



REPORT TITLE:	Member's Training and Development Programme 2025/2026
REPORT OF:	Nichola Mann - Director of People and Governance

REPORT SUMMARY

This report presents a revised Member's Training and Development Programme for the municipal year 2025/2026 for Members comment and endorsement.

This programme will benefit all members of the council with not just mandatory training which is required for them to fulfil their committee roles, but also development within their political groups and their future careers within the Local Government. The programme is subject to change, as necessary.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to:

- R1. To endorse the Member's Training and Development Programme for 2025/2026 as set out in Appendix A.**

SUPPORT ING INFORMATION

1.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 1.1 Training for Members of the Planning/Licensing/Audit Committee is mandatory, and members of the committee must undertake this training before attending a meeting of that committee. These will be scheduled to take place before the first meeting of the new municipal year.

- 1.2 All substitutes for the Planning/Licensing and Audit Committee must also be trained before substituting a member of the committee. These substitutes will be named at Annual Council.
- 1.5 Committee members are advised to undertake training available to gain and enhance their knowledge of the committee's responsibilities.
- 1.6 Members have the opportunity to attend a range of member development session annually including briefings, seminars and workshops, The overall aim is to ensure Members feel that they can continue to develop their knowledge or specialised subjects.
- 1.7 The Member's development programme will be supported by the Local Government Association (LGA). The LGA has a range of political leadership development training designed to help support and develop councillors to ensure they are 'confident and capable; well-equipped and well supported to make a difference, deliver and be trusted'. Many of these courses provided free of charge as part of the Council's membership of the LGA.
- 1.8 The Council will work together with the LGA to adopt the Councillors Development Charter. The Charter is an important tool that provide councils with a robust framework, but flexible to local needs, to ensure effective leadership, equip their members with the support they need, and provide resilience in times of challenge.
- 1.9 If a member expresses an interest in attending a LGA development course within the programme, this request will need to be authorised by their Group/Deputy Leader and be submitted to the Director of People and Governance.
- 1.10 All Member Briefing sessions maybe required throughout the municipal year, these do not form a part of this training and development programme. These are items that relating to urgent matters i.e. traveller incursion, emergency planning, Operation London Bridge (Death of Monarch) or major planning and asset projects. These are normally held on a Monday evening at 6:00pm remotely.
- 1.11 Training sessions are held in person/remotely with sessions in the day and evening to ensure as many councillors as possible can attend.
- 1.12 Attendance at training sessions is monitored and entered on the Council's website and publicly available.
- 1.13 Members will be given the opportunity to give feedback and comment on any further training that they might find of assistance.

2.0 Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 To provide a Member's Training and Development Programme in line with best practice.

3.0 References to Corporate Plan

- 3.1 Continue to improve our governance arrangements leading to faster more effective decision-making.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Member Training and Development programme will be delivered from within the existing Budget of £15,000.00.

5.0 LEGAL/GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The recommendation is lawful and within the Council's powers and duties. An effective training programme for Members will contribute to lawful decision-making and promote strong governance.

6.0 ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An all-encompassing members development programme to assist the democratic decision-making process of the Council when making decisions with regards to the borough and the economy.

7.0 EQUALITY & HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:
- a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
 - b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 7.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 7.3 The proposals in this report will not have a disproportionate adverse impact on anybody with a protected characteristic and the member training and

development programme ensures that members understand their responsibilities in regard to equality as part of their roles in supporting residents.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Member Training and Development Programme 2025/2026

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date



**ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL
MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMME
2025/26**

Introduction

This programme gives details of opportunities for Members to undertake essential learning as well as develop and enhance their knowledge and skills. The programme has been approved by the Audit and Governance Committee and has been tailored to cater for the different roles of Members.

Training will be held via a combination of in person, hybrid and remote sessions. Please note that there will be Members of Brentwood Borough Council attending some of the courses as sharing costs has enabled us to offer more options for Members.

This programme will benefit all members of the council with not just mandatory training which is required for them to fulfil their committee roles, but also development within their political groups and their future careers within the Local Government.

Section 1 – Annual Training Programme

Section 1 sets out the annual training programme for the municipal year 2025/26. It is an expectation that Members will engage in this programme, attending and participating where required.

Please be advised that whilst some of these courses are of a specialist nature, all Members are urged to attend all courses as these are available to everyone.

Training sessions are held in person/remotely with sessions in the day and evening to ensure as many Members as possible can attend.

Attendance at training sessions is monitored and entered on the Council's website and publicly available.

Members will be given the opportunity to give feedback and comment on any further training that they might find of assistance.

