

# Case Study

## MA Leadership



**Mairi Brookes**  
Sustainable City Team  
Manager, Oxford City Council

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*“It was the highest quality learning time I’ve ever experienced”*

### How did you come to be on Henley’s MA Leadership programme?

‘I saw a competition for a scholarship for the programme advertised on the Guardian Professionals Network and thought it would be fun and interesting as an exercise. And despite my expectations, I won!’

### So what were your expectations, and how did the reality of the programme differ?

‘I really hadn’t given too much thought about the programme itself. Whilst I’m quite a driven, ambitious person, I recognised that I needed some personal self-development, and a formal framework to become a more responsible senior leader in the sustainability field. So I thought the programme would give me that.

‘On reflection, the thing that surprised - and delighted - me most was how well everyone gelled from day one. We just clicked. I had been a little anxious about being amongst people from such a mix of backgrounds, but it very quickly became a safe space for all of us to talk about work and life.’

### What were the highlights of the programme for you?

‘As well as the people, the course materials were excellent, and they seemed to have a way of sparking my creative thinking. My colleagues could tell when I’d been at Henley just by the way I’d apply new ideas. I found myself being able to see further, and clearer.’

### And what impact did that have professionally and personally?

‘People definitely noticed a change in me, especially in my confidence levels. I’ve become more enthusiastic; more inclined to come forward with suggestions and with ways of dealing with situations that previously I might have shied away from.

‘Outside work, my husband has also noticed my increased confidence. And even though the extra studying has put pressure on my time, I’m actually a more balanced and less stressed person.’

### So what advice would you give to anyone who might be thinking of enrolling on the programme?

‘Just do it! It’s really awesome! If there’s anything you’re not completely attuned to in your professional life, the self-development this programme gives you can be invaluable.

‘The action learning and the workshops are so well designed to fit around your work time, and it still manages to give you vital time for reflection. It was the highest quality learning time I’ve ever experienced.

‘Being at Greenlands enables you to learn naturally, and it was never a slog. It felt like a sanctuary, but I remember feeling energised every time I went there.’

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