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Our reference:
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Date: Friday, 18 July 2025

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To all Members of the Member Development Group

Dear Councillor

A Meeting of the Member Development Group will be held on Monday, 28 July 2025 at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber Area B, Rushcliffe Arena, Rugby Road, West Bridgford to consider the following items of business.

This meeting will be accessible and open to the public via the live stream on YouTube and viewed via the link: <https://www.youtube.com/user/RushcliffeBC>
Please be aware that until the meeting starts the live stream video will not be showing on the home page. For this reason, please keep refreshing the home page until you see the video appear.

Yours sincerely



Sara Pregon
Monitoring Officer

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest

[Link to further information in the Council's Constitution](#)
3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 March 2024 (Pages 1 - 6)
4. Councillor Training Update and Programme (Pages 7 - 16)
5. Councillor Learning and Development Policy 2026-2029 (Pages 17 - 28)
6. Review of Councillors Community Support Scheme (Pages 29 - 36)

Postal address
Rushcliffe Borough Council
Rushcliffe Arena
Rugby Road
West Bridgford
Nottingham
NG2 7YG

Membership

Chair: Councillor P Matthews

Councillors: T Birch, R Butler, T Combellack, J Cottee, M Gaunt, L Plant, L Way and G Williams

Meeting Room Guidance

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Toilets: Are located to the rear of the building near the lift and stairs to the first floor.

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Microphones: When you are invited to speak please press the button on your microphone, a red light will appear on the stem. Please ensure that you switch this off after you have spoken.

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MEMBER DEVELOPMENT GROUP TUESDAY, 26 MARCH 2024

Held at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Rushcliffe Arena,
Rugby Road, West Bridgford
and live streamed on Rushcliffe Borough Council's YouTube channel

PRESENT:

Councillors D Soloman (Chair), M Barney, T Birch, T Combellack, M Gaunt,
A Phillips, D Polenta and G Williams

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

C Caven-Attack

Service Manager - Corporate
Services

H Tambini

Democratic Services Manager

APOLOGIES:

Councillor R Mallender

33 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

34 Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 September 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 25 September 2023 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

35 Councillors' Training Update

The Service Manager – Corporate Services presented the Councillors' Training report, which updated the Group on the current position in regard to Councillor Learning and Development.

The Chair referred to the summary of progress detailed in Paragraphs 4.6 and 4.8 of the report and asked the Group to consider the six questions posed in Paragraph 4.14 of the report.

The Group noted that overall the uptake for e-Learning was poor, with a few Councillors completing a lot of modules and many completing very few or none at all. Some members of the Group thought that face to face training was better, and that the whole e-Learning process was off putting and did not suit everyone. Reference was made to a previous request that face to face training sessions should be recorded, as that would allow the sessions to be viewed again, which could remove the need to run face to face sessions again, and hopefully relieve pressures on officers and allow Councillors to watch it whenever they wished.

The Service Manager – Corporate Services advised that trying to record the sessions would not be straightforward and it would not be possible to record who had attended, which would be an issue, as the Council had to demonstrate that Councillors were attending mandatory training. She went on to question the quality of the training experience, and the passive nature of training if it was simply viewed from a recording.

A member of the Group referred to the difficulties in attending face to face sessions, especially parents with young children and those with busy work commitments and stated that recordings could help Councillors and the training programme should be flexible to support all Councillors.

The Chair referred to the legal requirement to complete mandatory training, including GDPR and questioned how much proof was required that such training had taken place elsewhere.

A member of the Group asked if there was any feedback available as to why Councillors had been unable to attend training sessions, as that could be a useful tool going forward. They were advised that there was not.

The Group considered the number of sessions run for each topic, the spread, timings and days of the week sessions were held on. It was noted that many Councillors were also on parish and town councils, which had evening meetings, which often clashed with training. The Service Manager – Corporate Services advised that many parish and town council meetings were held on a Monday, and therefore training sessions were not held on Mondays. A balance also had to be struck to ensure that meetings and training sessions were spread out to avoid officers and Councillors being busy on multiple nights in one week. The Service Manager – Corporate Services stated that a pilot would be undertaken and a suitable internal training session chosen. However, she reminded members of the Group that delivering online training sessions was specialised, Council officers were not trained for that, and that would affect the quality of the session.

Members of the Group stated that whilst training was important a balance had to be struck and a sense of proportion was required. Mandatory training was very important; however, the desirable training should be left to a Councillor's own judgement, as to whether they considered it to be necessary, and there should be no consequence for not undertaking this training. Some Councillors might not have attended training if they thought it related specifically to a committee that they were not members of. The Service Manager – Corporate Services referred to the Member Development Charter, part of which had involved appraisals for Councillors, and had included an individual training plan for each Councillors. That had not proved very successful and had been discontinued; however, if the Group wished, that could be reconsidered again at a future meeting.

In answer to a question regarding the completion of mandatory training and what was required to get that to 100% by specific deadlines, the Service Manager – Corporate Services stated that there were five mandatory courses, related to various committees, and no Councillors could be a member of those committees without having undertaken that training. She went onto advise that

GDPR should be completed by all Councillors. In respect of essential training, she confirmed that Councillors should also be completing that training.

Members of the Group suggested that deadlines should be given to complete courses and where applicable, Councillors should be made aware that some sessions would not be repeated. Councillors who had not undertaken mandatory training should be contacted directly when further sessions were run, for example Licensing Committee training and asked about their availability to ensure that they could attend. The Service Manager – Corporate Services referred to the Learning and Development Policy, which clearly stated that mandatory training should be completed within 12 months of a Councillor taking office; however, there were currently no sanctions in place, apart from reporting Councillors to the Standards Committee, which she advised had never happened.

In answer to a question regarding refresher training, the Service Manager – Corporate Services advised that many courses were regularly updated and refreshed, as could be seen on the training programme for next year. She went on to advise that in respect of Standards training, the basics had been covered as part of the Induction Programme; however, to sit on the Standards Committee specific training was required, and currently two members of the Committee had not undertaken that training.

