



**Joint Member Development Charter Network Meeting
Held on 23 September 2011 at London Councils**

Present

First Name	Surname	Authority
Holly	Adams	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Nicola	Adams	Canterbury City Council
Michelle	Anderson	Dacorum Borough Council
Lisa	Anderson	Rother District Council
Karen	Archer-Burton	Surrey County Council
Diane	Baker	Peterborough City Council
Cllr Jo	Bevis	Braintree District Council
Craig	Bowdery	London Borough of Croydon Council
Christine	Byles	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Stephen	Canning	Braintree District Council
Natasha	Clark	Cherwell District Council
Richard	Clifford	Colchester Borough Council
Duncan	Crow	Crawley Borough Council
Andrew	Davies	Crawley Borough Council
Jim	Doyle	Dacorum Borough Council
Andy	Emms	Norwich City Council

Susan	Farrell	Norfolk County Council
Edith	Gardener	Stevenage Borough Council
Michelle	George	Guildford Borough Council
Janine	Gill	South East Employers
Joanne	Hammond	Swale Borough Council
Victoria	Harrington	Tendring District Council
Janice	Holbrook	St Albans City and District Council
Jeff	Hughes	East Hertfordshire Council
Paul	Hughes	Hertsmere Borough Council
Suzanne	Hulks	Welwyn and Hatfield District Council
Kirsty	Hunt	Bracknell Forest Borough Council
Fiona	Jamieson	London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Council
Cllr Inder Singh	Jamu	London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Council
Amanda	Jerrom	Huntingdonshire District Council
Rod	Lee	North Norfolk District Council
Fiona	McMillan	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Jackie	Moore	Hertfordshire County Council
Ann	Moore	Bracknell Forest Borough Council
Donna	Offord	Waveney District Council
Mark	Palmer	South East Employers
Alastair	Peace	Braintree District Council
Joseph	Pearson	Mid Sussex District Council
Professor Jo	Silvester	Work Psychology Partnership

Adriana	Stapleton	St Edmundsbury Borough Council
Nick	Smead	Kent County Council
Manize	Talukdar	London Borough of Harrow Council
Simon	Wroe	Hampshire County Council

1) Welcome and introductions

Mark Palmer, from South East Employers, welcomed those attending and outlined the schedule for the day. Introductions were made around the room. No queries or concerns were raised regarding the minutes from the previous meeting.

2) Regional and National Charter Update

London – 12 councils in the London Borough’s have achieved Charter status. 3 have not recommitted to the standard.

South-East – 30 of 74 councils have committed or achieved the Charter; 20 of the 30 authorities committed have achieved the standard. Kent County Council recently became the first County Council in England to be awarded the Charter Plus. Two authorities in the SE have now achieved the Charter Plus status, Kent County Council and Bracknell Forest Council.

East – 29 of 52 councils have committed to the Charter with 17 achieving the status. Waveney Borough Council and Breckland Council still hold the Charter Plus for Elected Member Development. SEE are currently working very closely with the EE LGA in order to keep authorities recommitted to the Charter.

Northern Ireland – Currently SEE is supporting 4 clusters (7 councils) across NI to achieve the Charter. This is a pilot exercise and the first council, Belfast City Council have already scheduled their assessment date for the end of November.

LGG is firmly committed to supporting the Charter process and as a result all regional employers organisations, including SEE, have gone through a review process to ensure the quality of the Charter process is continuing at a high level. Early next year SEE will be putting a questionnaire out to Charter authorities to see how effectively SEE are delivering the Charter and if we can make any improvements to the process.

It was discussed that SEE are working with NALC to see if a light touch Charter assessment can be put together for Towns and Parish Councils.

3) Charter Plus Building Member Capacity – Donna Offord, Principle Services Manager for Democratic Services at Waveney District Council

Donna Offord gave a presentation on how she found working towards the Charter Plus and how in terms of MD at Waveney District Council, it is important to have as there could be a take over at any time and therefore they need to ensure that all of their members have been provided for. All the members are very proud that they

have the Charter Plus and have been through a re assessment. Donna said *“In the current Political environment all our members are committed to Member Development.”*

Donna covered topics regarding their member development strategy, what Waveney did in order to achieve the Charter Plus and discussed working jointly with Suffolk Coastal. Caroline Nixon, the Independent Chair of the Standards Committee, gave a short presentation on member and officer joint training and making the most of the budget. They finished off the presentation with a short piece on future challenges for Waveney and future National challenges with regard to Member Development.

4) Joining up Member Development across a two tier area, The Hertfordshire Approach – Round table discussion lead by Suzanne Hulks, Committee Manager at Welwyn and Hatfield District Council

Essentially Welwyn and Hatfield Council wanted to make working more joined up across the boarders using the communities of practise website set up by St Albans City and District Council. The benefits of joint working are that they are sharing ideas. The biggest issues are when they try to arrange meetings and getting everyone in the right place at the right time. The Leader at Welwyn and Hatfield Council was leading the Hertfordshire approach so there was little resistance when it came to engaging the members although it was mentioned that this type of process will not happen over night.

5) Review the Political Skills Framework – Professor Jo Silvester from the Work Psychology Partnership

The first of the afternoon sessions was lead by Professor Jo Silvester who put together the original Political Skills Framework. She is looking to tweak and move forward the framework focusing on the six skills sets needed by back benchers.

Jo was looking to hold a round table session involving all groups focusing on issues impacting on local councillors. Groups were formed and flipchart paper was used to note ideas and group discussions. Jo Silvester took these notes with her in order to collate the groups findings.

Jo has also just completed a project on Political Mentoring. The tool kit can be downloaded by accessing this [link](#).

6) Network Issues (slight amendment to the programme and network issues were brought forward)

Simon Wroe, Learning and Development Manager at Hampshire County Council asked how might you demonstrate that development is taking place at a senior political leadership level within the political groups?

Suggestions included;

- ▲ Using 360° Member Development Skills Portal through the Executive and Leaders
- ▲ Using PDP records
- ▲ Tapping into conversations the top political leadership are having

7) Councillors and Social Media, the benefits and barriers lead by Cllr Jo Beavis, Cabinet Member for Communities and Cllr Stephen Canning from Braintree District Council

In this session we heard how Twitter is one of the best tools in the box with regard to social media. Jo has been recently been converted, and has had so much success using the tool that the newspapers now follow her. Cllr Stephen Canning, also from Braintree District Council has 27,000 follows and offered hints and tips to getting started using the tool.

8) Date of next meeting

Time, date and venue to be announced shortly, the dates of the next meeting will be posted onto the SEE website.

**Janine Gill
Business Development Officer, SEE
3 October 2011**