Section 2 – Development Programme

Section 2 sets out the development programme which will be supported by the Local Government Association (LGA). The LGA has a range of political leadership development training designed to help support and develop councillors to ensure they are 'confident and capable; well-equipped and well supported to make a difference, deliver and be trusted'.

Should any Member wish to express an interest in these development sessions they must be authorised by their Group leader/Deputy leader and then submitted to the Director of People & Governance.

Attendance will be monitored and consideration given to development sessions that are not fully subsidised to ensure there is sufficient budget.

Feedback will be sought from those attending the development sessions, to ensure that the sessions are relevant and meet the needs of members.

As part of the LGA offer, all Committee Chairs and Group Leaders can have access to a LGA accredited mentor who offers up to 5 days contact per year as well as offering wider group discussions with Political Peers from across the sector to support engagement.

SECTION 1 - ANNUAL TRAINING PROGRAMME

Training	Constitution/Rules of Debate
Who for	All Members of the Council
Date	TBC
Location	TBC
Overview	<p>This course will outline the key provisions of the Council's Constitution relating to the running of meetings and it will review key provisions covering:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of the Chairman • Quorum • Substitutions • Voting • Motions and amendments • Points of order and personal explanation <p>It will cover etiquette and conventions at meetings, explore how best to get your voice heard and make an impact at meetings.</p>

Training	Effective Scrutiny
Who for	All Members of the Council
Date	TBC
Location	TBC
Overview	<p>This session will be focused on running effective Scrutiny Committees and ensuring that all Councillors have the appropriate skills to contribute constructively to the Scrutiny process.</p> <p>The outcomes will include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A greater understanding of the underlying principles of scrutiny, the roles it can play and how it can be conducted effectively. • Understand the crucial role that work programming and prioritization plays in successful scrutiny. • Examine effective processes for undertaking in-depth investigations including member-led scoping of projects. • An enhanced awareness of the importance of powerful questions and practicing developing key lines of enquiry. • Explore the many ways in which scrutiny can make positive change and make a difference.

Training	Communications Training
Who for	All Members of the Council
Date	TBC
Overview	<p>This session offers Members key skills with regards to communication challenges as a 21st century Councillor. This will cover:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overcome barriers to effective communication • Adapt communication style to convey messages more persuasively to people who have a different communication style • Select the best tools and methods for delivering messages • Be more effective when delivering and managing challenging news • Social media considerations • Considerations when working with the press

Training	Equality and Diversity Training
Who for	All Members of the Council
Date	TBC
Location	TBC
Overview	<p>This training will:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore how an individual's life chances are affected by their particular equality characteristics • Refresh Members knowledge of the public understanding of what the duties mean for Councils and elected Members. • Provide an understanding of Unconscious Bias and why it matters. • Consider their role as a Councillor in a diverse community.

Training	Code of Conduct and being a 21 st Century Councillor
Who for	All Members of the Council
Date	TBC
Location	TBC
Overview	<p>This session will support the development of new cultural norms at the Council and will focus on the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining the modern Councillor • Who is the 21st Century Councillor? • Nolan Principles • The content of the Code of Conduct • The process for reporting breaches • Member standards and behaviour

Training	Chairing Skills
Who for	Committee Chairs/Vice Chairs
Date	TBC
Location	TBC
Overview	<p>To provide Members with an understanding of why local authority meetings are different; the role of the Committee Chair; the legal framework and the rules that Members need to know.</p> <p>It will cover the types of meetings Members might chair and how to adapt to approaches to chairing different types of meetings; how to keep order; skills and approaches for ensuring effective meetings; and what can go wrong and how to manage it if it does.</p>

Training	Safeguarding
Who for	All Members of the Council
Date	TBC
Location	TBC
Overview	<p>Outline the role and responsibilities for addressing safeguarding. To enable Members to understand what is meant by safeguarding, know where safeguarding sits nationally and in the local context.</p>

Training	Digital Skills Training
Who for	All Members of the Council
Date	TBC
Location	TBC
Overview	To support and enhance Member digital skills, as well as an understanding of cyber security.

Training	Data Protection (GDPR)
Who for	All Members of the Council
Date	TBC
Location	TBC
Overview	All Members will be involved in casework advocating for the residents they represent. This raises key data protection issues and this course will help Members to manage personal data within the law and good practice. To have an understanding of the legal requirements for Members, understand data management, including secure data storage and learn how data regulations apply to records, emails, reports and WhatsApp.

Training	Carbon Literacy Training
Who for	All Members of the Council
Date	TBC
Location	TBC
Overview	To understand the basics of climate change science, what's already happening globally and locally, how your actions may be affecting climate change and what you, as an individual, can do to help and promote change.