A member of the Group felt that Councillors who had failed to undertake GDPR training should be advised that they could infringe regulations and that their email use could be suspended. They went on to mention that there was a difference between Councillors in their first term of office and more experienced ones, who would have previously undertaken the training for committees and they felt that some tolerance was required.

The Chair referred to the seriousness of undertaking GDPR training and asked the Group if it was happy to impose a sanction, with Councillors being given two months to do it, otherwise their email access would be removed, which would be in line with the same sanction that officers received.

A member of the Group voiced agreement that a sanction for GDPR was reasonable; however, more broadly he did not consider any further sanctions should be imposed, apart from potentially planning training and he questioned if withholding allowances was legal and advised that he would not support that. The Service Manager – Corporate Services confirmed that it was legal and other councils did take that sanction. In answer to a question about comparing Rushcliffe's training record to other councils, she advised that Rushcliffe was about average, and that some councils had better records as they paid Councillors to attend training, by keeping back part of their allowance specifically for that. Most councils had similar sanctions in terms of being unable to sit on specific committees without training, although this did not work for GDPR training.

Members of the Group stated that Councillors were very busy, receiving many emails and it was inevitable that information could be easily missed, and suggested that emails could be highlighted in colour to make things clearer. Also some of the terminology was unclear, for example the difference between

mandatory and essential training and the Group asked if the process could be simplified. The Service Manager – Corporate Services reminded the Group that following the Induction last May, each Councillor was sent a Training Expectations file that included the complete training programme for the last 12 months, including dates, times and the classification of that training, and that would be replicated for next year. In respect of terminology, she advised that it had been a previous decision of the Group to use that wording, and she would be happy to simplify it.

The Chair proposed that the classification be changed to mandatory and desirable training, with desirable being left to individuals to determine if the course was appropriate for them, whilst every effort would be made to reach 100% for mandatory training sessions, in particular for all committee members. A Councillor without that training would not be allowed to sit on the committee. The Chair asked officers to send a summary of training to each Councillor, with everything recategorised and colour coded red for mandatory and another colour for desirable, with a reminder that all mandatory training should be completed.

In answer to a question regarding holding training sessions around the Borough, to reduce travel time for Councillors, the Service Manager – Corporate Services stated that this could be looked into, although she reminded the Group that the Arena was centrally located, and Councillors were entitled to claim travel expenses to attend training sessions.

In respect of GDPR training, the Chair asked officers to contact the remaining Councillors who had still to complete this training, or provide evidence that they had done it, and remind them that this should be done within two months or they would lose access to their emails. A member of the Group suggested that rather than asking officers to contact those Councillors, Group Whips and Group Leaders should be asked instead.

The Chair asked the Group if they agreed that the point had come when a sanction was required regarding the GDPR training, in conjunction with contacting those Councillors again, and members of the Group agreed that it was a fair and proportionate response.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) a pilot be implemented on recording a face to face internal training session on YouTube for Councillors to view;
- b) the training categories be amended to mandatory and desirable; and
- c) that a sanction of losing e-mail access be imposed on any Councillor who fails to complete their GDPR training by the required deadline.

36 **Draft Training Programme 2024/25**

The Service Manager – Corporate Services presented the draft Training Programme for Councillors for 2024/25 as detailed in Appendix One to the report.

The Chair reiterated that people learned in different ways and questioned if any of the 16 face to face courses, listed in Appendix One were also available as an e-Learning module. On looking at the list of six mandatory e-learning courses, it was noted that two courses, Equality and Diversity and Disability and Discrimination were also covered by face to face sessions.

The Chair advised that the draft Training Programme included a repeat of the Understanding Licensing Committee training, and she hoped that all members of the Committee would be trained after this session. It was noted that there was an e-learning module for Chairing Skills, which would also be helpful. The Service Manager – Corporate Services advised that all Councillors should attend the face to face session on Updates for Planning Committee members.

A member of the Group asked if there could be some training around dyslexia, autism, hearing and sight loss and the Service Manager – Corporate Services stated that this could be looked into.

The Chair questioned if the Cyber Security session should be mandatory rather than desirable given the increasing threats associated with this. Members of the Group considered that on balance, although it was an important issue, and as there was also an e-learning module available it should remain as desirable. The Service Manager – Corporate Services confirmed that this could also be included again in future face to face GDPR sessions when they were scheduled.

The Chair hoped that for some sessions going forward, for example planning and use of the Planning Portal, there could be some live demonstrations to further enhance those sessions.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) that a session on dyslexia, autism and other sensory issues be added to the Councillors 'Training Programme for 2024/25; and
- b) that the Councillors' Training Programme 2024/25 be approved.

The meeting closed at 7.45 pm.

CHAIR

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Member Development Group

Monday, 28 July 2025

Councillor Training Update and Programme

Report of the Head of Corporate Services

1. Purpose of report

1.1. Contained within the Terms of Reference for the Member Development Group are the following specified roles:

- Creating an environment that encourages self-development and continuous learning.
- Identifying, delivering and evaluating learning and development opportunities for Councillors.

1.2. This training update and programme is brought before the Group to inform members of the current position in regards to Councillor Learning and Development (training) and to consider training needs now and in the future.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the Member Development Group:

- a) considers the information provided by officers in relation to Councillor Learning and Development, and suggests any actions or ideas it may have;
- b) considers the questions outlined in Paragraph 4.17 in relation to the Councillors' Training Programme;
- c) approves the Councillors' Training Programme 2025-2027; and
- d) recommends 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.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

Learning and Development is an essential part of being a Councillor. The Member Development Group has been set up to advise and direct Councillor Learning and Development and has agreed to receive regular updates about this matter.

