

CASE STUDY: SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL

At a glance

- Charter Commitment - December 2005.
- Cross-party member steering group led process with support from Democratic Services and the Corporate Services Director.
- Member development strategy agreed by all members.
- Key initiatives implemented included role profiles for Councillors, prospective Councillor Guide, training flyers and evaluation strategy.
- New approaches included: training needs analysis held at full Council, Conference event hosted on a Saturday, which included three separate training sessions and keynote speech, and revised induction process.
- Learning and development plan regularly monitored by members and senior management team.
- Charter Awarded - October 2010.

Benefits for Councillors:

"The Charter process provided the Council with an excellent framework to identify good practice and areas for improvement. This is a very pleasing achievement for the Council, which recognises the progress made and the on-going improvements to our Member Training and Development provision for Councillors."

Joanne Hammond
Senior Democratic Services Officer
(Charter lead officer)

- Equality of access of training events for all Councillors with flexible times and a well established system for informing Councillors of training opportunities.
- Successful Induction events held over several years with a supporting Councillor Induction Guide to help ease Councillors into their new role.
- Councillors aware of the role of the Member Development Working Group and how to identify and access training opportunities.

Benefits for the Council

- Clear political and managerial commitment to member development, which includes identifying future training/briefing sessions linked to the Council's corporate priorities.
- A formalised process for identifying and meeting Councillors' training needs.
- An improved Evaluation Strategy to assess the benefits of training/briefing sessions, including whether it fulfilled the proposed aims/objectives and value for money.



"Central to any high performing Council are effective and well informed Councillors. Swale Borough Council has worked hard to formalise our member training provision and take an innovative approach to supporting Councillors learning and development requirements. Receiving the Charter award is excellent recognition of this progress."

Abdool Kara
Chief Executive

Benefits for Communities



"Given the challenges and opportunities facing Local Government it is vital that the Council's elected Members are equipped with the skills and knowledge to manage the difficult decisions ahead. Being awarded Charter status reflects the Council's commitment to providing training and development opportunities, which will empower our Councillors to be effective community leaders."

Andrew Bowles
Council Leader

- Involvement of Councillors in a variety of community engagement events - Local Engagement Forums, speed debating events, Youth Forum.
- Training sessions tailored to assist Councillors in their role as community leaders.
- Better informed Councillors who feel confident in representing their constituents both inside and outside of the Council.
- Training/Briefing sessions run in conjunction with various partner/external organisations to improve communication and understanding of local issues.

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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