



CASE STUDY: Braintree District Council

At a glance

- Charter Commitment - July 2006;
- Cross-party member steering group led process with good member-officer relations;
- Strong political leadership across all groups;
- Member development policy and strategy agreed by all group leaders;
- 12 month action plan informed by member self-assessment;
- A well-developed Members' Portal acting as a hub for member information;
- Comprehensive induction process including a range of e-learning courses.
- Strong community links - raising the profile of ward members;
- Strong indications that a step change will occur as a result of the work being undertaken in relation to the role of the local member;
- Member development is regularly monitored by members and senior management team;
- A step change in the member induction process compared with 4 years ago;
- Charter awarded - July 2011.

Benefits for Councillors:



Alastair Peace
Member Services Manager
(Charter lead officer)

"The Charter Process has given us an invaluable tool for ensuring our Member Development is as good as it can be. By working towards Charter standards we can now be sure that our Member Development is innovative, accessible and effective."

- All members invited to self-assess their development needs with their responses informing the development of the Member Development Programme.
- Our new induction process has enabled newly appointed Councillors to get to grips with their duties more quickly than before. This has been particularly useful following elections.
- A new range of more flexible development activities including web-based learning and more choices over session dates and times. This has ensured that a busy work or home life does not prevent Councillors from having the chance to access development activities;
- Our Members' Portal acts as a hub for quick access to key information for members.

Benefits for the Council:



Allan Reid
Chief Executive

“As well as improving our services to Members and Communities, the changes we have made will ensure that our member development programme will continue to respond to local and national priorities such as understanding and delivering on the localism agenda.”

- Member development activities are clearly focused on the Council’s corporate priorities;
- Senior Management and Members both monitor member development.
- The processes and procedures put in place give us a robust framework for responding to future challenges and legislative changes;
- Strong cross-party member steering group led process with excellent member-officer relations leading the development of an effective strategy and member development programme supported by all political groups.
- Learning is key to our success, both from a member and staff perspective.

Benefits for Communities:



Councillor Graham Butland
Leader of the Council

“I have seen a real change in many members since the start of this process. Members have really benefited from the opportunity to have their say about what will best help them to serve the residents in their wards.”

- Increased public awareness about the role of the Council and Councillors.
- Public resources spent on Member Development more efficiently.
- Councillors have access to the knowledge and support they need to respond to enquiries from residents in their wards.
- Successful programmes need leadership by example with commitment to learn.

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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