



**Member Development
Annual Report 2025/26**

Member Development Annual Report 2025/26

Foreword from the Chair of the Member Development Working Group

I am pleased to present this annual report on Member Development for 2025/26. The Council is dedicated to fostering a culture of continuous learning and professional growth among our Councillors, recognising that their development is crucial to the effective governance and representation of the community.

The report highlights the various training sessions that have been conducted throughout the year, including refresher training where required for Statutory Committees such as Planning and Licensing.

The Member Development Working Group regularly considers feedback from training sessions and reviews the training opportunities available.

I would like to thank all those involved in delivering the Councillor training programme for 2025/26.

Councillor Cathy Jeffery

Chair of Member Development Working Group (2025/26)

1. Introduction

The purpose of this annual report is to provide a summary of member development work undertaken in the municipal year 2025/26.

Member development activities are designed to support the learning and development of Members so that they have the appropriate knowledge, skills and confidence to carry out their various roles and represent the public they were elected to serve.

The Annual Report covers the following subjects:

- Member Development Working Group
- Member Development Sessions
- Committee Specific Training and Other Training and Development Events
- Other Member Development Opportunities

Part of the Members' Roles and Responsibilities includes that Members 'be responsible for continuous personal development, engaging in available opportunities for training and development to build on understanding and knowledge, and to develop relevant skills.'

2. Member Development Working Group

The Council has a cross-party working group to oversee, monitor and make recommendations on member development. The Group is committed to supporting the development of Councillors and to enable them to engage effectively in the modernisation of local government and to deliver the Council's statutory functions and corporate objectives, and to represent the people of Bolsover District.

The Working Group was chaired by Councillor Cathy Jeffery and its membership in 2025/26 was as follows:

Councillor Mary Dooley
Councillor David Bennett
Councillor Louise Fox
Councillor Sandra Peake
Councillor Jeanne Raspin
Councillor Deborah Watson

3. Member Learning, Development and Information Sessions

The purpose of the Member Learning, Development and Information Sessions is to provide a framework to support the achievement of members' objectives.

The sessions offer an opportunity for Members and officers to discuss the latest developments in local government in terms of policy, legislation and initiatives from

Government and to undertake development work in an informal environment which supports learning.

The sessions held during 2025/26 are listed in the table below. The sessions comprised of refresher training courses and topics requested by members.

Date of Session	Topics	Attendance
3 June 2025	TPAS – Councillors Guide to Social Housing	12
4 June 2025	Planning Committee Training	13
4 June 2025	Predetermination and Bias in Planning	11
5 June 2025	Licensing Committee Training	10
9 June 2025	Planning Committee Training	1*
26 June 2025	Licensing Committee Training	1*
4 July 2025	Licensing Committee Training	2*
1 October 2025	Successful Healthy Places – Supplementary Planning Document Training	7
15 October 2025	Complaints Handling Training Conference	2
20 – 21 November 2025	LGA Planning Leadership Essentials , Programme 5 Planning Committee – Chairs	1
22 – 23 November 2025	LGA Planning Leadership Essentials, Programme 2 Leading the Local Plan	1

Date of Session	Topics	Attendance
10 December 2025	Viability in Planning	8

****these were additional sessions provided as the Member(s) were unable to attend the scheduled training event***

SkillGate e-learning

In June 2025, a new online learning platform SkillGate was launched which offered a range of e-learning courses available to staff and Members. Mandatory training courses for Members included:

- Safeguarding
- Health & Safety
- Equalities
- Data Protection & FOI
- ICT

The level of training completed by Members included:

Training	Number of Councillors Who Have Completed	Number of Councillors Outstanding
Data Protection and Freedom of Information: Compliance Following GDPR	27	10
Managing Information Securely	27	10
Introduction to Data Protection	27	10

*it was confirmed that members who had participated in the in-person Freedom of Information and Data Protection training session delivered on 17 March 2025 were not required to complete the online training.

External courses and webinars

External courses by the Local Government Association (LGA), Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) and East Midlands Councils (EMC) were also advertised to Councillors and places were booked as requested by individual Councillors.

Training is particularly important for certain subjects and there are a number of sessions that are set out as mandatory training sessions in the Members' Code of Conduct. Training for members of committees such as Planning and Licensing are vital due to the nature of the decisions the committees take and it is essential that Members are trained prior to sitting on such committees. This is set out in Appendix A to the Members' Code of Conduct.

Encouraging attendance at training sessions can be challenging and previous options such as offering a number of training sessions on one day will continue to be offered. This enables members to attend a number of different events on the same day as well as providing a good notice period so members can plan (especially for those needing to make caring or work arrangements).

The Member Development Working Group regularly considers the attendance of Councillors at training sessions.

4. Member Development Evaluation

The Working Group receives reports on a regular basis detailing evaluation, together with Members' comments, on training and development events. All training events in 2025/26 received positive feedback.

5. Member Development Programme Development

Member Development and Training Courses are arranged on an ongoing basis with training arranged as needs are identified including changes in legislation. The training programme is also discussed at each meeting of the Member Development Working Group.