

**AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**  
**– 12 March 2025**

**Policy on Councillor Training and Development**

**Report by Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer**

**RECOMMENDATION**

1. **The Audit and Governance Committee is RECOMMENDED to**
  - a) Review the Policy on Councillor Training and Development in Annex 1;
  - b) Agree to consider the Policy at the Audit & Governance Committee's next meeting in June following consultation with the Member Reference Group on the categorisation of training included in Table 1.

**Executive Summary**

2. It is proposed to adopt a policy to set out the purpose, principles and expectations of councillor induction, training and development.
3. The policy also specifies which training will be compulsory for all councillors and which will be compulsory only for councillors in certain roles.

**Background**

4. The Council has provided comprehensive induction training following each election which is available to newly elected councillors and re-elected councillors.
5. Induction training is also offered to those elected in bye-elections on an individual basis.
6. Specialist training is also provided to councillors who are nominated to specific committees. In some cases, the training is considered to be compulsory for participation in that committee.
7. The Constitution currently stipulates that councillors "Shall undertake Code of Conduct training as required by the local authority" in Part 9.1 Members Code of Conduct Section 6.8.1. All councils are required to maintain high standards of conduct with members having individual responsibility to register and declare certain interests and uphold the Council's ethical framework.

8. Part 3.1 Council Procedure Rules (Section 4.2) states that “Substitute members may attend meetings only: (iv) subject to any training requirements specified by the Monitoring Officer”.
9. Part 8.4 Officer Employment Rules section 11 on training specifies “All officers and members who take part in the recruitment process must have completed the Council's recruitment and selection training or be trained to the satisfaction of the Director of HR and Cultural Change.”
10. Part 9.5 Members’ Planning Code of Practice includes the advice “DON’T participate in decision making at meetings dealing with planning matters if you have not attended any mandatory planning training prescribed by the Council.”
11. The Pension Fund Committee at its meeting on 13 December 2025 agreed minimum training requirements for members of the committee and for substitutes.

## **Policy**

12. The proposed policy brings together the various training requirements and specifies clearly what training is compulsory and for whom.
13. The policy clearly sets out the purpose of training and the principles that will underpin its provision.
14. The policy will inform councillors and officers of the Council expectations in this regard. It will help councillors to judge the level of commitment required for certain roles.
15. Officers are currently planning the induction programme to follow the election in May 2025. Part of that process is to consult with a newly formed Member Reference Group. The Audit Committee is asked to review the list of training provision in Table 1 to confirm that this is appropriate for consultation with the Member Reference Group. Subject to consultation, the Policy will be brought back to Audit Committee in June 2025 for approval.

## **Financial Implications**

16. The proposed training programme does not add to the training already provided by the Council. The programme can be delivered within current resources.

Comments checked by:

Drew Hodgson  
Strategic Finance Business Partner  
Drew.Hodgson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

## Legal Implications

17. Promoting high standards of conduct through member training and development is a non-executive function (section 27(8) Localism Act 2011). This means that it is the responsibility of the whole Council. Under the Council's Constitution the Audit Committee is delegated responsibility by the Council monitor governance arrangements to ensure compliance with best practice and to provide assurance on the effectiveness of those arrangements (Constitution Part 5.1A).
18. The Localism Act 2011 placed a duty on the Council to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the Council. A member training policy relating to the Code of Conduct and other matters where the Council exercises decision making functions is evidence of the Council fulfilling that statutory requirement.
19. In (*Dennehy, R (on the application of) v London Borough of Ealing [2013]*) it was stated the intention of the legislation is to ensure the conduct of public life within local government does not fall below a minimum level which engenders public confidence in democracy whilst at the same time bearing in mind the importance of freedom of political expression or speech in the political sphere. Good member training therefore has a strong public interest element.

Comments checked by:

Kim Sawyer, Interim Head of Legal and Governance (Legal)  
Kim.sawyer@oxfordshire.gov.uk

## Staff Implications

20. The proposed training programme does not add to the training already provided by the Council. The programme can be delivered within current resources.

## Equality & Inclusion Implications

21. The provision of training in general enables councillors to become involved in any area of Council business that interests them and therefore aids equality and inclusion.

## Sustainability Implications

22. The policy commits to providing online training, as well as in-person, which will give councillors the ability to avoid travel and receive training material electronically rather than printed on paper.

Anita Bradley

Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex: Annex 1 – the proposed Policy on Councillor Training and Development.

Contact Officer: Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Democratic Services Manager,  
[colm.ocaomhanaigh@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:colm.ocaomhanaigh@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

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