

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
MEMBER DEVELOPMENT GROUP
MONDAY, 28 JULY 2025**

Held at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber Area B, Rushcliffe Arena,
Rugby Road, West Bridgford

PRESENT:

Councillors P Matthews (Chair), T Birch, R Butler, T Combellack, M Gaunt,
L Plant, L Way, G Wheeler and G Williams

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

C Caven-Attack
H Tambini

Head of Corporate Services
Democratic Services Manager

APOLOGIES:

Councillor J Cottee

1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 March 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 26 March 2024 were agreed as a true record.

3 Councillor Training Update and Programme

The Head of Corporate Services presented the Councillor Training Update and Programme, which provided an overview of training undertaken since 2023, together with future training opportunities, and referred to the questions listed in Paragraph 4.17 of the report, for members of the Group to consider.

The Group acknowledged that up take of training continued to be a struggle for various reasons, and the Chair referred to reference in the report to the possibility of referring Councillors to the Standards Committee for non-participation in learning and development and questioned what reminders were sent out to prompt them. The Head of Corporate Services referred to the Learning and Development Policy, which outlined training principles for Councillors, including a requirement that all mandatory training should be completed within 12 months of a Councillor being elected. Currently GDPR was the only training with 100% completion. Each Councillor had an Individual Learning Record, which was emailed out to them and Group Leaders, in the hope that where gaps occurred, Councillors would be encouraged to undertake that training. It was suggested that Councillors should be given six months to complete any outstanding mandatory training, with a progress report taken to Standards Committee. The Group was reminded that whilst face to face training could be difficult to attend, e-learning could be done at any time.

The Chair felt that six months to complete any outstanding training seemed proportionate but suggested that Councillors should be prompted after three or four months if the training had not been completed.

The Group questioned if face to face mandatory session would be repeated to allow Councillors an opportunity to attend and the Head of Corporate Services advised that some sessions were run annually and questioned what was a realistic expectation that 100% attendance could be achieved. However, 100% completion for e-learning was achievable, and some face to face sessions would be arranged again to show Councillors how to access and complete e-learning modules.

A member of the Group suggested that the training session on working with officers should be repeated again, as this was very important, as not all Councillors had been able to attend the first session. It was also felt that a session on AI would be very helpful, given the pace and implications of this technology.

In answer to a question about recording more training sessions and running them virtually, the Head of Corporate Services advised that for any mandatory training it was not possible to measure who was watching recordings afterwards, so although attendance could be recorded for live sessions, compliance for any other Councillors could not be proved to the auditors.

A member of the Group acknowledged those issues; however, he felt that if a Councillor joined a live session with their camera on, it was no different to physically attending a session in person and given that Councillors had so many commitments, it was important to use technology to improve accessibility for everyone. The Head of Corporate Services accepted that improvements were required; however, it was more difficult to interact and engage remotely, with trainers needing the skills to ensure people were involved in the same way as they would be in a face to face session. There had been improvements, which would continue; however, feedback from Councillors was that they preferred face to face training.

The Chair suggested that training on line worked if numbers were small and suggested that could work to pick up smaller groups of Councillors who needed to complete mandatory courses.

A member of the Group suggested that desirable training sessions could be held on line, to improve uptake and asked if face to face sessions could be held on a Thursday, as the majority were currently held earlier in the week, which clashed with town and parish council meetings.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) the information provided by officers in relation to Councillor Learning and Development was considered;
- b) the questions outlined in Paragraph 4.17 of the report in relation to the Councillor Training Programme were considered;

- c) the Councillor Training Programme 2025-2027 be approved; and
- d) subject to the comments made, it be recommended to Council that the Learning and Development Policy be updated to reflect the need for individual Councillor training participation, to be reported to the Standards Committee.

4 Councillor Learning and Development Policy 2026-2029

The Head of Corporate Services presented the Councillor Learning and Development Policy, for the Group to consider and review before being submitted to Council for adoption.

The Head of Corporate Services confirmed that this was the second time that the Policy had been reviewed and would incorporate any comments made and actions requested by the Group during the meeting.

