

COUNCILLOR TRAINING REPORT

AGENDA ITEM No. 24

MEETING: ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING

DATE: 13TH MAY 2026

REPORTED BY: TOWN CLERK

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with information on the training offered to and undertaken by councillors during 2025/26, as well as details of the training available to Members in the 2026/27 financial year.

2.0 Background to the Report

2.1 Ensuring an effective member training programme is an essential element in supporting councillors in effectively undertaking their responsibilities.

2.2 This is particularly important for newly elected councillors and extensive training was therefore undertaken last year following the May 2025 Elections.

2.3 It is one of the Council's Strategic Targets in the Service Delivery Plan to:-

“Maintain a training programme for Members which shows recommended courses with a regular reminder sent and records of attendance and non-attendance kept”.

3.0 Current Situation

3.1 A list of training undertaken by councillors during 2025/26 is attached at Appendix 1.

3.2 As highlighted earlier, comprehensive induction training was undertaken last year for newly elected councillors.

3.3 Training for councillors is provided by a combination of in-house training by officers, and external courses provided by County Durham Association of Local Councils (CDALC), Durham County Council and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), as well as partner organisations to NALC and CDALC, such as Breakthrough Communications and Parkinson Partnership.

3.4 The main induction training was provided by the Town Clerk last year and covered:-

- Overview of the Town Council and its Services;
- Officer and Management Structure;
- Current Projects and Issues
- Powers and Duties of Local Councils;
- Roles and Responsibilities of Councillors and Officers;
- Code of Conduct
- Council and Committee Structure;
- Council Constitution and Standing Orders;
- Council Meetings and Rules of Debate;

- 3.5 It is intended that this training will be repeated for the newly elected councillor and co-opted councillors over the summer (following the Woodham Co-Option).
- 3.6 Further specific training sessions were also provided by the Corporate and Policy Officer last year on the following subjects:
- Risk Management
 - Freedom of Information and Data Protection
 - Planning and Neighbourhood Plan
 - Emergency Action Plan
- 3.7 Further training is to be provided over the coming months as follows:
- Council Finances (Finance Manager)
 - Allotments and Cemeteries (Grounds Maintenance Service Co-Ordinator)
- 3.8 As highlighted earlier, various external training courses are also available via the County Durham Association of Local Council (CDALC) County Training Partnership (CTP), Durham County Council and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), and partner organisations Breakthrough Communications and Parkinson Partnership.
- 3.9 A full list of forthcoming member training courses is attached at Appendix 2 and details of training opportunities are regularly circulated to members with an invitation to register for any training of interest.
- 3.10 If any councillor requires further information or wishes to book a place on any training courses identified in this report or the appendices, please contact the Senior Administration Officer at the Council Offices, who will make the booking on your behalf.
- 3.11 If Members have any specific training needs, over and above that referenced in this report and the appendices, they are asked to contact the Town Clerk or Corporate and Policy Officer who will strive to identify and arrange the training.

4.0 Impact on Great Aycliffe Town Council

- 4.1 Ensuring an effective member training programme is an essential element in supporting councillors in effectively undertaking their responsibilities.

5.0 Policy Implications

- 5.1 This complies with the Council's Strategic Aim No. 2:-
'To provide good quality governance and management of the Council'.

6.0 Staffing Implications

- 6.1 Internal training will mainly be provided by the Town Clerk, Corporate and Policy Officer and Finance Manager with support from other officers such as the Works and Environment Manager and Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 A significant proportion of member training is provided 'in-house' by Council officers at no cost to the Council.

7.2 The cost of any external training e.g. via the County Durham Association of Local Council or National Association of Local Councils will be met from the Member Training Budget in the Members and Civic Revenue Budget.

8.0 Crime and Disorder Implications

8.1 None.

9.0 Equal Opportunity Implications

9.1 None

10.0 Environment, Biodiversity and Climate Change Implications

10.1 None.

11.0 Risk Assessment

11.1 It is not considered that the matter contained in this report poses a risk to health and safety of staff or to the financial or public standing of the Council to a degree that a risk assessment should be appended to this report.

12.0 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

12.1 Is any personal or sensitive data required for this proposal which may have any implications for GDPR?

13.0 Recommendations

13.1 It is recommended that Members:

- a) Receive the report.
- b) Note the training that has been undertaken by councillors during 2025/26.
- c) Note the list of forthcoming member training courses for 2026/27.
- d) Note that induction training will be provided to the newly elected councillor and co-opted councillors over the summer.
- e) Contact the Senior Administration Officer at the Council Offices if any councillor requires further information or wishes to book a place on any training courses identified in this report or the appendices, who will make the booking on your behalf.
- f) If Members have any specific training needs, over and above that referenced in this report and the appendices, they are asked to contact the Town Clerk or Corporate and Policy Officer who will strive to identify and arrange the training.

Member Training Undertaken in 2025/26

New Councillor Induction Training Delivered by Council Officers

- **Council Service Provision, Staffing and Current Issues (Town Clerk)**
Tuesday 13th May 2025
- **Roles, Responsibilities, Standing Orders and Meetings (Town Clerk)**
Tuesday 20th May 2025
- **Tour of Town Council Land and Facilities (Various Officers)**
June and July 2025
- **Data Protection and Risk Management (Corporate and Policy Officer)**
Wednesday 12th November 2025
- **Planning and Neighbourhood Plan (Corporate and Policy Officer)**
Wednesday 16th July 2025
- **Council Offices Emergency Action Plan ((Corporate and Policy Officer)**
Wednesday 4th June 2025

External Training Courses Attended

Surname	Initial	Training Course	Provider	Date
Armstrong	T	Code of Conduct Training	CDALC	18/06/25
Beddard	J	Code of Conduct Training Chairmanship Training	CDALC CDALC	18/06/25 08/07/25
Beddard	T	Code of Conduct Training An Introduction to Planning	CDALC CDALC	18/06/25 01/10/25
Chandran	A	Chairmanship Training	CDALC	08/07/25
Collinson	N	Chairmanship Training	CDALC	08/07/25
Hill	A	Code of Conduct Training	CDALC	18/06/25
Hutchinson	R	Code of Conduct Training	CDALC	18/06/25
McFadden Lewis	J	Code of Conduct Training	CDALC	18/06/25
Moore	J	Code of Conduct Training Chairmanship Training	CDALC CDALC	18/06/25 08/07/25
Robinson	C	Code of Conduct Training	CDALC	18/06/25
Robson	K	Chairmanship Training	CDALC	08/07/25
Sowerby	B	Code of Conduct Training	CDALC	18/06/25
Woodward	A	Code of Conduct Training	CDALC	18/06/25
Woodward	J	Code of Conduct Training	CDALC	18/06/25

Please note that the above list includes all training courses booked and paid for by the Council through the Senior Administration Officer.

It does not therefore include any free of charge training courses that Members may have signed up for themselves and not informed the Senior Administration Officer of their attendance.