Appendix 1: Member Development Charter

The Member development charter is a statement of a council's commitment to developing and supporting its elected members. It aims to help council's adopt a structured approach to elected member development and to building elected member capacity. The charter and its underpinning good practice guidelines were developed by Local Government Improvement and Development and the nine Regional Employers Organisations in England. All of the regions now have their own charters. The charter has not yet been developed to reflect the Northern Ireland local government context.

1. **Commitment to member development**

	GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	MINIMUM EXPECTATION
1.1	Top political and managerial leadership commitment to development of elected members	The political and managerial leadership can describe strategies put into place to develop elected members in order to improve the council's performance	- Clear commitment from the top political and managerial leadership - Signed commitment to member development and action plan - Established all party training and development task group - There is a clear strategy
1.2	Policy statement	The council has a written statement issued to all members, specifying its policy on member development in terms of equality of opportunity, priority development areas and named member and officers responsible.	- Statement of commitment - Policy easily accessible to members

	GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	MINIMUM EXPECTATION
1.3	Equality of opportunity and access to learning and development	The political and managerial leadership can describe specific actions that they take to ensure equality of opportunity, and access to learning, in the development of elected members.	• Timing of events takes account of cultural and personal circumstances • Assessment of members needs
1.4	Budget	The council has allocated a budget for member development which is adequate to address priority and other development needs.	• Budget is explicit and clearly identified and monitored
1.5	Officer resource support	An officer of the council has responsibility, which is time resourced and in their job description, for co-ordinating member development.	• Members confirm that there is an officer who supports their learning
1.6	Dissemination of learning	The political and managerial leadership can provide examples of learning among elected members, and of promoting exchange of information, as part of encouraging a learning organisation culture.	• Member champions in certain topics/functions • Joint officer member development is offered when appropriate

2. Strategic approach to member development

	GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	MINIMUM EXPECTATION
2.1	Member led strategy	Representative members are involved in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of member development strategies, possibly through an established all party task group or other all party committee.	• Decisions about member development are taken by some form of formally constituted body of members
2.2	Linkage to council corporate plan	Political and managerial leadership are actively involved in identifying priority organisational development needs which link council's aims and objectives to the development of elected members.	• Strategy identifies priority development needs and makes clear links with council's aims and objectives
2.3	Member roles clearly set out	The various representative roles of elected members are clearly specified and members are able to describe how they contribute to achieving the council's objectives.	• Members demonstrate an understanding of the skills and knowledge required in their ward and council wide roles
2.4	Process for identification of needs at individual and council wide level	The council has a structured process for regularly assessing elected member development needs at the individual and council wide levels.	• System/process exists to identify individual and organisational development needs
2.5	Structured and timely approach to promoting development opportunities	Members confirm that they receive appropriate and adequate notice of development opportunities to allow them to plan in advance.	• Timetable of learning opportunities
2.6	Appropriately learn with external partners	Political and managerial leadership can provide examples of action taken to encourage joint development opportunities for elected members and external partner organisations.	• Programmes using external (partner) support for developing members

2.7	Strategy for induction	Elected members who are new to the council, and those new to a particular role, confirm that they received a structured and effective induction.	• Induction strategy and programme of events • Induction programme for new councillors
2.8	Addresses political leadership and team development	Top political leadership are actively involved in defining the council's approach both to effective political leadership (for current and prospective leaders) and to team development.	• Development is a standing item on Exec agendas • Members are able to discuss development needs in confidence
2.9	Mechanisms for evaluation, and informing future plans, identified	The council has systems in place that effectively evaluate the benefits from elected member development and identify areas for improvement.	• Written up outline approach to evaluate member training and development with named member and office responsibilities

