



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

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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