnaires or interviews involving councillors evaluating the impact of their development on overall performance • Political and managerial leadership display a good understanding of both the costs and benefits of development activities • Political and managerial leadership can provide examples and evidence of the impact and benefits of councillor development

Criterion 3. Learning and development is effective in building capacity

	Elements	Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter Plus	Examples of evidence
3.2	Learning is shared with other councillors and where appropriate, with officers and stakeholders to encourage capacity building in the council and a learning organisation culture	Knowledge and learning is shared with councillors' peers, officers and others	There is an effective process in place for disseminating, sharing and exchanging knowledge and learning	- Examples of reports, briefing sessions, and information exchange systems used to capture and disseminate learning programmes of joint learning exchanges - Councillor formal/informal mentoring arrangements - Hosting case study visits - Developing councillor champions for topic areas - Councillors can give examples of how they have supported and learned from the development of others

Criterion 3. Learning and development is effective in building capacity

	Elements	Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter Plus	Examples of evidence
3.3	The council demonstrates a commitment to an effective councillor learning and development programme by implementing improvements to learning and development activities as they are identified	Continuous improvement in the approach to developing councillors is identified and implemented	- There are links to an evaluation strategy - Evaluation outcomes inform change and drive continuous improvement - A quality assurance process is in place	- Written reviews of learning and development activities with recommendations for change - Notes of meetings, reports, personal statements providing examples of improvements to learning activities - Changes to development programmes and a rationale for the changes made - Councillors can describe what has been done to improve the development activities - Quality assurance process is in place and is effective



Local Government Association

Local Government House
Smith Square
London SW1P 3HZ

Telephone 020 7664 3000
Fax 020 7664 3030
Email info@local.gov.uk
www.local.gov.uk

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please contact us on 020 7664 3000.
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