3. Member learning and development plan in place

	GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	MINIMUM EXPECTATION
3.1	Addresses development priorities	The council draws up plans to meet training and development needs identified as a priority in helping it to achieve corporate aims and objectives.	• Reports or other paperwork indicating training provision to meet priority needs
3.2	Identify what development activities should achieve	The council can demonstrate that elected member training and development activities have well defined and focused objectives.	• Development programme has clear objectives
3.3	Takes account of access to development opportunities	The council organises events at various times to allow for access by those with work or family commitments, and utilises a range of methods to meet learning needs.	• Training programmes indicate development opportunities available at a range of times allowing access by different groups including those who work
3.4	Linkage between individual plans and the council's corporate and other plans	Individual elected members can describe their learning needs and how these link into function and corporate aims and objectives	• Those responsible for member training and development can describe how they regularly identify individual training needs and how these link into the council's corporate and other plans
3.5	Representative elected members consulted	The council has an open and constructive relationship on elected member development with representatives from the various political/non-political groups.	• Evidence that all groups on the council are consulted on the training plan

4. Learning and development is effective in building capacity

	GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	MINIMUM EXPECTATION
4.1	Members learn and develop effectively	The top political and managerial leadership can consistently give tangible examples of how development of elected members has improved the performance of the council, functions and individuals.	• Examples of end of event questionnaires
4.2	Learning is shared with other elected members and where appropriate, with officers and stakeholders	Elected members can give examples of how they have been encouraged to learn, and to share the learning with others, so as to improve their own performance and that of others.	• Elected members can describe how they have learnt from or shared their learning with their peers, officers and others
4.3	Investment in learning and development is evaluated in terms of benefits and impact	The council can demonstrate that it periodically evaluates the cost and benefits of member training and development and the impact it has had on performance	• Evaluation strategy in place • Reports to top political and managerial leadership showing regular analysis of costs of and benefits from member training and development
4.4	Identifies (and implements) improvements to learning and development activities	People confirm that the council is genuinely committed to the continuous development of elected members and can give examples of relevant and timely improvements that have been made to development activities.	• Minutes of meetings, reports etc providing examples of improvements to learning

5. Supporting Councillors

	GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	MINIMUM EXPECTATION
5.1	Councillors are provided with an appropriate level and range of support	The council regularly assesses how it can assist those with family responsibilities in terms of suitable allowances and support.	• Councillors speak openly of feeling genuinely supported and enabled
5.2	Reviews how council business is conducted to allow for equality of access to key political decision making mechanisms	The council regularly reviews how it conducts its business, in terms of when meetings are held and access based on a clear understanding of diversity, so that elected members or potential members are able to take part in the democratic process.	• Council diary – times of meetings include both day and evening so that members can discharge their duties in such a way so as not to sacrifice family and employment responsibilities • Council diary – scheduling meetings takes account of cultural and faith commitments
5.3	Holds events for the community to encourage people to become community leaders.	The council actively encourages citizenship and publicises the role of elected members as community leaders, as part of promoting local democracy and encouraging under represented groups to take up office.	• Local democracy week action plan, programme of activities and review

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT CHARTER PLUS

Charter Plus is an optional, further level that builds on the main charter requirements. It is intended for councils that have already been awarded the charter and want an additional challenge to further improve their member development and support arrangements.

1. Commitment to member development

	GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	MINIMUM EXPECTATION (in addition to Charter requirement)
1.1	Top political and managerial leadership commitment to development of elected members	The political and managerial leadership can describe strategies put into place to develop elected members in order to improve the council's performance.	- Portfolio-holder has responsibility for members development - Clear commitment from top political and managerial leadership to share development opportunities across local government tiers (including with parish and town councils) - Members' handbook exists and includes key internal and external contacts at corporate and ward level - Evidence that all-party training and development task group meet on regular basis - Evidence that the Policy is regularly reviewed - MDTG has clear links to a portfolio and portfolio holder. Cabinet member with responsibility is on the MDTG

