

**To:** Standards Committee  
**Date:** 17 March 2026  
**Report of:** Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer)  
**Title of Report:** Member Training Update – March 2026

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Decision being taken:</b>	To update the Standards Committee on the delivery of Member training from November 2026 to February 2026.
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	N/A
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	A Well Run Council.
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	None

<b>Recommendation(s):</b> That the Standards Committee resolves to:
1. <b>Note</b> the updates to the Councillors training since the previous committee.

<b>Information Exempt from Publication</b>	
N/A	N/A

<b>Appendix No.</b>	<b>Appendix Title</b>	<b>Exempt from Publication</b>
N/A	N/A	N/A

## Introduction and background

1. The Standards Committee has responsibility in the Council's Constitution for receiving reports from, and advising the Monitoring Officer on, training for members.
2. The rules relating to compulsory member training are set out in the Councillors' Allowances Scheme which forms Part 26 of the Council's Constitution. The Allowances Scheme requires that members who fail to attend the following training will have a reduction applied to their basic allowances:
  - Induction for newly elected members (new Members only)
  - Compulsory planning training (every two years for all Members)
  - Compulsory code of conduct training (annually for all Members)
  - Compulsory licensing training (annually for members of General Purposes Licensing Committee and Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee)

## Additional Non-Compulsory Training

3. Table 1 sets out the additional (non-compulsory) training sessions and briefings that have been scheduled since November 2025.

**Table 1: Additional training and briefings offered in 2025/2026 to date**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b># of attendees</b>
Risk Register Training	15 October 2025	2
Devolution	4 November 2025	5
Social Media	12 November 2025	2
Local Plan Briefing	3 December 2025	9
Tenancy Management - Area Based Working Model	17 December 2025	6
Annual Briefing: Thames Valley Police Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner	15 January 2026	6

4. Committee and Member Services also advertised a free Local Government Association (LGA) training session to Members in relation to mis/disinformation on Tuesday, 25 November, 10:00-12:00.

## Member Training and Development for 2025/2026

5. Officers continue to look at ways to improve the level and quality of information provided to members about the work and priorities of different Council services, to

make it easier for all members to understand how the organisation is structured and what work is already underway.

6. The Committee and Member Services team conducted a survey for Members in March 2025, with 11 responses received.
7. Topics for Member Training were submitted as follows, as seen by the Standards Committee in March 2025, and have been updated once completed:
  - Legal developments and national policy changes which impact OCC
  - Planning – Completed in May 2025
  - Committee relevant training
  - Oxford Direct Services (ODS) systems
  - Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) expenditure applications, how to manage CIL – Completed in May 2025
  - Use of IT systems and computers in Town Hall
  - Case work and reporting/solving issues
  - Rights of social and private tenants
  - Budget
  - Media training and public speaking
  - Housing allocation systems
8. Topics for Member Briefings were submitted as follows:
  - Planning, changes to national regulations which affect Oxford City Council
  - Renter's rights bill
  - Procurement, social value
  - Community wealth building
  - Property/estates/ODS
  - CIL expenditure applications, how to manage CIL – Completed in May 2025
9. There was also a request to review the online training schemes, to make training more interactive and a preference for written briefing notes to compliment the sessions. Mentimeter was used for the Code of Conduct Training and was positively received.
10. The requests will be reviewed by the Corporate Leadership Team for consideration and will be scheduled for the 2026/2027 schedule.

### **Member Induction following Local Election 2026**

11. Half of the City Council's Members will be up for election, due to be held on Thursday, 8 May 2026. Committee and Member Services are currently reviewing the induction for new, returning and current Members, which will include a Welcome Event, for all Members to meet with Officers across the Council, a revised Members Guide to Services and a refreshed Induction programme.
12. As per the Induction Programme, mandatory training for all Members will include planning, code of conduct and, for the Members who have been appointed to the General Purposes Licensing Committee and Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee, three separate modules for licensing to ensure Members can review the different types of casework at the Sub-Committees. This is following a request from

the Standards Committee to also include training to determine street trading applications.

### **Implications of Local Government Reorganisation**

13. The Member Development programme is only for Oxford City Council members. A separate training programme will be organised once the new Unitary Authority arrangements have been confirmed by the Government.
14. Officers will develop briefings for all Members on the implementation of Local Government Reorganisation and the next steps over the two years.

### **Financial implications**

15. Ordinarily most member training is delivered by officers of the Council in the Town Hall. Services are responsible for service-based training (e.g. planning, licensing) and may use external trainers where service budgets allow.
16. There is a small budget for member training held by Committee and Member Services which has been used to pay for one or two external trainers per year as required to meet members' training and development needs in particular areas that the Council cannot deliver (e.g. chairing skills, inclusive behaviours). This budget is also used to fund individual members' attendance at external training courses that are relevant to their special responsibilities or the reasonable learning and development of a councillor, with the agreement of their Group Leader.
17. Any move away from the provision of in-house training or an increase in the number of specialist external training courses would result in an additional financial cost to the Council which has not been budgeted for.
18. Ahead of the 2026 elections it will be considered if there is any additional funding available for training for members post-election who are new or hold new positions. This will be updated on as it is confirmed.

### **Legal issues**

19. There is no legal requirement for the Council to adopt a scheme for member training but doing so is considered good corporate governance and member support practice.
20. Council has collectively agreed that members who fail to attend the applicable compulsory induction and training (detailed in paragraph 3) will forego a portion of their allowances, as set out in Part 26.2 of the Council's Constitution.

### **Level of risk**

21. There is a risk that if members undertaking regulatory functions are not equipped to undertake those roles, then the Council's decision making could be undermined and subject to an increased risk of challenge, which, if successful, could be very costly for the Council. Similarly, if members are not trained on the Code of Conduct there is a

risk of an increase in the number of complaints that members have breached the Code of Conduct.

22. Ensuring all Councillors have attend training for Planning Committee allows a wider pool of Members who can substitute for committee members. However, updated legislation from the Government means that those appointed to the Committee will be the only Councillors to attend the training and determine planning applications. This is similar to the legislative requirements for the Councillor appointed to the Licensing Committees and the training arrangement to allow those Members to determine applications at Sub-Committees.

### **Equalities impact**

23. All newly elected councillors are invited to declare any special requirements relating to the provision of training and Committee and Member Services will work with the individual to ensure that those needs are met.

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<b>Background Papers:</b>	
1	Oxford City Council Constitution <a href="#">Part26Councillorsallowances.pdf</a>
2	Oxford City Council Constitution <a href="#">Part24PlanningCodeofPractice.pdf</a>

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