4. Supporting Information

Training Update

- 4.1. The Council's Learning and Development Policy has been updated and is being considered at the meeting of the Member Development Group this evening. If agreed, it will be submitted to Council for adoption. This Policy contains a number of key Learning and Development Principles including the completion of all mandatory training within 12 months of becoming a Councillor. Mandatory training sessions have taken place and will continue to be updated as and when required.
- 4.2. To assist Councillors in completing their mandatory training, individual learning records were developed and are available for Councillors at any time to check their progress. This is sent to Group Leaders, and individual Councillors, following Member Development Group.
- 4.3. Since the last meeting, improvements to accessing e-learning have been introduced by setting up single sign-on.
- 4.4. There are five mandatory training sessions which Councillors must undertake before serving on a specific committee, these are for Planning, Licensing, Standards, Employment Appeals and Interviewing committees. Training is mandatory for the Councillors nominated to serve on these committees (including substitutes). These sessions are marked with an * in the table at paragraph 4.7. Where these figures are less than 100%, this is due to changes in committee membership in May 2025 and training is being organised for those who have not already received it in advance of any meetings being held.
- 4.5. Additional mandatory training is designed to keep Councillors and the Council safe and up to date with key budget and legislative information, and good practice. This training is provided using a mix of face-to-face and e-learning modules to provide Councillors with flexibility. The Councillor Learning and Development Policy requires that this training is undertaken once in every four-year term of office, usually within the first twelve months, and provides the opportunity for Councillors to provide certification from other organisations where a training session has already been undertaken elsewhere (these must also be up to date).
- 4.6. As shown below, participation in all forms of training could be improved. Member Development Group is asked to consider whether the Councillors' Learning and Development Policy (also on this agenda) should be amended to include an annual report to the Standards Committee about the take-up of development opportunities to address the concerning levels of participation in mandatory training. It is proposed that a report highlighting levels of training engagement, particularly in relation to mandatory training, be taken to the next Standards Committee recommending that those with outstanding mandatory training be written to by the Chair of the Standards Committee and requested to bring training up to date within the following 12 months. The following year

those with outstanding mandatory training will be named in the report for transparency and accountability. This provides a possible 18 month window for Councillors to ensure they are up to date with their mandatory training requirements and allow time for the scheduling of future training.

- 4.7. The table below shows Councillors' progress since May 2023 towards completing mandatory training in line with the Councillors' Learning and Development Policy.

Topic	Nature of Training	Percentage Complete
Understanding Planning Committee*	Face to face	98% (100% of current committee members)
Understanding Licensing Committee*	Face to face	54% (80% of current committee members)
Understanding Standards Committee*	Face to face	34% (83% of current committee members)
Understanding Employment Appeals Committee*	Face to face	N/A Completed as required
Understanding Interviewing Committee*	Face to face	100% of current committee members
Planning for Ward Councillor	Face to face	61%
Understanding Scrutiny/Scrutiny Skills*	Face to face	52% (55% of current committee members)
Understanding Local Government Finance	Face to face	43%
Understanding your responsibilities GDPR and Cyber Crime	Face to face/e-learning/certificates	100%
Understanding and making the most of motions at Council	Face to face	36%
Budget Session	Face to face	65%
Treasury Management*	Face to face	47% (77% of current committee members)
Risk Management*	Face to face	52% (55% of current committee members)
Domestic Violence Awareness	Face to face/online	72%
Understanding the role of the officer and getting the best out of relationships with officers	Face to face	52%
Equality and Diversity	Face to face/e-learning	See below for e-learning
Your role as a Councillor	e-learning	32%
Equality and Diversity	e-learning	48%

Disability and Discrimination	e-learning	41%
Section 17: Crime and Disorder	e-learning	25%
Safeguarding Adults	e-learning	23%
Safeguarding and Child Protection	e-learning	20%

* only mandatory for those Councillors sitting on specific committees.

- 4.8. There is a concern that Councillors' understanding of their responsibilities, and those of the Council, in relation to Equality and Diversity, Disability and Discrimination, Section 17 and Safeguarding Adults and Children is a potential risk to the authority as the completion rates for those courses are all below 100%. The Group is asked to consider if any action is necessary to address this issue. Officers are prepared to repeat the face-to-face e-learning workshop in September / October 2025.
- 4.9. Officers will increase their surveillance of East Midlands Councils and the Local Government Association training courses and ensure that these are featured regularly in the weekly Councillors' Connections newsletter. Training undertaken with an external provider can be logged on Councillors' Individual Learning Records on the request of the Councillor.
- 4.10. The Democratic Services team records and reports upon Councillor engagement in training. Currently, this stands at 55% for in-person training and 40% for mandatory e-learning (up to end of June 2025).
- 4.11. Additional training has been offered on: Domestic Violence (32 attendees), a Design Code Workshop (25 attendees) and further Planning training sessions (32 attendees). In addition, Councillors have attended courses run by East Midlands Councils or other external providers.

Training Programme 2025-2027

- 4.12. The purpose of training for Councillors is to:
- Increase their understanding of a specific subject and understand their own/the Council's responsibilities.
 - Increase their skills in a particular area, enabling them to be more effective in their roles as Councillors.
 - Increase their confidence as Councillors in key areas of their role.
 - To reduce the risk for Councillors and the Council in taking decisions and performing their duties effectively.
- 4.13. The Councillor Training programme has been updated and is available for the Member Development Group to consider at Appendix One.
- 4.14. The Council is anticipating new training to be introduced later in the year in relation to Local Government Reorganisation and specifically Unitary Authorities. The programme will be updated when it is clear what is required.

- 4.15. This programme will run alongside the e-learning modules that are available throughout the year. Additional training may be offered on an ad-hoc basis as needs are identified or as external training opportunities become available.
- 4.16. The budget for Councillor training in 2025/26 is £6,500.
- 4.17. Member Development Group is asked to consider:
- Do the proposed training sessions meet Councillor needs as we understand them at the present time?
 - Does the Group know of any additional areas in which training would be beneficial at this time, potentially a session on AI and one on learning about Unitary Authorities?
 - Does the Group have any comments to make about the timing or format of training that officers could take into account when organising sessions?
 - What does good engagement in training for Councillors look like?
 - Would a report to the Standards Committee outlining Councillor participation in Learning and Development promote further engagement, particularly in those topics considered to be mandatory?

