

At a glance

- Canterbury is delighted to have been awarded the Charter for Elected Member Development. The building blocks were laid as early as 2008, when the Group Leaders originally signed the Charter commitment. Although the preparation for assessment has taken longer than expected, the council has actively promoted member development throughout this period by providing regular training and briefings and gathering feedback from surveys.
- The Council's cross-party Member Development Group led the process, supported by staff from Democratic Services and Policy and Improvement.
- By completing the Charter template, the council was able to identify opportunities to strengthen its support. Role profiles were adopted and individual Training Needs Analysis forms introduced. These new initiatives stimulated debate among members about their role and provided additional information about their individual support needs.
- The council's Executive approved the Member Development Strategy, which reflects the priorities in the council's Corporate Plan. The Member Development Group and Overview and Scrutiny committee both contributed to the drafting of the Strategy.
- Councillors complete an annual survey, in which they offer important feedback on the learning and development they have received over the last 12 months and offer guidance on the courses and briefings they would like to see delivered in the future. The results are carefully analysed by the Member Development Group who agree the programme for the coming year. The programme is regularly monitored by members and the Senior Management Team.
- Following a rigorous assessment, the Charter was awarded to the Council on 1 November 2011.

Benefits for Councillors:



- Key initiatives implemented included a comprehensive induction process that got the basics right.
- Courses are provided at different times of the day to suit a growing number who have work or family

“Supporting councillors can be very rewarding, particularly when they comment on how the programme of events and briefings have helped them to perform their role. We will continue to build on the Charter award to ensure the needs of our Members are met.”

Matthew Archer
Assistant Head of Democratic
Services

commitments.

- New systems introduced to collect and monitor feedback such as councillor’s Training Needs Analysis.
- TNA’s have identified areas where individual support can make a difference and help councillors to perform their role.

Benefits for the Council

- Member development activities are clearly focused on the Council’s corporate priorities.
- Councillors have the opportunity to shape the development programme to meet their needs. We use the feedback to identify the areas of training and support we need to provide.



“Being a councillor is not as straightforward as it may seem from the outside. In some areas, such as planning and licensing, there are very strict legal guidelines that must be adhered to. Some of our other processes are also quite complex.

Therefore it’s important we provide councillors with the right training so that they can do the best they possibly can for their residents. I’m pleased we have received confirmation that we do this well.”

Colin Carmichael
Chief Executive

Benefits for Communities



“It’s great to see new councillors go from knowing very little to understanding the ins and outs of the council so quickly, and that’s down to the quality of the training.

They’re able to get to grips with constituents’ problems straight away, which is what being a councillor is all about”

John Gilbey
Council Leader

Who can I contact?

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

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- For local residents, the award is confirmation of good quality and effective local governance. They can also be assured of having councillors with the knowledge and skills to represent and assist them with issues in their ward.
- Councillors have access to the knowledge and support they need to respond to constituent enquiries.