Training	Mental Health Awareness Training
Who for	All Members of the Council
Date	TBC
Location	TBC
Overview	To understand what mental health is and how to challenge stigma, with an introduction to some common mental health issues. Providing you with the confidence to support someone who may be experiencing mental ill-health and ways to look after your own mental health and support wellbeing.

Training	Community Dementia Workshop
Who for	All Members of the Council
Date	TBC
Location	TBC
Overview	To provide Members with an overview of Dementia, helping to equip you to recognise when people are struggling and may need additional help and where you can signpost them.

Training	RRAVS – Enrichment Session
Who for	All Members of the Council
Date	TBC
Location	TBC
Overview	The session will cover: Who are RRAVS What is a CVS SWOT your ward and then feedback as a group 'Play your data right' Integrated neighbourhoods – what are they and how they will influence our future works

Training	Overview of Local Government Finance
Who for	Highly recommended for Members of the Audit, Governance & Appointments Committee and newly elected Members All Members of the Council
Date	TBC
Location	TBC
Overview	<p>To provide a thorough grounding in local government finance and funding. Enabling Members to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grasp the overall national legal and policy framework affecting Council finance and budgets. • Learn key concepts and terminology, such as capital and revenue, general fund and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), reserves and balances. • Have an overview of treasury management and understand how local authorities receive their funding. <p>To support Members to understand the importance of the Council's Annual Financial Statements and the various roles and responsibilities in their preparation, review and approval. Have a better understanding of how to read the Financial Statements and find key financial information more efficiently and be able to understand, engage with and review this document.</p>

Training	Audit Training
Who for	Highly recommended for Members of the Audit, Governance & Appointments Committee and newly elected Members All Members of the Council
Date	TBC
Location	TBC
Overview	To develop Members understanding of the audit role, providing an overview of the knowledge and skills required, as well as the role of internal and external audit.

Training	Licensing Training
Who for	Members of the Licensing Committee and Sub-Committee All Members of the Council
Date	TBC
Location	TBC
Overview	<p>To provide new Members will a full overview of the Licensing Act 2003 and to refresh and update more experienced Members. An overview will also be given on the key elements of taxi licensing legislation and the general appeals process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The basics of Town Police Clauses Act and Local Government Misc Provisions Act relating to licensed vehicles, drivers and operators. • The key elements of appropriate legislation.

Training	Planning Training
Who for	Members of the Planning Committee All Members of the Council
Date	TBC
Location	TBC
Overview	<p>4 sessions covering different aspects:</p> <p><u>Session 1</u> To give Members an introduction to the various aspects of Local Authority Planning to enable them to fulfil their role as a Member of the Planning Committee. This will include detail on what each team is responsible for and how they can assist Members, along with procedural and practice guidance.</p> <p><u>Session 2</u> To provide an overview of material considerations when making decisions on planning applications and the use of planning conditions. Having an overview of:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What matters are material to planning decision-making • The correct use of planning conditions <p><u>Session 3</u> Understand Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) for new development and gaining an overview of:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The requirements of the Environment Act 2021 relating to BNG • How the requirements can be delivered <p><u>Session 4</u> Understanding the preparation of a new Local Plan for the district.</p> <p>Members will have an overview of:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why Local Plans need to be updated. • The process of preparing a new Local Plan The requirements of the Environment Act 2021 relating to BNG • How the requirements can be delivered

SECTION 2 - DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

LGA Fully Subsidised Sessions

Training	Leadership: Finance
Dates	Various Dates
Location	TBC
Cost	LGA fully subsidised
Overview	<p>Topics covered will include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of leaders and portfolio holders in a changing political environment. • Working with others to make sense of the opportunities. • Understanding the Council's finances. • Navigating the budget process. • The financial aspects of the new delivery models. • Recognising a good business case for change

Training	Leadership and Finance Governance
Date	Various Dates
Location	TBC
Cost	LGA fully subsidised
Overview	<p>With finance in every local Council getting ever tighter, it is even more important that every Council ensures that it has a culture and systems to ensure that finance is well governed and controlled.</p> <p>Good governance starts at Full Council and every Councillor has a role to play, but what does good financial governance look like? These two online sessions will explore this question.</p>

Training	Leadership Essentials: Audit Committees
Date	Various Dates
Location	TBC
Cost	LGA fully subsidised
Overview	<p>Aimed at Audit Committee Chairs, this programme will discuss how Audit Committees can be most effective. Drawing on the insights of regulators and practitioners it will provide space for participants to reflect on the way their committee functions and how it can gain maximum assurance that the Council's governance arrangements are fit for purpose.</p>

Training	Leadership Essentials: Culture Services
Date	Various Dates
Location	TBC
Cost	LGA fully subsidised
Overview	<p>To ensure that culture portfolio holders are aware of the key role of councils in arts and culture to deliver across council agendas and that they are able to articulate this potential and these benefits.</p>

Training	Leadership: Transformation
Date	Various Dates
Location	TBC
Cost	LGA fully subsidised
Overview	These programmes will give Councillors the confidence, capability and awareness to shape and lead the transformation agenda within their local authorities and local areas. It is also an opportunity to introduce any newly elected Councillors to the concept of transformation, giving them the skills to become the next generation of transformational leaders.

