

BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

This matter is not a Key Decision within the Council's definition and has not been included in the relevant Forward Plan

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CORE SERVICES TO CABINET

Barnsley Council Awarded the Member Development Charter Plus Status

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise that the council has achieved the Member Development Charter Plus Award in recognition of its work to support and develop its elected members. The award was given following an external assessment by the North East Charter on behalf of the Local Government Association (LGA).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To acknowledge and recognise the council's achievement of the Local Government Association Member Development Charter Plus Award.
- 2.2 To commit to addressing the identified areas of improvement outlined in the North East Charter's assessment report (see Appendix 1) in preparation for its reassessment against the Charter Plus standard in 2022.

3. INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 Barnsley Council originally achieved the Member Development Charter Award in 2007 which resulted in the foundation of its member development programme. The council was successfully reassessed against the Charter Award in 2010 and again in 2014.
- 3.2 In 2014, the Member Development Working Party agreed that the council should work towards achievement of the higher level Charter Plus standard to recognise the significant changes and improvements it had made in relation to member development.
- 3.3 The assessment against the Charter Plus standard took place on 30 January 2019. The purpose of the assessment visit was to determine whether the council had continued to meet the standard of the Charter Award and also the higher standard of Charter Plus.
- 3.4 The external verification team who conducted the on site assessment consisted of Councillor Malcolm Brain, Gateshead Councillor and LGA Member Peer and Jill Rouse, Associate of the North East Regional Employers' Organisation.

- 3.5 The assessment for Charter Plus involved evidence examined from three main sources:
1. A portfolio of evidence provided by the council
 2. A review of the council's Member's intranet site
 3. Information gathered from interviews with members and officers
- 3.6 The evidence presented in the portfolio was drawn from a wide range of sources and provided a comprehensive overview of the council's member development activities as well as its direction of travel since its last re-assessment in 2014. This evidence was assessed against the three sets of good practice guidelines of the Charter Plus. Members and officers were asked a variety of questions dependent upon their role.
- 3.7 To achieve the higher level Charter Plus award, the council had to provide further information and evidence including a number of impact stories and case studies to determine the how member learning and development has impacted on members' effectiveness, both within the council and in their community leadership role within their wards.
- 3.8 Those interviewed during the assessment visit were:

3.9 **Elected Members:**

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Cllr Sir Stephen Houghton | Cllr Robert Barnard |
| Cllr Sharon Howard | Cllr Ken Richardson |
| Cllr Alice Cave | Cllr Daniel Griffin |
| Cllr Richard Riggs | Cllr Jenny Platts |
| Cllr Phil Lofts | Cllr Margaret Bruff |
| Cllr Hannah Kitching | Cllr Joe Hayward |
| Cllr Kevin Williams | Cllr Mick Stowe |
| Cllr Sarah Tattersall | Cllr May Noble |
| Cllr Nicola Sumner | Cllr Dave Leech |

Officers:

- Diana Terris (Chief Executive)
- Andrew Frosdick (Executive Director-Core Services Directorate)
- Michael Potter (Service Director-Business Improvement and Communications)
- Phil Hollingsworth (Service Director-Stronger, Healthier Communities)
- Kate Faulkes (Head of Service-Stronger Communities)
- Amanda Glew (Head of Service-Organisation and Workforce Improvement)
- Kay Welbourne (Organisation and Workforce Improvement Manager)
- Lesley Glanville (Organisation and Workforce Improvement Strategy Officer)

4. KEY FINDINGS

- 4.1 The team of external verifiers acknowledged the strong committed political and organisational support for member development, which had increased substantially since the council had its last re-assessment in 2014. It was noted that there was now a genuine culture of member development that was led from the top by the Leader and had the buy in from all members and officers.
- 4.2 In addition, it was recognised that member development has been pivotal in providing members with the skills to deliver the corporate and strategic priorities of future council with member development enabling members to effectively deliver within their roles and support the performance improvement of the council.
- 4.3 The verifiers were pleased to see that recommendations made following the last assessment in 2014 had been implemented e.g. joint officer/member development opportunities, investment in IT skills as well as members demonstrating a more outcome-focused approach in their work.
- 4.4 The verifiers also felt that the current level of support for member development was excellent but this needed to be maintained if the council wanted to achieve its future ambitions.
- 4.5 The verifiers were encouraged by the council sharing good practice with other authorities in order for it to improve its own practices around member development.

4.6 Strengths

The assessors identified the following key strengths:

- There is continued senior political and management commitment to member development, which was complimented by the highly valued officer support through the Organisation and Workforce Improvement Team.
- The Member Development Strategy and Organisational Improvement Strategy are closely linked to the overall Future Council Strategy and the member development programme compliments and supports the key strategic priorities of the organisation to ensure all members have the appropriate skills and knowledge.
- The Member Development Working Party continues to have a high profile that is both strategic in focus and exercises a high level of influence to ensure that the member development programme is responsive to individual needs and demonstrates clear links to strategic priorities which has encouraged a culture of continuous improvement and learning.
- The instigation of Area Councils has had a profound impact on how members work in their communities. This has included members learning new skills in order to effectively deliver in their new roles. Both political and managerial leaders have played an active role in identifying and developing the necessary skills, which in turn have ensured the success of Area Councils because development and support had been done effectively.

4.7 Areas for improvement

The following were identified by the verifiers as areas that the council should work on over the next three years. They will act as a focus for the direction of travel to take forward member development and will compliment other initiatives and approaches led by the council.

- Maintain the level of support and budget for member development
- Continue to have a robust member development working party
- Keep working on the cultural shift in being more community-faced
- Further work on Health and Social Care knowledge and skills as well as joint-working
- Develop skills for members to enable them to become even bolder in their decision-making
- Encourage younger members to step up to leadership roles
- To work on the mentoring and coaching offer, particularly for new members
- The Member Development Working Party should continue to draw together examples of best practice in member development across the council and other councils who have charter plus status. Identified good practice should be utilised to support improvement to the member development offer across the council.
- The council should continue to support the strategic approach to leadership development both for cabinet members and for all councillors through attendance on the council's member leadership programme.
- Leadership development should continue to support cabinet succession planning with a more formal induction programme for newly appointed cabinet support members
- Whilst the verifiers acknowledged that the officer and members' leadership programmes needed to be different in several key ways, they also suggested that the council should consider joint elements for officers and members on future programmes.
- Consideration was also given by the verifiers that work should continue on how member P&DRs are done which may include members having a 'buddy' to help them identify their learning and development needs.
- Finally, the verifiers wanted all members to be encouraged to actively use the newly designed Members' Intranet and for the council to offer the appropriate support to make this happen.

4.8 Work to address these areas of improvement will be undertaken through the delivery of the Organisation Improvement Strategy. The work will be undertaken through the Member Development Working Party and progress monitored and reported to the Organisation Improvement Board.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR LOCAL PEOPLE/SERVICE USERS

- 5.1 The Member Development Charter Plus is a good practice framework which ensures that our elected members are developed and supported effectively to fulfil their roles. This has a positive and beneficial impact on how services are delivered to local people and how members support their communities through their role as community leaders.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The cost of the Member Development Charter Plus assessment was £1500. This was funded from the Member Development budget.

7. EMPLOYEE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 To continue to provide the appropriate level of officer support to ensure member development is fully supported.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 None

9. GLOSSARY

MDWP – Member Development Working Party
LGA – Local Government Association

10. LIST OF APPENDICES

- 10.1 Appendix 1: Member Development Charter Plus Verification Report

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 If you would like to inspect background papers for this report, please email governance@barnsley.gov.uk so that appropriate arrangements can be made

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