



# Borough of Telford and Wrekin

## Governance Committee

Tuesday 14 April 2026

### Member Development Update Report

---

<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Cllr Zona Hannington – Cabinet Member: Finance, Governance & Customer Services	
<b>Lead Director:</b>	Anthea Lowe – Director: Policy & Governance	
<b>Service Area:</b>	Policy & Governance	
<b>Report Author:</b>	Lorna Gordon – Member Support Officer	
<b>Officer Contact Details:</b>	<b>Tel:</b> 01952 384978	<b>Email:</b> lorna.gordon@telford.gov.uk
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All Wards	
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Not Key Decision	
<b>Forward Plan:</b>	Not Applicable	
<b>Report considered by:</b>	Governance Committee – 14 April 2026	

---

#### 1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

The Committee is asked to:-

- 1.1 Note the feedback received from the Working Group on the 2023-2027 Member Learning & Development Programme;
- 1.2 Approve the proposed actions set out in Section 4.6 of this report;
- 1.3 Approve the revised Personal Development Plan document, and
- 1.4 Endorse the development of an updated Member Learning & Development Programme for 2027-31, incorporating the improvements identified.

#### 2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Governance Committee with a summary of the feedback received during a working group meeting of the Governance

## Member Development Update Report

Committee on the 2023–27 Member Development Programme and to set out the recommended actions to strengthen the design, accessibility, and effectiveness of the programme ahead of the next electoral term.

### **3.0 Background**

- 3.1 A comprehensive Member Induction and Development Programme was delivered following the May 2023 elections, supplemented throughout the year with role-specific, mandatory and optional training. Feedback was collected from Members after each module, via Microsoft Teams forms emailed to Members individually and through feedback forms handed out at meetings. Additionally, attendance data was monitored regularly by Officers to understand levels of engagement.
- 3.2 Following a recommendation at its meeting on 9 October 2025, the Governance Committee agreed to establish a working group to undertake a more detailed review of the sessions offered as part of the Member Development Programme.

### **4.0 Summary of main proposals**

- 4.1 The working group met on 10 February 2026 whereby Members considered each training session included in the programme based on its relevance and value, quality and delivery and impact and outcomes. Members also discussed additional areas that they would like to see included in the development programme and made suggestions to streamline the programme further. This report provides an outline of the working group's main conclusions drawn from their review of the development programme.

### **Findings of the Working Group**

#### **4.2 Attendance and Accessibility**

The data collected found that attendance varied significantly between modules, with several sessions experiencing low engagement. Members expressed a strong preference for a hybrid approach to delivery, incorporating both Microsoft Teams and in-person sessions, alongside recorded sessions to support those with work or caring responsibilities.

Members also emphasised the value of having online learning modules available on the Council's e-learning platform, Ollie, so that training could be completed at a convenient time.

In addition, the Working Group highlighted the need for clear identification of required learning modules, including those that must be completed before serving on specific committees, as well as repeat sessions and a tailored induction package for Members elected through by-elections. These changes were viewed as essential to ensure consistent and equitable access to training across the Council.

### 4.2 **Quality, Relevance and Practicality of Training**

The Working Group emphasised the importance of training that is practical, scenario-based, and grounded in real casework or committee examples, supported by useful supplementary resources such as FAQs, quick-reference sheets, and briefing notes.

Members also valued demonstrative approaches, particularly for system-based sessions such as Councillor Connect, Member Enquiries, MyView, and IDT, and stressed the need for training to be regularly updated in response to legislative changes or real incidents, including information governance breaches or developments in planning and regulatory frameworks.

Modules such as Ethics, Corporate Parenting, Scrutiny, and Safety were identified as areas where Members particularly appreciated the use of practical examples and case studies to enhance understanding and application.

### 4.3 **Streamlining and Structuring the Programme**

Feedback highlighted opportunities to reduce duplication and improve the overall member experience by combining related soft-skill modules, such as negotiation, public speaking, and influencing, and by integrating Member Support and Media/Communications content where this would add value.

The Working Group also suggested reviewing the sequencing of modules to create a clearer and more logical development pathway. These proposals reflect a strong preference for a coherent, efficient, and strategically aligned training programme.

### 4.4 **Role-Specific Developments Needs**

Members of the Working Group highlighted the need for enhanced support for Chairs, including opportunities to develop chairing skills, regular “keep in touch” sessions beyond scrutiny committees, and direct introductions to relevant Directors and officers.