Training	Communications: Media Leadership
Date	Various Dates
Location	TBC
Cost	LGA fully subsidised
Overview	<p>The session will be run by Scott Chisholm who advises some of the country's top politicians and the world's most influential corporate executives.</p> <p>You will learn:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to be in control of any encounter with any journalist. • How to prepare and present. • How a journalist thinks. • What makes news, news. • Your rights. • How to exploit difficult questions. • How to influence rather than merely inform. • The 3 Rs of damage imitation and crisis management.

Training	Risk Management: Political Leadership Masterclass
Date	Various Dates
Location	TBC
Cost	LGA fully subsidised
Overview	<p>There is truth in the cliché that the greatest risk for Councils in the current climate is to take no risk. Consequently, every Council has had to develop strategies to transform the way they deliver services, whilst ensuring that the Council's finances remain resilient.</p> <p>However, recent government and audit reports written where such strategies have run into difficulties have highlighted that elected Members are not as engaged as they should be in ensuring that risk is effectively managed throughout the authority.</p> <p>This seminar will enable participants to develop their understanding of how risk should be identified, assessed and managed throughout the Council.</p>

Training	Leadership and Finance (non-Cabinet)
Date	Various Dates
Location	TBC
Cost	LGA fully subsidised
Overview	This exciting new course will de-mystify the financial elements of portfolios or the policy Committee that you chair. While all Councillors understand the pressures and their importance, many Councillors, including policy committee chairs find local government finance difficult to understand and hard to navigate. Too often financial leadership is left to the finance or relevant Committee chair but all leading Members need to understand finances and be comfortable with their financial roles.

Training	Finance in Local Government; Finance without the Numbers
Date	Various Dates
Location	Virtual
Cost	LGA fully subsidised
Overview	Finance in Local Government will focus on the following:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expenditure and income • Ringfencing and reserves • Financial strategies • Budget setting process • Role of external audit

Training	Hitting the Ground Running: for all newly elected Councillors
Date	Various Dates
Location	Smiths Square, London
Cost	LGA fully subsidised
Overview	It will cover the following:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an overview of current issues affecting the sector and practical support and guidance on working effectively as a Councillor • Develop networks with Political Group Offices

LGA chargeable session

Training	Effective Opposition
Date	Various Dates
Location	TBC
Cost	£150
Overview	These events provide participants with cross party opportunities to explore the nature of effective opposition and gain insight into their personal leadership and influencing styles.

Training	Leadership Essentials: Effective Scrutiny
Date	Various Dates
Location	TBC
Cost	£99 (Virtual) or £250 (in person)
Overview	<p>Effective scrutiny 2-day programme is for new or aspiring scrutiny chairs or task and finish group review lead members covering:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading and managing a scrutiny review • Chairing scrutiny meetings in all their forms • Increasing participation by members and the public • Ensuring the impact of scrutiny recommendations

Training	Leadership Effective Cabinet Member/Committee Chair
Date	Various
Location	TBC
Cost	£99 (Virtual) or £250 (in person)
Overview	<p>This interactive course examines the key aspects of being a successful Cabinet member/Committee chair, from having a clear understanding of the legacy you want to leave, to working with your director, working with other cabinet members, making effective decisions and managing your workload. The course is designed to produce a step change in the effectiveness of cabinet members and policy committee chairs. It is designed to support all different types of portfolio holders - and is not specific to a specific portfolio.</p>

Leadership Academy Programme

Training	Leadership Academy
Date	Various Dates
Location	Warwick Conferences, Coventry CV4 7SH
Cost	TBC
Overview	<p>The Leadership Academy is the LGA's flagship development programme for Councillors in leadership positions. Refreshed and updated for the current challenges faced across local government, the Leadership Academy delivers for local leaders a step change in leadership behaviours, strategies, skills and mind-set.</p>

LGA Political Group Support

Political Group Support	
Who for	Leader and Committee Chairs
Cost	LGA fully subsidised
Overview	<p>LGA accredited mentors can be offered to all Committee Chairs and Group Leaders for up to 5 days contact per year as well as offer wider group discussions with Political Peers from across the sector to support engagement. Support can be extended to all Councillors if necessary.</p>