A member of the Group questioned why in the Policy GDPR training was listed in both mandatory and desirable categories and officers explained that initially face to face sessions had been offered to Councillors; however, as not everyone could attend there were e-learning modules available as well. It was agreed that this was confusing and the Policy would be reflected to amend that.

A member of the Group referred to a recent email received regarding some cybercrime training and asked if this would be happening more frequently. The Head of Corporate Services advised that both officers and Councillors would be undertaking this new training, with the expectation that officers would trial it first, followed by Councillors. Some confusion had occurred as the email had already been sent to Councillors; however, Councillors were not expected to undertake it now, they would be informed about it again later on in the year.

In answer to a question about the training budget, the Head of Corporate Services stated that currently none of the budget had been used for this year and it rarely got fully used, as a great deal of training was run internally.

A member of the Group requested that going forward, if Councillors were being asked to do some training any notification in Councillors' Connection should be headlined. The Head of Corporate Services apologised and stated that there had been a message in Staff Matters and not Councillors' Connection regarding the cybercrime training, and when the training was rolled out to Councillors, everyone would be sent an email and it would be headlined in Councillors' Connection.

A member of the Group referred to the Training Request form and asked if that should be publicised more, as she had been unaware of this until recently. The Head of Corporate Services stated that Councillors could use this form and make a request for any training opportunity they saw, and Democratic Services also advertised courses to Councillors. If any cost was involved, then a formal request was required, to ensure that the budget was being managed. Officers agreed to ensure that this was placed in a more prominent place on the Councillors' Portal and advertised periodically in Councillors' Connection.

It was **RESOLVED** that subject to the comments made, the Councillor Learning and Development Policy 2026-2029 be approved and recommended to Council for adoption.

5 Review of Councillors Community Support Scheme

The Head of Corporate Services presented the Councillors' Community Support Scheme, for the Group to consider and review.

The Group was advised that this was not a full review, as this took place in line with the electoral cycle. This year, it was hoped to phase out using paper application form, with Councillors being given appropriate training to help facilitate this change. The Head of Corporate Services advised that significant improvements had been made to the electronic form, which was easy and straightforward to use for both the applicant and Councillors, ensuring that the correct information was included, speeding up the process and so providing a good audit trail.

The Chair and members of the Group expressed concern that elderly and disabled residents, and those without internet access might be unable to complete a form, and this could stop people applying and asked what measures would be put in place to overcome that. The Head of Corporate Services confirmed that Councillors would continue to be able to complete the form on the applicant's behalf, and members of the Council's Customer Services team could also do that.

The Chair agreed with the principle but felt that the navigation process needed to be improved to make it easier to complete the form, and that should take place before completely moving over to using electronic forms.

The Chair felt that for one member wards the £1,000 budget was very limited and questioned if that could be increased; however, other members of the Group felt that this was an appropriate amount. It was suggested that it would be helpful if Councillors who were close to exceeding their budget could apply to use some of the unspent budget.

A member of the Group asked if there could be a way of logging that a Councillor had completed a form on behalf of an applicant, to ensure transparency, and once a form was completed, if a Councillor could be updated on progress, including when a payment had been made, and details of what funds they had left for the year.

In answer to a question regarding a minimum turnaround time for applications, the Head of Corporate Services advised that this depended on the information that was submitted, with delays caused by incorrect or missing evidence having to be chased up.

Members of the Group questioned if there was a way to redistribute funds or roll them over to the next year if they were unused and the Head of Corporate Services clarified that any unspent money was returned to the Council's reserves. Any changes to this process could be looked at when the next full

review was undertaken before the next elections.

A member of the Group stated that it was not easy for residents to navigate the website to locate the form and it was unclear what the scheme was called, and the Head of Corporate Services advised that this would be investigated and resolved.

It was **RESOLVED** that subject to the comments made, the Community Support Scheme as appended to the report be approved and that all applications received should be electronic.

The meeting closed at 7.10 pm.

CHAIR