5. Risks and Uncertainties

- 5.1 There is a risk that if Councillors are insufficiently trained to carry out their roles then decisions that they make may be ultra vires or they may advise residents incorrectly.
- 5.2 Currently individual Councillor progress on their training programme is not reported. Reporting annually training performance to Standards Committee will demonstrate where there maybe 'gaps' in progress and any necessary action required. This therefore reduces the risk of a Councillor taking inappropriate action (and any direct impact of this) as well as reputational risk to both the Councillor and the Council from having not undertaken the required training.
- 5.3 All training involves an investment in time and cost. The more Councillors can attend the relevant training the better value for money for taxpayers. Poor attendance, particularly on externally run courses, runs the risk of being poor value for money.

6. Implications

6.1. Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications from the report. The budget for Councillor training for 2025/26 is £6,500 however, if, for example, more external training was recommended additional budget may be required.

6.2. Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications, although Councillors not undertaking training places the Council at risk of potential negligence.

6.3. Equalities Implications

There are no equalities implications arising from this report, although Councillors not undertaking training places the Council at risk of potential negligence.

6.4. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications

There are no Section 17 implications arising from this report, although Councillors not undertaking training places the Council at risk of potential negligence.

6.5. Biodiversity Net Gain Implications

There are no biodiversity net gain implications arising from this report.

7. Link to Corporate Priorities

The Environment	Knowledgeable and efficient Councillors are better placed to make sound decisions supporting the environment in the Borough
Quality of Life	Knowledgeable and efficient Councillors are better placed to make sound decisions affecting the quality of life of residents in the Borough
Efficient Services	Knowledgeable and efficient Councillors are better placed to make sound decisions regarding the delivery of efficient services
Sustainable Growth	Knowledgeable and efficient Councillors are better placed to make sound decisions supporting sustainable growth in the Borough

8. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the Member Development Group:

- a) considers the information provided by officers in relation to Councillor Learning and Development, and suggests any actions or ideas it may have;
- b) considers the questions outlined in Paragraph 4.17 in relation to the Councillors' Training Programme;
- c) approves the Councillors' Training Programme 2025-2027; and

- d) recommends 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.

For more information contact:	Charlotte Caven-Atack Head of Corporate Services Tel: 0115 9148278 ccaven-atack@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers available for Inspection:	
List of appendices:	Appendix One – Draft Councillor Training Programme 2025-2027

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Draft Councillor Training Programme 2025-2027

Topic	Who	Type of training	Format of training
Budget 2026/27 (<i>annually</i>)	Internal Peter Linfield/Sarah Whittaker	Essential for all Councillors	Face-to-face
Treasury Management (<i>annually</i>)	Internal / External – Peter Linfield/Sarah Whittaker and Arlingclose	Essential for members of Governance Scrutiny Group / Desirable for all Councillors	Face-to-face
Updates for Planning Committee Members (<i>ad hoc as required and annually for new membership of Committee</i>)	Internal- Planning Services	Essential for all Councillors	Face-to-face
Understanding Licensing Committee (<i>annually for new membership of Committee</i>)	External – Institute of Licensing	Essential for members of the Licensing Committee	Face-to-face/online
Effective Meetings and Chairing Skills (scrutiny)	External – East Midlands Councils	Essential for all scrutiny chairs and vice chairs (or those hoping to take up those positions in future years)	Face-to-face
Equality and Diversity	External - Baikie-Wood Consultancy via East Midlands Councils	Essential for all councillors An e-learning module is available	Online
Dementia Awareness	External – Gwyneth Owen	Desirable	Face-to-face
Understanding Neurodiversity	TBC	Desirable	Face to Face
Learning about Unitary Authorities	TBC	Desirable	Face-to-face
Using Artificial Intelligence	TBC	Desirable	Face-to-face/online

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Member Development Group

Monday, 28 July 2025

Councillor Learning and Development Policy 2026-2029

Report of the Head of Corporate Services

1. Purpose of report

The Councillor's Learning and Development Policy was first written in 2014 and last reviewed by the Member Development Group in 2021, before being adopted by Council at its meeting in July 2021. The current Policy expires in 2025, so it is timely for it to be reviewed again before being submitted to Council for adoption.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the Member Development Group approves the 2026-2029 Councillors' Learning and Development Policy and recommend its adoption to Council with any proposed amendments.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

To ensure that Councillors are adequately trained and supported to deliver effective decision making within the Borough.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1. The Councillors' Learning and Development Policy (see Appendix One) aims to help develop Councillors so that they have the necessary knowledge, skills and attributes to significantly improve the Council's decision making, the quality of its services and the work Councillors do to benefit their communities.
- 4.2. Every Councillor has the right to access learning activities that will provide them with the necessary knowledge and skills to be able to effectively perform their duties as elected representatives.
- 4.3. The Councillors' Learning and Development Policy recognises the need for different forms of development, both in content and method of delivery. It addresses developmental needs in skills and knowledge, having regard to the context of local government in a rapidly changing society.
- 4.4. The Councillors' Learning and Development Policy sets out agreed Learning and Development Principles including commitment to learning and self development, as well as the parameters for organising and holding training.

- 4.5. The Council provides a range of development opportunities through the Councillors' Learning and Development Policy. However, ultimate responsibility for participating in learning rests with individual Councillors.

5. Risks and Uncertainties

There is a risk that if Councillors are insufficiently trained to carry out their roles, then decisions that they make may be ultra vires or they may advise residents incorrectly. The Policy also balances resources and flexibility for Councillors, so some training can be undertaken at home and some is offered in person.

6. Implications

6.1. Financial Implications

There is a Councillors' training budget of £6,500 in a standard year (this is increased to £8,000 in an election year).