1.2	Policy statement	The council has a written statement, issued to all members, specifying its policy on member development in terms of equality of opportunity, priority development areas and named member and officers responsible.	• Evidence that the Policy is regularly reviewed
1.3	Equality of opportunity and access to learning and development	The political and managerial leadership can describe specific actions that they take to ensure equality of opportunity and access to learning, in the development of elected members.	• The development programme includes a range of delivery methods to meet the different learning styles of members
1.4	Budget	The council has allocated a budget for member development which is adequate to address priority and other development needs.	• Evidence that the budget is properly reviewed, set and prioritised by the cross party task group (see 1.1)
1.5	Officer resource support	An officer of the council has responsibility, which is time resourced and in their job description, for co-ordinating member development	• Member development and support staff have access to their own on-going professional development • Member development and support staff are involved in regional and national learning networks
1.6	Dissemination of learning	The political and managerial leadership can provide examples of learning among elected members, and of promoting exchange of information, as part of encouraging a learning organisation culture.	• Examples of how learning is shared with other authorities across the tiers of local government including Parish/Town councils • Mentoring opportunities, using internal or external mentors are available • Support is provided to internal mentors

2. Strategic approach to member development

	GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	MINIMUM EXPECTATION (in addition to Charter requirement)
2.1	Member led strategy	Representative members are involved in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of member development strategies, possibly through an established all party task group or other all party committee.	• Robust evaluation is in place and can be evidenced • Evidence that evaluation feedback contributes to review and further development of the strategy
2.2	Linkage to council corporate plan	Political and managerial leadership are actively involved in identifying priority organisational development needs which link council's aims and objectives to the development of elected members.	• Evidence that a review and discussion takes place with CMT/Exec at least once per year
2.3	Member roles clearly set out	The various representative roles of elected members are clearly specified and members are able to describe how they contribute to achieving the council's objectives.	• Member role descriptions exist and are maintained for all key roles including ward councillor • Role descriptions are used to help identify development needs • Evidence that members are clear about: - The role of partner bodies (e.g.LSP's) -The role of other stakeholder bodies (e.g. Primary Care Trust) -Their own role on partner bodies - Their own role in relation to other stakeholder bodies
	Process for identification of needs at individual and council wide level	The council has a structured process for regularly assessing elected member development needs at the individual and council wide levels.	• All councillors are offered PDP's and the majority of councillors take them up

			• Evident of outcomes from PDP's • Council has piloted a 360 diagnostic
2.5	Structured and timely approach to promoting development opportunities	Members confirm that they received appropriate and adequate notice of development opportunities to allow them to plan in advance.	• Annual programme of development activities published and circulated to all councillors through a variety of channels • Evidence that briefing sessions and materials are provided and publicised on emerging issues (e.g. legislative changes, government white papers)
2.6	Appropriately learn with external partners	Political and managerial leadership can provide examples of action taken to encourage joint development opportunities for elected members and external partner organisations.	• Development opportunities are made available across the local government tiers • External partners are involved in relevant training sessions
2.7	Strategy for induction	Elected members who are new to the council, and those new to a particular role, confirm that they received a structured and effective induction.	• Pre-election briefings for candidates to explain process and role of councillor • Induction programme for new councillors including those following a by-election • Programme is evaluated after each induction and members views and input sought as part of the evaluation • A post induction meeting to be held with new members after 6 months to identify any gaps in development and support • All new members are offered

			• some form of mentoring • Induction process links to PDP process and on-going development programme
2.8	Addresses political leadership and team development	Top political leadership are actively involved in defining the council's approach both to effective political leadership (for current and prospective leaders) and to team development.	• All portfolio holders and spokespersons have undertaken development appropriate to their portfolio area • Evidence of a programme to develop the next generation of leaders
2.9	Mechanisms for evaluation, and informing future plans, identified.	The council has systems in place that effectively evaluate the benefits from elected member development and identify areas for improvement.	• Robust evaluation process is in place and can be evidenced • Some form of impact assessment at the community level exists and is used (e.g. by asking for feedback from partners)

