

Member Development Programme 2026/27

Meeting considering report:	Council
Date of meeting:	14 May 2026
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Vicky Poole
Date Head of Service agreed report:	17 February 2026
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	26 March 2026
Report Author:	Stephen Chard (Democratic Services Manager)

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To be informed about the previously agreed Four-Year Plan for Member Development and to approve specific training for the 2026/27 Municipal Year. These were considered by the Member Development Group on 9 October 2025 and have been recommended to be approved by Council.
- 1.2 Having a Member Development Programme is important in order to ensure that Members receive sufficient development opportunities to continue to fulfil their roles and gain further insight into the Council and its activities. The Programme itself is developed through a Member Development Group consisting of Members from across the political parties represented on the Council.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Council is asked to:
 - 2.1.1 Approve the proposed Member Development Programme for 2026/27.
 - 2.1.2 Authorise the Service Lead for Legal & Democratic to regularly review and amend these documents where necessary throughout the Municipal Year to ensure it remains relevant and fit for purpose.
 - 2.1.3 Encourage the Group Leaders to use all reasonable endeavours to secure attendance by Members at all relevant training as detailed within the Programme and to participate in the sessions available on the [Members Learning Hub](#).

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
<p>Financial:</p>	<p>The proposed training sessions in the Four-Year Plan of Member Development and the Member Development Programme for 2026/27 will be delivered in-house by Council Officers. Therefore, there will be no direct cost implications beyond Officer time.</p> <p>Member Training has an allocated budget of £15,000. This can be used to procure sessions from outside providers throughout the Municipal Year, if a specific training need is identified.</p>
<p>Human Resource:</p>	<p>The Member Development Programme is established, managed and monitored by officers within Democratic Services. The delivery of sessions is cross-service, usually at Service Director level.</p>
<p>Legal:</p>	<p>The Member Development Programme outlines the expected training that is required by the Council's Constitution and any identified subject matter that carries a risk for the Council that should be mitigated by way of training.</p> <p>The provision of training will be reassessed given any future relevant legislation to ensure compliance.</p>
<p>Risk Management:</p>	<p>Adopting a Member Development Programme will help ensure that Members make more informed decisions.</p> <p>Ensuring that all Members receive the appropriate and Constitutionally required training will protect the Council's decisions if they are appealed and ensure that management of any sensitive information is done under our Data Protection requirements both as an organisation and individually for Members.</p>
<p>Property:</p>	<p>None identified.</p>
<p>Policy:</p>	<p>The Member Development Programme will be delivered as part of the Member Development Strategy.</p>

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	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		
Environmental Impact:		X		
Health Impact:		X		
ICT Impact:		X		The Council aims to provide the Member Development Sessions through an online training platform.
Digital Services Impact:		X		
Council Strategy Priorities:		X		
Core Business:		X		
Data Impact:		X		

Consultation and Engagement:	The Member Development Group reviewed the proposed plans for Member Development at their meeting on 9 October 2025. The group recommended that the programme be approved by Council.
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4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 This report presents the previously approved Four-Year Plan for Member Development (Appendix A) as well as a Member Development Programme for the 2026/27 Municipal Year (Appendix B).
- 4.2 The Four-Year Plan forms the structure to which Member Development takes place across a typical four-year Council term, whereas the Member Development Plan 2026/27 outlines the additional training that is proposed for the upcoming year.
- 4.3 These documents outline those training sessions where Member attendance is expected, as defined in the Council's Constitution, and those sessions where it is recommended or optional. It will also remain flexible over time to accommodate new sessions should the need for them be identified. Council is asked to approve both of these documents.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

- 5.1 This report is brought to Council as it is a regular yearly item outlining the proposed training schedule for the upcoming Municipal Year.
- 5.2 The Four-Year Plan was agreed at the Council meeting on 27 March 2025 and forms the basic structure to which training will be provided to Members across an entire Four-Year term of the Council. The 2026/27 Municipal Year will be the fourth and final year of an ordinary Council term.
- 5.3 The MDP for 2026/27 provides a list of specific training for the year that will look to be provided. These sessions have been reviewed and agreed to be held by the Member Development Group.
- 5.4 Both the Four-Year Plan and the MDP for 2026/27 outline those training sessions which are recommended for Member development, but also those to which attendance is expected under the Council's Constitution and legislation – such as training for Members on regulatory or quasi-judicial committees and panels.

Background

- 5.5 Ensuring that all Members have received the appropriate level of training will not only help Members make more informed decisions, but it will also ensure that the Council can better defend its decisions if they are appealed – such as with decisions of the Planning Committees. Due to the Constitutional and legislative requirements around the

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expected training sessions highlighted in the Programme, it is imperative that Members engage with these sessions.

- 5.6 The range of sessions proposed have been informed by the development needs identified during the 2025/26 Municipal Year and has been reviewed and recommended for approval by the cross-party Member Development Group.
- 5.7 In addition to the sessions provided by the Council, Members are also encouraged to access the numerous resources available to them through the Local Government Association (LGA).
- 5.8 The LGA maintain their own online training platform which has over 25 unique [e-learning modules](#), free for Members of the Council. Some of the e-learning modules included are for Planning, Corporate Parenting, Scrutiny, Local Government Finance, and supporting constituents. These modules are all optional and can be added to the Members Training Log should confirmation of completion be sent to Democratic Services.
- 5.9 The LGA also provide multiple [workbooks](#) for Members and hold several development related [events](#) each year.

Proposals

- 5.10 Council is recommended to reexamine the agreed long-term plan for Member Development, the Four-Year Plan, is set out as Appendix A to the report.
- 5.11 The proposed Member Development Programme 2026/27 is set out as Appendix B to the report.
- 5.12 The Programme must remain flexible, with additional development sessions being added as and when a need is identified. To facilitate this, it is requested that the Service Lead - Legal & Democratic be authorised to regularly review and amend the Programme where necessary throughout the Municipal Year to ensure it remains relevant and fit for purpose.

6 Other options considered

- 6.1 The alternative option would be for Council to not approve a Member Development Programme.
- 6.2 This alternative is not recommended as having an approved plan would allow Members and Officers to prepare for training sessions in advance as well as ensuring that all the Constitutional and legislative requirements around training can be met.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 Council is recommended to be informed about the Four-Year Plan and to approve the Member Development Programme for 2026/27, and to delegate authority to the Service Lead - Legal & Democratic to review and amend the Programme as necessary.
- 7.2 By approving the recommendations contained within this report, Members will have a clear and defined development path that will enable them to make clear and informed decisions, as well as ensuring that the Council is compliant with all relevant legislation.

8 Appendices

Appendix A – Four-Year Plan

Appendix B – Member Development Plan 2026/27

Background Papers:

None.

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees, Task Groups within preceding six months | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Item is Urgent Key Decision | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Report is to note only | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Wards affected: All

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