

## Slough Borough Council

<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Standards Committee</b>
<b>Date:</b>	10 March 2026
<b>Subject:</b>	Programme of member training and development for the 2026/27 municipal year
<b>Chief Officer:</b>	Sukdave Ghuman – Director of Law and Governance
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Sukdave Ghuman – Director of Law and Governance
<b>Ward(s):</b>	All
<b>Exempt:</b>	No
<b>Appendices:</b>	Draft programme of member training and development

### 1. Summary and Recommendations

1.1 This report sets out a proposed programme of member training and development for the 2026/27 municipal year.

#### **Recommendations:**

The Standards Committee is recommended to:

- a) Review the proposed programme and provide any final requests, suggestions or inclusions.
- b) Agree the member training and development for the 2026/27 municipal year.

**Reason:** To secure a programme of member training and development for the upcoming municipal year and ensure that members have ample opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills, in order to undertake their roles as community leaders.

#### **Commissioner Review**

*Commissioners note the Member training programme and are pleased that feedback from a variety of sources has informed this plan. Of great concern to Commissioners though is the poor rate of attendance by Members. Attendance is essential for Councillors to be able to perform, their roles effectively and Commissioners will take an active interest in attendance levels.*

### 2. Report

#### **Introductory paragraph**

The provision of a comprehensive programme of member training and development is an integral part of the leadership and governance workstream of the council's recovery programme. It is also good practice generally, with such arrangements being in place in numerous other local authorities.

- 2.1 In response to feedback provided by members on the current year's arrangements, development of the upcoming programme was commenced earlier with extensive engagement with various stakeholders including:
- The Corporate Leadership Team (undertaken in December 2025)
  - Commissioners (undertaken in December 2025 and February 2026)
  - Group leaders (undertaken in December 2025)
  - The member development working group (undertaken in February 2026)
  - And finally, the Standards Committee
- 2.2 The feedback from each stakeholder listed above was reviewed by the member development working group on 18 February 2026, with a final proposed programme agreed for consideration by commissioners prior to it being recommended to the Standards Committee.
- 2.3 A key change to the approach being taken in delivering member training and development is the inclusion of 'bitesize' sessions. Feedback suggested that members would value additional, shorter and more easily consumed sessions. These sessions have been structured to permit two topics being presented on a given evening, with a break between sessions, to ensure the best use of members' limited time. Such sessions may also present an opportunity for members to share information that they have gained, subject to the agreement of group leaders.
- 2.4 It should be noted that member attendance at sessions during the 2025/26 municipal year has been low. For the months of November 2025, December 2025 and January 2026, the level of member attendance was 26%. This figure was inflated by the moderate level of attendance at the finance briefing in January 2026. It is hoped that a strong emphasis on topics of interest to members and the approach to holding both shorter and longer sessions will encourage increased levels of member attendance in 2026/27. Democratic Services will continue to monitor and report on member attendance at training and development sessions.
- 2.5 In order to ensure clarity over the nature of each session, each states which is mandatory and for which audience. In accordance with best practice and the expectations of members sitting on quasi-judicial or quasi-judicial type committees such as planning and licensing, it is important that these sessions in particular are attended by the relevant individuals. Other select sessions, such as that for the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee, are also recommended to be mandatory for relevant members.
- 2.6 On agreement of the programme by the Standards Committee, Democratic Services will begin finalising session leads and issuing calendar invites to all members, to ensure that as much notice as possible is provided for each session. It is anticipated that most sessions will be delivered by subject matter experts within service areas and that they will be held online unless otherwise stated.
- 2.7 In anticipation of the local election in May 2027, Democratic Services will begin developing an induction programme for all councillors early in the 2026/27 municipal year. As part of developing an induction programme, discussions will again be held with key stakeholders.
- 2.8 In order to supplement the training sessions provided as part of the annual programme, officers are working to provide access to the council's online suite of

officer training materials (Cornerstone). This is dependent on a number of technical issues being overcome, which means that it is not currently possible to give an indicated timescale for this. The programme signposts to the numerous resources provided through the Local Government Association. Members are encouraged to make use of these sessions, as they provide useful national context and draw upon best practice learned in authorities across the country.

- 2.9 Members are requested provide any further feedback on the programme and to agree topics in accordance with the recommendations set out earlier in this report.

### **Options considered**

Not applicable.

### **Background**

Addressed in the body of this report.

## **3. Implications of the Recommendation**

### **3.1 Financial implications**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Any external facilitation will initially be provided for via the member training and development budget. Out of budget or significant funding requests, should they arise, will be made through applicable formal processes.

### **3.2 Legal implications**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### **3.3 Risk management implications**

Member training and development is a key element of the council's governance arrangements and associated assurance activities. Members having access to a comprehensive suite of training and development opportunities ensures that they are able to familiarise themselves with key processes and developments for the authority.

### **3.4 Environmental implications**

Training and development sessions will, wherever possible, be delivered remotely, limiting the need for participants and facilitators to travel into the council's offices.

### **3.5 Equality implications**

Training and development sessions will, wherever possible, be delivered remotely. This will enable the participation of the widest possible audience. Any requests made by individuals requiring additional support to enable their participation in training sessions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

## **4. Background Papers**

None.