

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Standards Committee

14 March 2025

TITLE:	Review of Councillor Learning and Development Opportunities
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Councillor Mike Gledhill - Leader
CONTACT OFFICER:	Sally Hampton – Senior Democratic Services Officer
WARDS INVOLVED:	Not applicable

Appendix A - Training Programme February 2024 – February 2025

1. Reason for the Report

- 1.1 To provide an overview of Councillor Learning and Development opportunities over the last 12 months.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 To note the content of the report;
- 2.2 For members to reflect on development opportunities, comment and make suggestions for the future.

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 Councillor Learning and Development opportunities are developed in line with best practice, take account the priority areas for members training, feedback received following the Induction Programme held in 2023, from the Corporate Peer Challenge and the review of scrutiny and feedback from subsequent training sessions.

4. How this report links to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 Providing effective training and development opportunities for councillors is integral to the achievement of the Council's corporate priorities.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1 None - In accordance with the Council's constitution, some elements of training are required for members to be able to serve on particular committees.

Mark Trillo
Executive Director (Governance & Regulatory Services)

**Web Links and
Background Papers**

Agenda and Minutes from the Member Development Working Group

Contact details

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6. Detail

- 6.1 The aim of the Councillors' Training Programme is to ensure that Councillors are supported to deliver the Council's statutory and corporate obligations, objectives and priorities and are provided with the tools and information to fulfil their roles.
- 6.2 The Councillors' Training Programme is developed by the Member Development Working Group, which is attended by cross-party councillors and Group Leaders and meets on a regular basis. The Group is supported by the Head of Democratic Services and the Senior Democratic Services Officer.
- 6.3 The Group reviews past and planned training opportunities and evaluates feedback received from attendees to ensure that the opportunities offered are useful to members in their roles, are delivered in a variety of ways and are accessible. A summary of training opportunities offered over the last 12 months is attached at Appendix A. A new evaluation form has recently been created via MS forms, which is simple to complete online and provides useful summaries of the feedback received.
- 6.4 The majority of training sessions continue to be facilitated in-house, as the use of internal expertise, as well as being cost effective, is supported by councillors. Exceptions to this include Grant Fund Application training, Risk Management, Carbon Literacy, Safeguarding Awareness, a Security briefing led by Staffordshire Police and Resuscitation sessions provided by AEDdonate. A session specifically for the Planning Applications Committee has also been delivered by a specialist planning barrister.
- 6.5 Those councillors that are also parish/town councillors have had the opportunity to attend sessions relating to various aspects of planning as part of the Parish Assembly.
- 6.5 A number of sessions this year have been delivered virtually via Teams which provides the benefit of being able to record the sessions to be made available at a later date. Some sessions have also been delivered jointly across the Strategic Alliance with High Peak Borough Council, which not only is cost effective but contributes to the Alliance's Climate Change Agenda.
- 6.6 Other initiatives introduced by the Member Development Group include an item on Councillor Wellbeing at each meeting. To support members with this,

a Handling Online Abuse and Intimidation session was offered and positive feedback has been received.

- 6.7 Councillors have recently been given access to the E-ssentials training platform and encouraged to undertake the first module around personal safety. Other modules will be offered in due course and it is hoped that being able to access online training at a time convenient to councillors will result in a high completion rate by members.
- 6.8 Information and resources are available on the Councillor's portal, including online training and the Local Government Association workbooks, which members are encouraged to access. Members are also made aware of other training opportunities offered by external organisations on an ad hoc basis.
- 6.9 This year, a number of councillors have attended courses as part of the LGA Leadership Academy Development Programme such as Leadership Essentials for Audit Committees.
- 6.10 Upcoming training opportunities include; Carbon Literacy Training, Equalities and Diversity Training, Mental Health Awareness, Resuscitation and an IT drop in session is scheduled to take place, prior to the next meeting of Full Council. Annual refresher training around Planning and Licensing will also be arranged.