

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP

Minutes of a meeting held at the Council Offices, Narborough

WEDNESDAY, 23 JULY 2025

Present:-

Cllr. Adrian Clifford (Chairman)
Cllr. Matt Tomeo (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr. Nick Brown
Cllr. Luke Cousin

Cllr. Ande Savage
Cllr. Roger Stead

Cllr. Bob Waterton

Officers present:-

Sandeep Tiensa - Senior Democratic Services & Scrutiny Officer

Apologies:-

Cllr. Susan Findlay, Cllr. Dillan Shikotra and Cllr. Jane Wolfe

1. NOTES OF LAST MEETING

The notes of the meeting held on 10 October 2024, as circulated, were approved as a correct record.

2. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

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

Member Development Programme:

- Planning Masterclasses, dates of which would be circulated to Members once confirmed with Planning Officers.
- An upcoming training session on treasury management, which may be held in the late autumn/winter.
- Chairing Skills – costs involved in hosting this session were quite high, with training providers limiting the number that can attend. Members discussed various options and types of providers that Officers had sought, including utilising experienced Members to provide the training. The SDSSO added that new legislation may be introduced that may allow hybrid meetings, and Members would require a wide range of advanced chairing skills to run these meetings. Cllr Luke Cousin offered a training provider that had been used by NALC. It was agreed to use an external provider for this training session to ensure that Members had the appropriate skills. Members requested to view the training needs assessment from the Councillor Development Reviews at the next meeting to consider training and development opportunities identified.
- Cllr. Ande Savage requested that Artificial Intelligence (AI) be added to the Member Development Programme, he spoke of how AI has seen an increase in its use in both the workplace and personal use. What could AI offer the Council and Members, what systems have benefited from AI. Members raised that they should be informed of the pitfalls of AI, e.g. not inputting sensitive information into apps and being aware of AI generated videos and scams. The SDSSO responded that an update would be provided at the next meeting.

Online training:

- Skillgate, the Council's new online training provider will be launched to Members soon. Members will be required to complete the Sexual Harassment Awareness and Cyber Security modules. Other courses that officers have completed are:
 - Fraud Awareness
 - The Importance of Environmental Sustainability
 - Carbon Literacy.

Priorities for year ahead:

The SDSSO sought feedback from Members on their learning and development priorities. The Member Development Strategy requires that a second Councillor Development Review will be completed in year 3 (2026/27) to identify skills and development needs for succession planning and preparation for induction and mentoring of new Members. Members

discussed the impact of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and training/development opportunities to prepare Members for the transition. For induction, Members considered the importance of being prepared for any administration changes. Suggestions included induction programmes for new Members pitched at the correct level, preparing Officers and Members on the Member/Officer Protocol, sharing the LGA's 'Be a Councillor' guide with agents and prospective candidates so they're fully aware of what the role involves, building relations with the groups, providing information about practical things e.g. pay, parking provision, hours, times of meetings.

Members also added:

- Digitising the induction programme and providing a library of training.
- Creating prospective councillor videos – with explanations of what the role involves, including the role of the Monitoring Officer, decisions that Members can take, resources available and funding.
- That the Steering Group take stock of and review training provided previously.
- LGR will make it simpler to advise prospective candidates on their role, as it will be a single tier authority.
- Cllr Luke Cousin added that the Chief Executive had shared a useful infographic on the various roles of County, District and Parish – which he would share with the SDSSO to circulate.

3. LICENSING AND REGULATORY SUB-COMMITTEE

Members considered the attendance of Members at Licensing and Regulatory Sub-Committees which were arranged as when a hearing was required. In these circumstances, Officers would contact Members of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee (13 Members) to see who is available. The hearings were previously held during the day, however due to Members availability, the last one was held in the evening.

Members suggested alternative means of communication where responses were required as soon as possible, they included:

- Sending a read receipt on an email, or setting a reminder on an email or calendar invitation
- Sending a calendar invitation of the sub-committee to all Members so they could accept/decline to show their availability
- WhatsApp Community/Group, with responses disabled allowing Officers to post updates or requests. Messages could also be broadcast to all Members. Additional groups could be set up in the community for Licensing and Regulatory Committee Members.
- Teams channel

It was agreed that an update on this would be provided at the next meeting.

4. I.T UPDATE AND FEEDBACK

The Chairman, Cllr. Adrian Clifford provided Members with an update on Member laptops, with a significant number having been handed out. There are a couple of Members yet to make contact with Democratic Services to understand their requirements.

The Senior Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer (SDSSO) added that Members would require a new link to enable them to access private/scrutiny agendas on the Modern.Gov App. Members requested that the link be sent as soon as possible, adding that officers clarify that a new link will be required for each device

5. BUDGET UPDATE

The Senior Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer (SDSSO) provided an update on expenditure which had not been included in the budget update presented to Members, this included:

- LGA conference for the Leader and Deputy Leader.
- Cabinet Support - where following recent changes to the Cabinet Executive, some Members may require specialist briefings and learning and development for their portfolio.

Steering Group Members asked Officers to consider if the LGA conference ought to be funded from an alternative budget, to ensure that there was sufficient budget for the year to meet outstanding training needs and requirements.

6. ITEMS/ACTIONS FOR NEXT AGENDA

1. Communicating with Members – using WhatsApp/Teams
2. Revisit training and development needs arising from Councillor Development Reviews
3. Disseminate attendees of Licensing and Regulatory Sub-Committees, recent training to Group Whips.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 23 September 2025
- 10 December 2025

THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 6.43 P.M.