6.2. Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

6.3. Equalities Implications

The Policy is accessible to all through a variety of training methods.

6.4. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications

There are no direct Section 17 implications arising from this report.

6.5. Biodiversity Net Gain Implications

There are no direct biodiversity net gain implications arising from this report.

7. Link to Corporate Priorities

The Environment	Knowledgeable and efficient Councillors are better placed to make sound decisions supporting the environment in the Borough
Quality of Life	Knowledgeable and efficient Councillors are better placed to make sound decisions affecting the quality of life of residents in the Borough
Efficient Services	Knowledgeable and efficient Councillors are better placed to make sound decisions regarding the delivery of efficient services
Sustainable Growth	Knowledgeable and efficient Councillors are better placed to make sound decisions supporting sustainable growth in the Borough

8. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the Member Development Group approves the 2026-2029 Councillors' Learning and Development Policy and recommend its adoption to Council with any proposed amendments.

For more information contact:	Charlotte Caven-Atack Head of Corporate Services Tel: 0115 9148278 ccaven-attack@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers available for Inspection:	
List of appendices:	Appendix – Draft Councillors' Learning and Development Policy

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Draft – Councillor Learning and Development Policy

Rushcliffe Borough Council

2026 - 2029

1. Introduction

Every member of Rushcliffe Borough Council strives to serve the communities they represent, and the Borough as a whole, to the best of their ability.

This Policy aims to help to develop Councillors so that they will have the necessary knowledge, skills and attributes to significantly improve the Council's decision making, the quality of its services and the work Councillors do to benefit their communities. Councillors need a whole range of skills in order to embrace the increasing complexity of their individual roles. Every Councillor has the right to access learning activities that will provide them with the necessary knowledge and skills to be able to effectively perform their duties as elected representatives.

The Councillors' Learning and Development Policy recognises the need for different forms of development, both in content and method of delivery. It addresses developmental needs in skills and knowledge, having regard to the context of local government in a rapidly changing society.

2. Why have a Policy?

The development of Councillors is an essential investment by Rushcliffe Borough Council in its own future. The Member Development Group recognises that Councillors have different skills and expertise gained through employment and life. The Group is keen to enable Councillors to access as many development opportunities as possible to make them effective in their ever-changing role as a Councillor. Councillor development can have a significant impact on the performance of the organisation. Well-equipped Councillors are better placed to make the decisions necessary to make the Borough a great place to live, work and play, and can deal with the challenges and changes faced by the organisation.

3. Key Principles

- Councillors will be offered opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills and expertise they need to perform their roles effectively
- Development will be available to all Councillors irrespective of political allegiance
- Councillors will be encouraged to take responsibility for, and actively seek opportunities for, their own learning and development
- Ensure a consistent approach to Councillor development

- Creation of a learning culture for Councillors at Rushcliffe Borough Council that regards continuous Councillor development as vital to its success
- Councillors to have ownership of the development programme via the Member Development Group
- In line with the Councillor Training Principles
- Consistent with Equal Opportunity policies.

4. Implementation

This Policy will be implemented:

- By the Member Development Group with support from the Democratic Services team (following approval by Full Council)
- With the assistance of Group Leaders who will actively encourage their members to participate in development activities and give feedback on courses attended
- By monitoring on a regular basis to ensure the take up and effectiveness of development activity.

The following learning and development principles have been agreed by Councillors (and are expanded upon in Appendix One to this document):

- Some training is mandatory meaning that it is necessary to complete this training before taking up a seat on the Planning Committee, Licensing Committee, Standards Committee, Interviewing Committee, and Employment Appeals Committee – this includes as a substitute
- Some training is considered mandatory to keep you and the Council safe and up to date in terms of legislation, budgetary position and current good practice
- Some training is considered mandatory depending upon the role you have within the Council; examples include scrutiny or risk management
- All mandatory training should be completed within 12 months of becoming a Councillor
- Dispensations for mandatory training undertaken for other employers will be given on production of evidence such as a current certificate or written confirmation from another employer
- The Council also provides access to training it considers to be desirable to support Councillors being as effective as possible
- A training record will be held by the Democratic Services Team for every Councillor during their term of office.

The learning and development principles document also outlines minimum numbers which must be met to avoid the cancellation of training events.

The programme will incorporate the following:

- Induction for new Councillors and refresher training for re-elected Councillors following a Borough Council Election to ensure that all Councillors have the necessary skills to be an effective Councillor including information about how the Council works and how decisions are made
- An annual training programme incorporating:
 - Core competencies – skills that all Councillors will benefit from including personal safety, caseload management and public speaking
 - Specific skills – building on the core competencies to pick up on a specific

- skills set for certain roles including media training for Cabinet members, chairing skills and questioning for scrutiny members
 - Mandatory training necessary to carry out specific roles on regulatory committees such as Planning, Licensing, Interviewing and Employment Appeals reflecting the policy and statutory requirements which directly affect Councillors
- A suite of e-learning packages designed to offer a range of information and skills development that can be undertaken by Councillors at a time and in place that suits their busy lives.
- Access to externally provided training courses and briefing sessions held by East Midlands Councils, the Local Government Association or private individuals to increase Councillor skills and understanding.

Accessing training:

This Policy encourages use of a wide range of methods to meet learning and development needs for individuals and groups. When choosing learning and development methods, the focus will be on the outcomes in terms of improved performance. Training will be delivered:

- With sessions at different times of the day to meet demand where possible
- Using different methods, including presentations, interactive sessions, briefing sessions, workshops and electronic learning to meet a range of different learning styles
- A training request form can be found on the Councillors' Portal or Councillors can contact Democratic Services directly.

Supporting Councillor Development:

The Council is a member of East Midlands Councils, which shares ideas and training opportunities.