3. Member learning and development plan in place

	GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	MINIMUM EXPECTATION (in addition to Charter requirement)
3.1	Addresses development priorities	The council draws up plans to meet training and development needs identified as a priority in helping it to achieve corporate aims and objectives	• Individual councillors are able to articulate how their training and development has contributed to overall corporate aims and objectives
3.2	Identify what development activities should achieve	The council can demonstrate that elected member training and development activities have well defined and focused objectives.	• PDP process is in place • Development programme has clear, measurable objectives • Members can identify positive outcomes as a result of their development programme

3.3	Takes account of access to development opportunities	The council organises events at various times, to allow for access by those with work or family commitments, and utilises a range of methods to meet learning needs.	• Development opportunities include:
			  o Mentoring
			  o Distance learning materials
			  o E-learning methods
			  o Internal and external training sessions
			• At least 90% of all councillors feel they have adequate access to development opportunities
			• Individuals understand their role in the process and feel involved

3.4	Linkage between individual plans and the council's corporate and other plans	Individual elected members can describe their learning needs and how these link into function and corporate aims and objectives	• Linkages are evaluated • There is evidence that members can articulate the link between their PDP and the corporate objectives, with reference to particular roles and responsibilities
3.5	Representative elected members consulted	The council has an open and constructive relationship on elected member development with representatives from the various political/non political groups.	• Development is a regular item on all political group agendas • All groups will identify member development champions

4. Learning and development is effective in building capacity

	GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	MINIMUM EXPECTATION (in addition to Charter requirement)
4.1	Members learn and develop effectively	The top political and managerial leadership can consistently give tangible examples of how development of elected members has improved the performance of the council, functions and individuals.	• Clear process showing how end of event evaluation feeds into impact evaluation and to review and development of the training programme • Evidence of post-event follow-up evaluation to assess performance change (e.g. through PDP process)
4.2	Learning is shared with other elected members and where appropriate with officers and stakeholders	Elected members can give examples of how they have been encouraged to learn, and to share the learning with others, so as to improve their own performance and that of others.	• Mentoring agreements are in place • Members report back to group on conferences and external development opportunities
4.3	Investment in learning and development is evaluated in terms of benefits and impact	The council can demonstrate that it periodically evaluates the cost and benefits of member training and development and the impact it has had on performance.	• All councillors leaving mid-term (i.e. between elections) or not seeking re-election are offered an exit interview • Clear evidence that findings from exit interviews are fed into the review process
4.4	Identifies (and implements) improvements to learning and development activities	People confirm that the council is genuinely committed to the continuous development of elected members and can give examples of relevant and timely improvements that have been made to development activities.	• Examples can be given of changes made as a result of feedback and evaluation

5. Supporting Councillors

	GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	MINIMUM EXPECTATION (in addition to Charter requirement)

5.1	Councillors are provided with an appropriate level and range of support	The council regularly assesses how it can assist those with family responsibilities in terms of suitable allowances and support.	• Evidence that support arrangements for councillors are reviewed on a regular basis and that this review covers support needs of all councillors are assessed including:
			  o ICT provision and support
			  o Administrative and secretarial support (incl. diary management)
			  o Research
			  o Casework
			• All councillors have equal access to council premises, facilities and systems

5.2	Reviews how council business is conducted to allow for equality of access to key political decision making mechanisms	The council regularly reviews how it conducts its business, in terms of when meetings are held and access based on a clear understanding of diversity so that elected members or potential members are able to take part in the democratic process.	• Evidence that council reviews its arrangements and timings of meetings and the way it conducts its business to take account of cultural, faith, travel needs and family commitments of councillors and open up the role to as many people as possible including those in employment
5.3	Holds events for the community to encourage people to become community leaders	The council actively encourages citizenship and publicises the role of elected members as community leaders, as part of promoting local democracy and	• Evidence that the council takes an active role in promoting local democracy

		encouraging under represented groups to take up office.	• Council provides information on the electoral process including pre-election events to promote the role of the councillor in a non-partisan way • Evidence that the council is building links with local businesses and employers to promote the role of the councillor • Likewise with young people's groups