

Elected Member Development	19th April 2016
Corporate Policy and Resources Committee	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Leadership and Champion
Outcome	Elected Member development and community participation supported
Lead Officer	Liz Johnston
Cost: (If applicable)	£2,300

1.0 **Background:**

Capacity building funding was provided by the Department of the Environment to the new Councils, in shadow form, to support the Council in preparing to adopt their full range of powers and functions on 1st April 2015. Elected members, employees and relevant transferring functions staff benefited from the resultant programme.

The Council is now in a new era of local government and Elected Members face challenges in leading reform and shaping the Council to better meet the needs of local communities, providing a broader provision of public services in the Borough through new powers in Community Planning.

2.0 **NI Elected Member Development Charter**

The Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) is offering a learning and development opportunity "The Northern Ireland Elected Member Development Charter". (copy explanatory leaflet attached)

The incentive is part of NILGA's corporate ambition to have 11 councils at Charter standard by 2019. NILGA will have responsibility for organising the programme. The Charter is entirely driven by the Council's timetable and priorities.

The National Association of Councillors has urged all Elected Members to ensure that their council take the opportunity to implement the Charter.

The Charter is a standard for Elected Member development, similar to Investors in People (IIP). As such it can be used to "quality assure" the good work that Council already does in the area of Member development and at the same time support development in our systems and practices to bring about real improvement.

The Charter exists to:

- Encourage Councils to develop an effective approach to Member development;
- Recognise those Councils that have developed an effective approach;
- Encourage Councils to continue that development and share their experiences and learning.

The Charter creates a positive framework for Member development within a highly acclaimed National Standard, licenced by the Local Government Association in England. While this is a national initiative the programme will be tailored to meet the needs of each Council ensuring that processes support members in their role as leaders of their local communities.

3.0 Elected Member Steering Group

It is envisaged that the corporate approach to Member development will be taken forward by an Elected Member Steering Group. The Group will work towards achieving Charter Status and regularly update the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on progress.

The Group's work will include developing a strategy for Member development including learning and development to build capacity and ensuring that all processes support members in their role as leaders of their local communities.

It is expected that Charter Status will be achieved within the next 12 months. Once achieved it is held for three years during which the Council can use the Charter symbol.

Arrangements will be made for a workshop to facilitate NILGA engagement with the Steering Group.

To date seven Councils have committed to take forward the Charter initiative, five of which have been awarded Charter Status.

4.0 Costs

Because of the critical mass of collective procurement by the four local government associations in the UK it is extremely cost effective. To complete the First Charter Award process and marketing/media follow up, will cost approximately £2,800, towards which NILGA contribute £500.

5.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that Council:

- (a) sign up to the Elected Member Development Charter.
- (b) set up a Steering Group to take forward the programme of work.



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Learning Development Improvement

*“Capacity building and training for
councillors is a priority”*

Mark H Durkan, Minister for the
Environment

*“The role of local councillors and the
expectations of them have changed
dramatically. Councillors now have to
be aware of local and European
legislation, they have to be much more
accountable, member development is
essential if local government is to
thrive and prosper”*

Councillor Patrick McAleenan,
Banbridge District Council

*“The National Association of
Councillors urge all elected members
to ensure that their councils take this
opportunity to implement the Charter.
Councillors need the learning and
development opportunities that meet
our requirements. We should settle for
nothing less.”*

Alderman Michael Henderson, NAC

*“The charter journey, similar to the use
of the Investors in People framework
for our employees, has provided the
council with an invaluable tool for
ensuring member development is
aligned to the council’s priorities.
Learning and development activities
are, accessible and effective in
equipping our members with the
necessary knowledge and skills to
undertake the ever increasing
complex role of a locally elected
representative.”*

Jill Minne, Head of Human Resources,
Belfast City Council



Northern Ireland Local Government



The Northern Ireland Elected Member Development Charter



The Charter

ELECTED MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT – IT IS YOUR BUSINESS

The Member Development Charter is a standard. It is not dissimilar to the Investors in People standard used by organisations to enhance and quality assure their workforce development practices. The Member Development Charter is designed specifically for the development of Councillors and ensures that the practices and mechanisms required for member development are in place and working.

There is a clear link between how well councils function and the investment made in elected member learning and development. Members face making highly complex, regularly multi-million pound decisions on matters affecting the lives and well-being of their citizens. Better informed councillors make better decisions and better decisions improve the lives of citizens.



elected member development *designing it in*

Using the Charter to ensure it happens

CHARTER NOW AND FREE

For a **LIMITED TIME**, and funded centrally through the reform funding from the Department of the Environment, new councils committing to the Charter will receive **FREE SUPPORT** to achieve the standard. This will include:

- Launching and committing to the charter
- Self assessment
- Pre-assessment review
- The Peer assessment, and
- The Award

Further information from:

John Adams, Head of Workforce at NILGA (phone 02890798972; email j.adams@nilga.org)

CHARTER COUNCILS

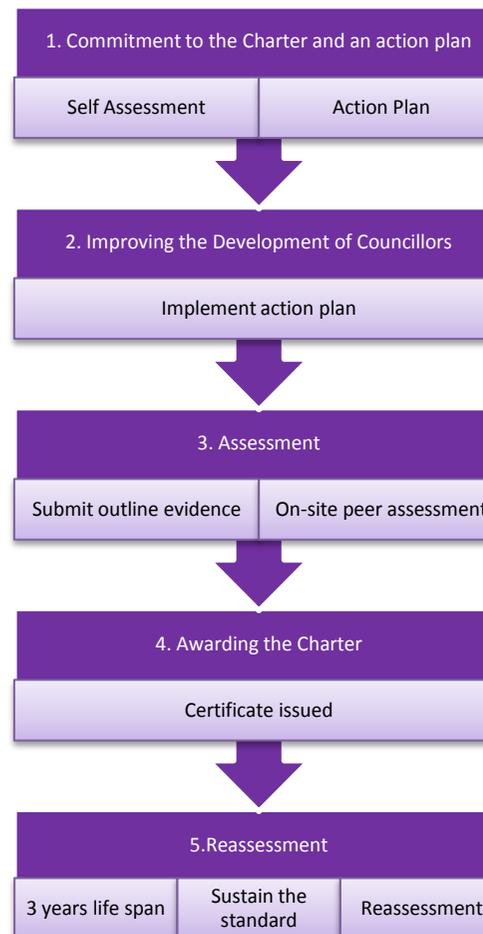
The following councils in Northern Ireland have already gained the Charter:

- Belfast City Council
- Strabane District Council
- Down District Council
- Newry and Mourne District Council
- Armagh City and District Council
- Banbridge District Council
- Craigavon Borough Council



What is involved?

There are 5 Charter stages:



CHARTER STANDARD

Achieving the charter standard involves demonstrating that the Council has the following:

Commitment to councillor development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Learning and Development Policy • Designated budget • Top political and managerial leadership 	Strategic approach to councillor development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor led strategy • Individual Learning and Development plans • Induction process for new councillors
Learning and development is effective in capacity building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning shared with other councillors, officers and stakeholders • Investment evaluated through benefits and impact 	Supporting councillors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillors provided with skills to help fulfil role as organisation leaders • Provided with briefings to help understand and fulfil role with regard to community involvement