



The Charter for Elected Member Development

At a glance, (background)

- Charter commitment – Broadland signed up to the Charter on 29 March 2005
- Cross Party member steering group led process
- Broadland District Council is the first council in the East of England to have been awarded the Charter for Elected Member Development.
- Two years of preparation
- A portfolio of work
- Day of assessment
- Giving elected members the opportunity to learn and develop their role with the help of officers.
- The training was linked to the local government training programme offered by the Broadland Council Training Services.
- Charter Awarded March 2007

Benefits for councillors

- The charter status is another demonstration of the council's commitment to 'Leading the way'. Being the first in the area to achieve charter status we have been able to share our experiences with other councils and discuss ways of working together to achieve efficiencies in member training and development. It has helped us to again see the benefits of collaborative working. It sets Broadland District Council up as an example of a well run and efficient organisation who is passionate about doing its best for member development.

The induction process for newly elected members.

- A choice of e-learning for elected members, to fit in with all lifestyles.

Benefits for the Council

- Local authorities who participate in the scheme are required to sign up to the charter to demonstrate their commitment to improving performance through the development of their elected members. One way in which the charter will help to develop members is to establish their different training needs both individually and council wide.

Benefits for communities

- Developing elected members to help meet the needs of the local community. Having better informed and knowledgeable members will make decision processes and every day dealings with the community better. Elected members will feel more supported in their roles, which will in turn lead to a more valuable service for the community they serve.

Who can I contact?

If you want to talk about the challenges and benefits of the Charter programme, please get in touch with

Quotes:

Colin Bland, Chief Executive of Broadland District Council,

“I was very pleased when all the group leaders immediately agreed to try to achieve the elected member development charter. Development of members, for me, is very important for a number of reasons. Members will make better decisions, which will impact on the area for many years. Hopefully members will feel supported and part of a successful organisation and will become even better ambassadors for the council. It might encourage more people to come forward at elections and it makes officers lives easier to have knowledgeable and informed members.”

Councillor Simon Woodbridge, Conservative Leader of Broadland District Council

“The public needs to have confidence in their council, and the public perception of local councils is forever changing. You can look at examples of councils who are in the newspapers for the wrong reasons because of ill informed decisions, and elected members lacking a sense of what is possible and lacking the tools to get things done. Broadland District Council has always put training and learning as a high priority for both staff and elected members and being the first council in the Eastern region to receive the charter for elected member development is a high achievement and clearly shows the work put in to achieve this. We can now get the very best out of our elected members and actively catch everyone’s interest, and the council has done extremely well to achieve the charter, and we will continue to work on our training and development for elected members.

Councillor Jo Cottingham, Chair of the elected member working group

“A tremendous amount of team effort from members, officers the Chief Executive and Broadland Council Training Services (BCTS) was put into achieving the Charter status and it was a proud day for all concerned. Everybody benefits from Member development, from the Members themselves to the person on the street. Members now have the opportunity to gain skills and knowledge that they perhaps wouldn’t previously have had access to and the community gains by having more knowledgeable and informed Councillors to represent them.”

Councillor Andrew Proctor, Deputy Leader of Broadland District Council

“Broadland District Council’s elected Members come from a wide variety of backgrounds, have much to offer and get involved in a range of interesting work on a council such as Broadland. There was a lot of hard work put in by both members and officers to get this far which is a demonstration of the commitment from the organisation to provide both training and development opportunities to fulfil the varied roles for the benefit of the community as a whole.”

Councillor David Teager, Broadland District Council Independent Group Leader

“The process shows what can be achieved with Members and Staff working together and I am proud to be part of the team that have gained this status. The skills and knowledge that will be gained through Member Development can only be to the benefit of the people in Broadland. Signing up to the Charter has been one of the best decisions that I have made as a Councillor as the benefits will be there for years to come. This will mean exciting things for the future.”

Matthew Cross, Strategic Director for Organisational Development

“If I was asked what the special features of Broadland’s approach are, I would point to three things. Firstly, it has been a team approach – cross party, officers and members. Secondly, for members to highlight their own training and development needs it is members themselves who are facilitating this, holding one to one sessions with each other to consider their roles and look at their needs. Finally, the officer support is coming not just from democratic services but from Human Resources and our training centre, BCTS. The right mix of skills and attitude are making this work.”

Sharon Morgan, Accreditation Officer for Broadland Council Training Services, the training section of Broadland District Council

“The whole process has been a great experience and the working group was passionate about achieving charter status and worked hard to ensure the process moved forward. We had a diverse group of people who were all working towards the same goal and there was a real sense of pride and achievement when we were awarded the charter status. This sets Broadland District Council up as an example of a well run and efficient organisation and clearly shows the benefits of collaborative working. We are able to use our experience and charter status to share our experiences with other councils. This will now set the tone for the importance of training for all, and elected members will hopefully feel more support.”

Jodie Butler, Personnel Officer at Broadland District Council

“The whole experience has been a real eye opener, to see how much an elected member needs to learn and understand to fulfil their role. I think training and development is vital and we, as officers, need to support them to do this. The Charter status will enhance Broadland District Council as we will have better trained and supported elected members who should therefore make better decisions. It will also hopefully help us to attract more people to stand for election as they will see that the support is there for them and we

can offer them training and development at different times so they can fit the role of being a member around their everyday life.

Martin Thrower, Committee Manager at Broadland District Council

“The culmination of 2 years of work with a small group of officers and cross party of Members with one common aim to achieve Charter status.. The collation of evidence showed that the Council already did a lot in the way of training, development and awareness which often went unnoticed or unrecorded. As a result of the charter application process, member training and development is now coordinated from within my team, which enables us to provide a more focused approach to training and maximise the use of the limited resources available. Following the recent elections we are now rolling out a comprehensive programme for all Members to meet their training and development needs based on a pilot scheme which we trialed as part of our Charter submission and which proved to be a key part of our evidence submission.

The support of other members outside of the working group, together with that provided by the Chief Executive was vital to the process in ensuring that we reached our goal. We are already working with colleagues in neighbouring authorities and have offered assistance and guidance in helping them to progress their applications, learning from our experiences. Being the first authority in the East of England to achieve Charter status we would now like Norfolk to be the first county in the region to have all authorities with Charter status.”