Evaluation of training opportunities:

A variety of different evaluation methods are used to measure the effectiveness of the Councillors' Learning and Development Programme. These include:

- Sample development events or briefings are assessed by using a simple SurveyMonkey evaluation form
- Councillors who attend externally provided courses will be encouraged to provide feedback to the Democratic Services Team to ensure value for money is obtained
- Member Development Group reviews training delivered including Councillors evaluation comments each time it meets

5. Methods of Delivery

These will include:

- Internal training courses, briefings and workshops
- Training courses held in-house but delivered by external providers
- Shared training courses with other authorities
- Written learning materials available via the Councillors' Portal
- E-learning packages available via the Councillors' Portal
- Occasional one-to-one training delivered by officers to meet a specific need.

6. Accessibility

It is recognised and understood that Councillors come from a variety of backgrounds, with different skills, experiences, knowledge and expertise in a wide range of subject areas, and that each Councillor may have different learning and development needs and different learning styles.

The objective is that all learning and development opportunities should be open to all Councillors. No Councillor should be disadvantaged by their previous work, life or learning experience in the way learning and development opportunities are offered and accessed. The Democratic Services Team will respond positively to reasonable requests from Councillors regarding how development opportunities can be made more accessible.

7. Member Development Group – Role and Remit

The Member Development Group is made up of representatives from the main political groups. Its role is to:

- Create an environment that encourages self-development and continuous learning
- Identify, deliver and evaluate learning and development opportunities for all Councillors
- Create an effective Councillor induction programme for delivery following a Borough Council Election
- Overseeing changes to the way Councillors work and deliver their role
- Evaluating and making changes to the Councillors' Community Grant Scheme as required.

8. Responsibilities

Democratic Services Team

- Develop a comprehensive Induction programme for new Councillors following a Borough Council Election
- Develop and resource an annual training programme for all Councillors
- Provide e-learning modules for Councillors to extend the variety of training opportunities available to them
- Promote training activities being run by other providers such as East Midlands Councils or the Local Government Association
- Evaluate the impact and outcomes of all learning activities and report these to the Member Development Group
- Actively promote learning and development events.

Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Councillor Development

- Actively promote learning and development events provided by the Council and external providers.

- Contribute to the development of a comprehensive Induction programme for new Councillors following a Borough Council Election
- Agree an annual training programme for all Councillors
- Encourage participation in learning activities for all Councillors
- Note the training evaluation reports presented by the Democratic Services Team and take action if required.

All Councillors

- Participate in training opportunities, in person or electronically, to widen their experience and knowledge
- Provide feedback on the effectiveness and benefit of training undertaken to the Democratic Services Team
- Seek and identify training opportunities themselves and forward any such information to the Democratic Services Team
- Share what they have learnt with other Councillors especially if this learning has been access externally.

9. Communications

Successful communication is an important element of Councillor development. A weekly Councillors' Connections e-newsletter is used to highlight and remind Councillors about forthcoming training events.

Additionally, Group Leaders are asked on a regular basis to encourage their members to attend particular events.

There is a designated page on the Councillors' Portal containing information about member development.

10. Resources and Support

This policy will be delivered by the Democratic Services team with the input of professional officers where appropriate. A dedicated budget is available for Councillor development covering all internal and external training events, materials and conferences.

11. How is the Policy Monitored?

The Member Development Group will monitor the progress of the work at its meetings. The feedback from the programme of Councillor development activities and how Councillors are developing as a result will be assessed. This will be used to make continuous improvements to the programme and ensure that Councillors are assisting the Borough in achieving its corporate priorities.

Appendix One – Councillor Learning and Development Principles

Each year the Council creates a Training Programme, in conjunction with the Member Development Group.

The Training Programme consists of courses offered face-to-face, delivered by both internal and external speakers as appropriate, and via the Council's E-Learning platform. The provision of E-learning training is to provide greater flexibility for Councillors to undertake training in their own environment without the need to come into RBC offices.

In both cases, some courses are considered mandatory for all Councillors to understand their legal, legislative and community leadership responsibilities. Some courses are considered mandatory for certain groups, such as those on particular committees or with specific responsibilities. Others are desirable for the Councillors to choose whether or not the training would be helpful to them in undertaking their role as a Councillor.

The following Learning and Development principles sit behind the Training Programme:

- The Democratic Services Team will maintain a Training Record for each Councillor which is available to the Councillor at any point during their Term of Office
- Councillors must make every effort to attend face-to-face essential sessions such as Planning Committee training or the annual budget workshops when they are provided
- Councillors in specific positions of responsibility, or on certain committees, must make every effort to attend face-to-face training essential to their role, such as Licensing Committee training when it is provided (ideally prior to first meeting); and likewise encourage all members of the respective committee to attend.
- All essential training should be completed within 12 months (subject to exceptional circumstances such as illness). Where it has not been possible to complete training in this time, Councillors should seek advice from the Democratic Services Team to arrange completion
- Group Leaders will have access to records of attendance of their Group Councillors' attendance and will encourage attendance, particularly for essential training
- Continued failure to undertake essential training courses could be referred as a Standards issue to the Council's Monitoring Officer given the Councillors role 'to promote and support high standards of conduct in accordance with the principles within the Councillors' Code of Conduct
- Dispensations can be awarded for training undertaken for other organisations (such as a workplace or other community leadership role) by providing the Democratic Services Team with written evidence such as a certificate or email from another employer
- As well as the publication of an annual Training Programme booklet, the Democratic Services Team will publicise training events in the Councillors' Connections publication

- With regard to externally delivered face-to-face courses, if ten people are not signed up for the course eight weeks in advance then the course will be cancelled
- With regard to internally delivered face-to-face courses, if six people are not signed up for the course two weeks in advance then the course will be cancelled.

Mandatory Training – Councillors are not permitted to sit on these committees without the relevant training or briefing

- Planning Committee
- Licensing Committee
- Standards Committee
- Employment Appeals Committee
- Interviewing Committee

Mandatory Training – designed to keep you and the council safe and up to date with key budget, and legislative information and good practice.

