

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP

Minutes of a meeting held at the Council Offices, Narborough

WEDNESDAY, 7 JANUARY 2026

Present:-

Cllr. Adrian Clifford (Chairman)

Cllr. Nick Brown
Cllr. Luke Cousin

Cllr. Ande Savage
Cllr. Bob Waterton

Cllr. Jane Wolfe

Officers present:-

Avisa Birchenough - Democratic & Scrutiny Services Officer
Nicole Cramp - Democratic & Scrutiny Services Officer

Apologies:-

Cllr. Matt Tomeo, Cllr. Susan Findlay, Cllr. Dillan Shikotra and Cllr. Roger Stead

1. NOTES OF LAST MEETING

The notes of the meeting held on 23 September 2025, as circulated, were approved as a correct record.

2. **BUDGET UPDATE**

The Chairman, Cllr. Adrian Clifford welcomed Members to the meeting and invited the Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer (DSSO) to provide an update.

- The cost of the upcoming Charing Skills course needs to be deducted from the training budget. The Finance Team will then provide Democratic Services (DS) with an updated report which will be brought to the next meeting.
- After the cost for the upcoming Charing Skills course has been deducted, there will remain approximately £3,000.
- The remaining budget runs until April 2026

The Chairman requested any remaining budget be rolled over into the new year. The DSSO responded that they will seek advice from the Finance Department.

3. SKILLGATE MODULES

The DSSO gave an update to the Steering Group on providing the reporting function on SkillGate for module completion to Group Whips. This request is not possible to fulfil, as the Group Whips would have to be listed as Managers on the SkillGate system, which in turn would impede their visibility on the system for the Senior DSSO.

It was agreed that Democratic Services will send a monthly report to Group Whips to ensure they have access to the data.

Members received an update from Cllr. Luke Cousin and Cllr. Jane Wolfe on the modules they have completed.

The overall view from both councillors was positive, noting that the 6 identified modules are relevant and should all be completed. Modules sizes allow for all to be completed in the suggested 6-month window. Completion of these modules would support Members in minimising the risk of “not being informed”, unable to serve/support residents and generally being knowledgeable about key and current topics.

The Chairman requested that SkillGate be rolled out to Members within the next 6 months and the following trialled modules be made available:

- Cyber Awareness and Staying Safe Online
- Essential Safeguarding for Children, Young People and Adults
- Fraud Awareness
- Introduction to Data Protection
- Sexual Harassment Awareness for Employees
- EDI
- An introductory email is prepared by the Chairman and SDSSO to give clear guidance on the expectations of time scales and modules to be completed by all Members.
- A concise short description of each module is provided so Members can better understand the content.

The Steering Group requested an alternative to the use of “Mandatory” in the title of the Modules. Members did not agree on a final term to be used, although the word could be dropped altogether.

The Chairman thanked the members who trialled the modules and provided feedback to the Steering Group.

4. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The DSSO gave an updated overview of Member Development Programme from the previous year and invited Members to feedback on the courses delivered and what proposed training they would like to see planned for the year ahead. Currently 3 courses have been scheduled for Members as per the Councillor Development Review:

1. Chairing Skills
2. Planning Masterclass - LCC Highways
3. Planning Masterclass – Flooding

The DSSO also gave an update on the published articles requested by Members for the weekly Newsletter. Current articles included rules of procedure, deadlines for questions and motions to Council, the role of a Monitoring Officer and the Golden Triangle: governance roles and responsibilities.

The Chairman expressed his concern on the low sign-up for Chairing Skills scheduled in March. This course was the most requested training by and for Councillors via the CDR. The Chairman asked Members to encourage their respective Groups to attend this course.

Cllr Luke Cousin requested presentation slides be shared with Members following the course.

The DSSO asked the Steering Group if they felt there were any areas/topics they would like to explore and receive more training in as we approach LGR. If a Unitary council was the way forward, did Members feel they had suitable provisions to equip them moving forward.

The Steering Group was interested to know what other authorities are doing and authorities who have already gone through the transition, what would they do differently if anything.

The Chairman asked Members to start considering what training they would like to see in the upcoming year and that this item be added to the next meeting agenda.

5. FEEDBACK FROM THE NEW MEMBER'S 6 MONTH CATCH-UP

The DSSO updated Members on the feedback received from the newest Member who joined the council following a by-election in May 2025. The feedback was positive and the Member advised they appreciated having the opportunity to give their comments and have a discussion around their experiences.

6. UPDATED MEMBER ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Member Roles & Responsibilities had been updated with the new appointments of Member Champions (Net Zero Lead and Digital Transformation). Since the publication of the agenda, there had been some slight amendments made by the Leader and the Chief Executive and updated role descriptions were circulated at the meeting.

The updated Member Roles & Responsibilities will be published on the Members SharePoint site for reference.

The DSSO informed the Steering Group that Scrutiny will be conducting a review on Members Champions on 10 March, and advised Members should they wish to sign up to contact the Democratic Services team.

7. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

1. Councillor Development Review – Members were asked to consider training and development opportunities that may arise from the review.
2. A full budget update/breakdown will be provided at the next meeting that will give an overview of the training and briefings that have been covered in the past year.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 4 March 2026
- 3 June 2026

THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 6.21 P.M.