



Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 30 NOVEMBER 2023
Subject	MEMBER TRAINING UPDATE
Wards affected	None
Accountable member	Councillor Lisa Spivey, Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Safety Email: Lisa.Spivey@Cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and Development Email: Democratic.Services@Cotswold.gov.uk
Report authors	Ana Prelici, Democratic Services Officer Andrew Brown, Democratic Services Business Manager Email: Democratic.Services@Cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To update the Committee on member training courses undertaken, including attendance figures and feedback.
Annexes	Annex A – Summary of Member Training Attendance Annex B – Summary of Feedback from Training and Induction Annex C – List of topics for member briefings
Recommendation(s)	That the Audit and Governance Committee resolves to: I. Note the report and the attendance summary at Annex A.
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deliver the highest standard of service
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Director of Governance and Development Local Management Team Member Development Steering Group



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report updates the Committee on member training courses undertaken since the local elections on 4 May 2023, including the attendance figures and feedback received.
- 1.2 The feedback on the Member training and induction programme has been very positive, although a small number of responses referred to some of the sessions overrunning their allotted time slots.
- 1.3 Member development activities also include a programme of regular member briefings and the development of a suite of e-learning for members.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A training and induction programme for new and returning members was developed ahead of the 2023/24 municipal year.
- 2.2 The Committee on 27 April 2023 received a report on Member Training relating to Gloucestershire Wide Code of Conduct and resolved to receive annual reports on member training courses undertaken.

3. REVIEW OF MEMBER TRAINING AND INDUCTION PLAN 2023

- 3.1 The training and induction programme included a combination of training delivered by officers and externally delivered training. Additional support included buddying arrangements and induction sessions for new members and the provision of welcome packs to all members returned at the local elections.
- 3.2 The training programme covered the following topics;
 - Planning and Licensing,
 - Chairing Skills,
 - Casework and Advocacy Skills,
 - Scrutiny Essentials,
 - Audit and Governance,
 - Social media,
 - Code of Conduct,
 - Emergency planning
 - Data protection, and
 - Finance
- 3.3 It was recommended that all Members attend the Code of Conduct Training. The Planning and Licensing Training was a pre-requisite to participating in meetings of the Committee to determine applications. All of the sessions were open to all new and returning members.



- 3.4** The attendance summary for the training and inductions sessions is provided at Annex A. A breakdown of attendance by group member will also be issued to the Leader and Deputy leader of each political group.
- 3.5** Feedback was collected through a survey, which was issued to attendees virtually after each session. The feedback received was very positive, with over 95% of respondents agreeing that the quality of the trainer, structure, content relevance to their role as a councillor was 'good' or 'excellent'. Several of the sessions overran and the respondents highlighted this. These respondents suggested that longer sessions be scheduled in the future as opposed to shorter sessions with less content. It was also suggested that virtual sessions be utilised, particularly by members representing wards in the north of the district. The summary of the feedback survey is contained at Annex B.
- 3.6** The programme was also supplemented by a 'buddying' system, where all newly elected Members were paired with an officer in Democratic Services. This was intended to ensure that Councillors had a point of contact for any questions they had. Very positive feedback was received on this scheme, and members stated that they felt well supported. A meet and greet session was also held for Members to engage with a range of senior officers.
- 3.7** Following the initial training and induction programme, all members have been requested to complete an online "Cyber Ninjas" training course by the end of September 2023. 25 Members have completed the Cyber Ninjas training and a further 2 Members have started but not completed this training. Further training sessions have been held which have been open to all members but targeted at members of certain committees.

4. PROPOSALS FOR FURTHER MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

Future Training

- 4.1** Democratic Services are working with the Learning and Development team to deliver further training opportunities for Members, which include;
- Making online training available to Members through the iHASCO Learning Management System (which is already being used to deliver officer training).
 - Rolling out Carbon Awareness training to Members. This may take the form of a series of short sessions.
- 4.2** Members will be encouraged to attend training as much as possible but the mechanisms for making training mandatory to Members are limited. Therefore, to ensure Member participation, the emphasis for this work will be on ensuring that training and briefing programmes are relevant and accessible to members. Attendance and participation will also be encouraged by regular reporting to Political Groups leaders.



Member Briefings

4.3 A programme of regular virtual Member briefings has also been developed by Democratic Services in consultation with Members and the Local Management Team. The programme and attendance figures to date are set out in Annex C.

4.4 Some briefings may be shared across two or more councils within the Publica partnership where applicable.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Member training costs are currently funded by a reserve rather than a recurring budget. Future budget provision for member training will be addressed through the current budget round.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

7.1 There are risks that if Members have not undertaken appropriate training for undertaking their roles effectively then the decisions taken by the Council could be subject to challenge, the reputation of the Council could be damaged, and there could be an increase in Code of Conduct complaints.

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.1 There are no equalities impacts.

9. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Where possible virtual training and briefing sessions will be utilised to reduce the need to travel to Cirencester, reducing the Carbon impact compared to in person sessions.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None.

(END)