- Planning for Ward Councillors – All (face to face)
- Understanding Scrutiny/Scrutiny Skills – All (face to face)
- Understanding Local Government Finance – All (face to face)
- Understanding your responsibilities GDPR and Cyber Crime – All (face to face)
- Understanding and making the most of Motions – All (face to face)
- Annual Budget Session – All (face to face)
- Treasury Management – All (face to face)
- Risk Management – All (face to face)
- Understanding the role of the officer and getting the best out of relationships with officers – All (face to face)
- Domestic Violence Awareness – All (face to face)
- Your role as a Councillor – All (e-learning)
- Equality and Diversity – All (e-learning)
- Disability and Discrimination – All (e-learning)
- Safeguarding Adults – All (e-learning)
- Safeguarding Children – All (e-learning)
- Section 17: Crime and Disorder – All (e-learning)

Desirable Training – to support you to be as effective as possible

- Chairing Skills (face to face)
- Getting tough (face to face)
- Emergency Planning (face to face)
- Cyber security (face to face)
- Dementia Awareness (face to face)
- Dyslexia, Autism and Sensory Issues (face to face)
- Retrospective Planning Applications (face to face)
- Personal safety and dealing with online abuse and intimidation (face to face/online)
- Understanding domestic violence and the Council's role in supporting victims (face to face)
- Effective Communication – Public Speaking (face to face)

- Debating skills for Councillors (face to face/online)
- Armed Forces Community Covenant (e-learning)
- Charing Meetings (e-learning)
- Community Leadership (e-learning)
- Managing Information Effectively (e-learning)
- Public Speaking (e-learning)
- Working with the Media (e-learning)
- Hate Crime – All (e-learning)
- GDPR 1, 2 and 3 – All (e-learning)
- Cyber-crime, phishing, smishing and vishing – All (e-learning)
- Information Classification – All (e-learning)
- Display Screen Equipment – All (e-learning)
- Hate Crime – All (e-learning)
- Prevent – All (e-learning)



Member Development Group

Monday, 28 July 2025

Review of Councillors' Community Support Scheme

Report of the Head of Corporate Services

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. The Councillors' Community Support Scheme was last reviewed in 2022, and it is timely to review it again to ensure it is working effectively and to look at possible improvements to the administration of the scheme.
- 1.2. Since the Borough Council elections in May 2023, Councillors have been encouraged to complete application forms electronically, and it is now planned to phase out using paper forms by the end of this year. Training will be offered to Councillors who would like support in completing electronic forms.
- 1.3. Streamlining the system will allow officers to access bank details and evidence directly from applicants, cutting down on processing time, reducing errors and opportunities for fraud and maintaining an electronic audit trail. It is also more environmentally friendly by not having paper and not printing documentation.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the Member Development Group approves the Community Support Scheme (as Appended) and that all applications received should be electronic.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. To streamline and improve the application process and improving value for money for the taxpayer.
- 3.2. The Councillors' Community Support Scheme is an allocation of public funding ringfenced for Councillors to spend on community projects, events and improvement in their ward. It is important that the Scheme is robust, fair and represents value for money as well as being clear in the community benefits it delivers. The Community Support Scheme is appended to this report.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1. The Councillors' Community Support Scheme is an allocation of public funding ringfenced for Councillors to spend on community projects, events and improvements in their ward. The allocation per Councillor is set as part of

the budgetary process each year and approved by Full Council in March. The current allocation for 2025/26 is up to £1,000 per Councillor.

- 4.2. During 2024/25, 127 applications were made, of which 57 were submitted electronically and 70 submitted in paper form.

5. Risks and Uncertainties

The Councillors' Community Support Scheme is related to opportunity, and if the allocation remains unspent at the end of the year then potentially the community is missing out on additional funding that can be spent on meeting community needs, improving community access or infrastructure, or the delivery of community events.

6. Implications

6.1. Financial Implications

6.1.1. Each Councillor is allocated £1,000 to spend within their local community (the allocation is set each year as part of the Budget). This grant allocation is primarily for use within the Councillor's own ward. However, it can be spent in conjunction with other Councillors for the same ward or within a neighbouring ward, with the approval of the relevant Councillor.

6.1.2. The total budget for 2025/26 is £30,000 as not all Councillors spend their allocation. If all Councillors spend their allocation, the budget would be covered firstly by in-year efficiencies or allocation from contingency.

6.1.3. Applications must be made in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders.

6.1.4. Any funds remaining unspent at the end of the financial year will be returned to corporate reserves.

6.2. Legal Implications

Councillors have a fiduciary duty to ensure that public funds are spent appropriately.

6.3. Equalities Implications

There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report.

6.4. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications

There are no direct Section 17 implications arising from this report.

6.5. Biodiversity Net Gain Implications

There are no direct biodiversity net gain implications arising from this report.

7. Link to Corporate Priorities

The Environment	The recommendations in this report do not impact on or contribute to the Council's environment priority
Quality of Life	Use of the Councillors' Community Support Scheme is predominately used to enhance residents' quality of life
Efficient Services	The recommendations in this report do not impact on or contribute to the Council's efficient services priority
Sustainable Growth	The recommendations in this report do not impact on or contribute to the Council's sustainable growth priority

8. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the Member Development Group approves the Community Support Scheme (as Appended) and that all applications received should be electronic.

For more information contact:	Charlotte Caven-Atack Head of Corporate Services Tel: 0115 9148278 ccaven-attack@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers available for Inspection:	
List of appendices:	Community Support Scheme Guidance Notes

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Councillors' Community Support Scheme Guidance Notes

Introduction

The Councillors' Community Support Scheme exists to enhance the capacity of Councillors to undertake their community leadership role through the granting of funds within their ward to support community projects. The grant is paid out of public funds.

All grants should have a positive impact on residents of the ward the Councillor represents and enhance the lives of the ward residents.

These notes have been produced to help Councillors with the administration and spending of their designated budgets within their ward. They aim to provide guidance so that Councillors have the freedom to spend their budgets within an approved reporting framework to benefit local communities and mitigate against risk.

