

## Long-term leadership - sustaining excellence

*What does really great leadership in the public sector look like?*

*How can we evaluate leadership?*

*What can we do to assess and develop future leadership capacity?*

### Background

In 2004, Cambridgeshire County Council was on the verge of moving its CPA rating from good to excellent. To sustain this achievement in the long term, the organisation wanted to create a process for developing leadership capacity amongst its second and third tier officers. Who would lead the organisation in the future? And if those people could be identified, how might they focus on their leadership development needs?

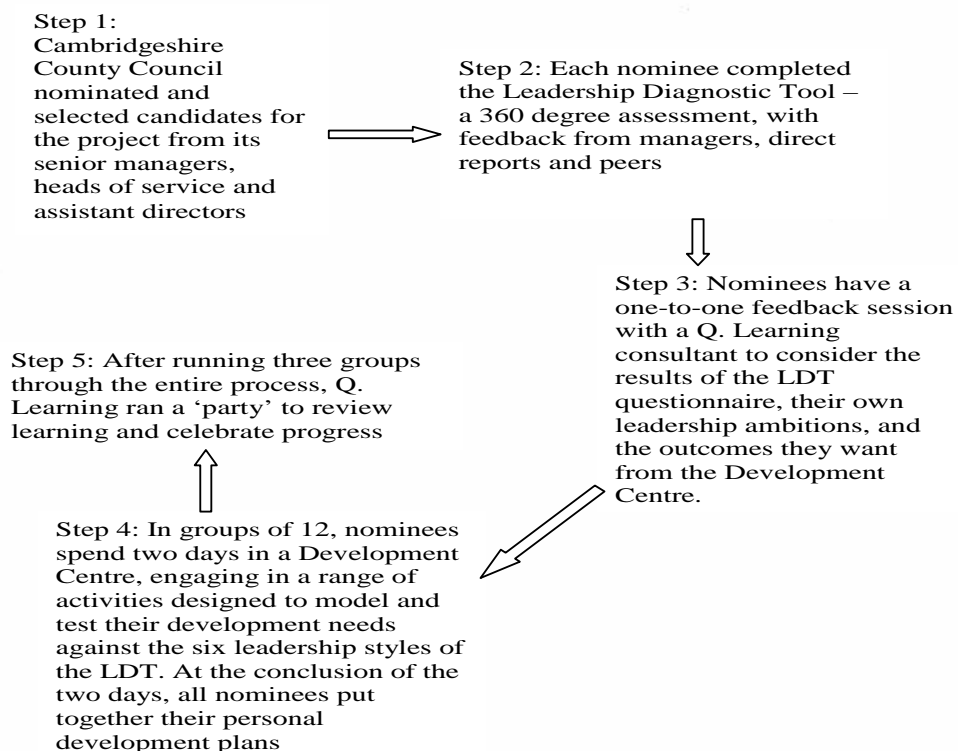
Cambridgeshire wanted to create a link or bond between personal development planning, leadership and improving organisational performance. And beyond this, they wanted the experience to be a powerful model for change within the organisation.



### The Solution/Process

Q. Learning worked with the Organisational Development Manager in Cambridgeshire to establish a model process for personal development planning around leadership. At the heart of the project was the Q. Learning/SOLACE Leadership Diagnostic Tool (LDT) - a new model for thinking about public sector leadership through six leadership styles.

The LDT is the result of extensive work with local authorities and national bodies engaged in developing leadership. Its focus is on the beliefs and values that drive great leaders, and the roles or identities they adopt in different scenarios. The tool also provides an analysis of the leadership development needs of an organisation in relation to its current performance.



Q. Learning provided two consultants for each development centre. This enabled each nominee to receive constant, high-quality feedback on their performance, and their development needs.

### Outcome

A few months after Q. Learning completed its work with Cambridgeshire, the Council achieved its excellent rating, and also embarked on a restructuring programme to modernise the Council. Those who had completed the leadership programme were in a position to:

- Think about what it takes to be a leader in a large public sector organisation, and whether that is a role they want to play
- Understand the differences between and the transition from management to leadership, and learning needed to make the change
- Relate their personal development plans to the future leadership needs of the organisation in its modern form.

Beyond these personal outcomes, the organisation has a 'model' group of around 30 leaders with a shared understanding of leadership that cuts across departments and service outcomes. At a time when it is tough to recruit talented leaders to the public sector, Cambridgeshire also has a leadership pool focused on improving itself and the organisation.

"Q. Learning played a key role in delivering our innovative succession planning programme. Participants gave excellent feedback on Q Learning and best of all, a number of them have gone on to gain promotion to senior roles in our new Corporate Leadership Team. We were also delighted when the programme was mentioned favourably in the course of our CPA assessment (which rated us as Excellent) and when we recently obtained Investors in People for the whole organisation." Marion Mair, Organisational Development Manager.

### Q. Learning delivers:

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Q. Learning  
The Stable Suite  
21 Hart Street  
Henley-on-Thames  
Oxon  
RG9 2AR

Tel. 01491 414202  
Fax. 01491 414303

[www.qlearning.com](http://www.qlearning.com)