Budget

The grant available to each Councillor to spend in their ward for the benefit of their community is decided each year by Council. The amount agreed is subject to change as part of the annual budget setting process.

This guidance and the process generally supports applications to be made in accordance with the Council's financial regulations and standing orders.

Use of designated budgets will be suspended during the pre-election period for Borough Council elections and, for those relevant Councillors, for the County Council Elections. Use of designated budgets may also be suspended at the discretion of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services during the pre-election period for a By-election for a Parish / Town Council if the member is also a Borough Councillor.

Any funds remaining unspent at the end of the financial year will be returned to corporate reserves or spent on community projects which benefit the whole Borough.

The grant allocation is primarily for use within the Councillor's own ward. It can be spent in conjunction with other Councillors for the same ward (where they exist) or in an adjacent ward with the approval of the relevant Ward Councillor and where there is a demonstrable benefit to both communities.

Payment of grants will be made by BACS, due to administration costs and efficiency, with a covering email unless Councillors specifically request a cheque for personal presentation to the group. An annual audit of the Scheme is undertaken each summer and a selection of beneficiaries will be contacted and asked to provide evidence of expenditure and community value (usually in the form of a photograph or personal statement).

Criteria for this scheme

Key Criteria: applications need to meet the following criteria:

- Within the Rushcliffe boundary and for the benefit of the residents in your ward
- To benefit the local community within your ward and enhance residents quality of life
- Proposals should be for one-off items of expenditure and not for anything which could create an on-going financial commitment
- Funding is not available for the direct employment of staff or for rent or general running costs
- Awards should, where possible, meet a guideline minimum payment of £50, which approximates to the estimated average cost of the administration of grants. For grants below this limit, the application should include justification.
- Awards to parish councils to fund projects that should be funded out of the parish precept, should be kept to a minimum, and will be made at the discretion of the ward Councillor.
- Awards should be for items or work within the current financial year and supporting evidence should be provided to reflect this.
- Awards should be avoided where there is an alternative, more suitable funding source i.e PTA of a school.

Transparency

Councillors need to be mindful of how they spend their budgets and be clear of the community benefit. A Councillor arranging a grant should clarify that this is arranged from the Council's Community Support Scheme. Information will be published on the Council's website in line with the transparency code, giving the general public the opportunity to scrutinise expenditure.

What this grant CAN be spent on

- ✓ Improvements to community facilities within the ward
- ✓ Community events or activities within the ward that benefit all/a wide range of residents of the ward
- ✓ Investment in community infrastructure within the ward
- ✓ Support to a religious organisation where the project/event to be delivered benefits the wider ward (e.g. repair of church clock)
- ✓ Support to a local school or academy where the project/event to be delivered benefits the wider ward
- ✓ Section of the community within the ward with a specific need.

What this grant CANNOT be spent on

- ✗ Anything illegal
- ✗ Projects of a party political nature, including supporting political organisations
- ✗ Supporting religious groups, activities or events, where the benefit is for that group only
- ✗ Requests which directly benefit a sole individual
- ✗ Requests spent on consumables
- ✗ Support to lobbying or campaign groups
- ✗ The direct employment costs of staff or hospitality payments (including food and drink)
- ✗ Anything that will bring the Council into disrepute or damage the Council's reputation.

The Monitoring Officer keeps a record of all applications to the Councillors' Community Support Scheme and may, on occasion, turn down applications from the same applicant made through multiple Councillors. Councillors are asked to check additional funding sources when approached by applicants to ensure the Community Support Grant is available to all residents that need it.

How do I make an application?

- Proposals for expenditure must be submitted using the electronic application form available on the Councillors' Portal. A separate electronic form must be completed for each application. Applications must contain up-to-date bank details for the applicant and evidence which supports the application being made (for example, requests on email, project proposals, quotes for work etc).
- Two or more Councillors may agree on a joint proposal for their own or adjacent wards for the whole or part of their Councillors' Community Support Scheme allocation. These must be submitted on separate electronic forms but can use the same supporting evidence. It is imperative that, in completing the form, the Councillor includes justification of how this would affect the wider community.
- **No firm commitment for expenditure should be made until a proposal has been approved.** Supporting evidence from the grant recipient should be included with the application, e.g. email asking for funding with an estimate of the cost, invoice or receipt etc.
- Part of the application form will need to be completed by a representative of the group in receipt of the funding as well as the ward Councillor. This is to ensure that correct contact and payment details are received.

Please note: Councillors need to declare on the application form any personal interest that they may have with the organisation or activity that the grant supports.

How we will make the decision

All applications will be considered by the Monitoring Officer or their designated representative. If an application does not initially meet the criteria for the scheme, they will discuss this with the relevant Councillor.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Decisions will be made by the Council's Monitoring Officer or their designated representative. Application forms will be reviewed against the criteria specified above.

Councillors must be mindful of the Councillors' Code of Conduct and the Nolan Principles.

Councillors must disclose on the application form any private interests in a proposal.

A record of grants awarded and refused in each ward will be kept on the Council's website. Reasons for turning down a grant will be provided by the Monitoring Officer or their designated representative.

To ensure that monies provided have been spent in accordance with the applications made – spot checks will take place throughout the year totalling 10% of the applications made.

The Council's communications team will be happy to work with ward Councillors to support promotion of activities funded by this scheme.

Review

The overall scheme will be reviewed every four years in line with the Borough Council's election cycle to be agreed at a full Council prior to the election.

Undertaking

All Councillors will be asked at the start of their term of office to read the above guidance and sign below before being able to access the Councillors' Community Support Scheme.

I declare that I shall follow these guidelines in my use of the funds and shall not use it for any purpose contrary to law or otherwise incompatible with my role as a Councillor of Rushcliffe Borough Council.

Signed by _____

Name _____

Ward _____

Dated _____

Updated: July 2025
Sara Pregon