Members also emphasised the importance of clearer and more accessible information on mandatory requirements for regulatory and quasi-judicial committees, as well as additional resources such as action cards and quick-reference guides to support Members in emergency response duties.

In addition, Members expressed a desire for a structured and ongoing development offer specifically for Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs. Collectively, these improvements are intended to strengthen Members’ confidence and capability in fulfilling specialist roles.

### 4.5 **Safety, Wellbeing and Casework Support**

## Member Development Update Report

The Working Group identified an increasing need for training and support in areas such as personal safety, lone working, conducting ward surgeries, and carrying out venue assessments, as well as managing challenging casework and responding to aggression. Members also highlighted the importance of guidance on the safe use of social media and appropriate escalation routes, as well as greater awareness of Operation Ford, maintaining stronger links with police partners, and improved access to wellbeing and stress-management support.

In addition, Members requested clearer guidance on how to log IT issues and make effective use of the Member Enquiry system.

### 4.6 **Proposed Actions**

Based on the feedback themes, the following actions are recommended for approval by the Committee:

#### Improved Accessibility

- Record all appropriate sessions and host them on Ollie or Councillor Connect with viewing data tracking
- Create learning modules that can be completed on Ollie in Member's own time
- Provide hybrid delivery where possible
- Establish a by-election induction package covering core essential modules
- Clearly identify essential, mandatory and committee-specific training withing the annual programme

#### Enhance Practical Learning

- Expand the use of real-world case studies, examples and scenario-based learning
- Provide supporting material such as FAQs, cheat sheets and briefing notes for key modules
- Update content regularly to reflect changes in law, guidance and practice
- Deliver more practical demonstrations for system-based sessions

#### Streamline Programme Structure

- Combine related modules to minimise duplication and improve efficiency
- Strengthen the structure and sequencing of the core induction modules

#### Strengthen Role-Specific Training

## Member Development Update Report

- Provide Chair Specific development, including keep in touch sessions and officer introductions
- Introduce a 'Committee Ready' checklist for Members appointed to Committees mid-year/term
- Liaise with Parish Councils to produce emergency response guidance at ward-level

### Support Member Safety and Wellbeing

- Enhance personal safety training with police involvement and updated guidance on lone working and social media risk
- Develop a Councillor Safety Pack, including a surgery venue risk assessment template and ward walk guidance
- Provide regular IDT drop-ins and clearer information on logging issues
- Expand awareness of wellbeing support and casework escalation pathways

## 4.7 Named Support Officers and Personal Development Plans

The Named Support Officer (NSO) arrangement and Personal Development Plans (PDPs) were introduced as part of the 2023 Member induction programme. However, uptake for both initiatives was lower than anticipated. In light of this, the approach to each initiative has been reviewed in advance of the 2027 local elections.

It is proposed that Named Support Officers within the Democracy Team be allocated by ward prior to the election, enabling this information to be included in the induction packs issued on election night. This will allow newly elected Members to meet their assigned NSO at the essential registration events, rather than receiving notification and introductions after the Annual General Meeting, as was the case in 2023.

Similarly, the PDP template was not distributed until after the AGM in 2023. It is therefore proposed that the revised PDP be included within the induction pack alongside other initial materials. The PDP has also been significantly streamlined and is now presented as a two-page document (attached at Appendix A), compared to the previous five-page version, which required a detailed self-assessment.

The revised PDP adopts a more focused and accessible approach, asking Members to identify up to three development areas they wish to prioritise and to briefly outline their reasons for doing so. This exercise is intended to be completed ahead of the Essential Member Induction sessions held shortly after the election.

To support completion and encourage engagement, it is proposed that a dedicated station be available during the induction events to collect completed

## Member Development Update Report

PDPs, assist Members who have not yet completed them, and provide information on next steps.

The overall intention of these changes is to simplify the process, provide clearer guidance, and increase Member participation in both initiatives.

### **5.0 Alternative Options**

5.1 The plans outlined in this report are subject to review by the Governance Committee.

### **6.0 Key Risks**

6.1 There are no key risks associated with this report.

### **7.0 Council Priorities**

7.1 A community-focused, innovative Council providing efficient, effective and quality services.

### **8.0 Financial Implications**

8.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from this report.

### **9.0 Legal and HR Implications**

9.1 There are no specific legal or HR implications arising from this report.

### **10.0 Ward Implications**

10.1 There are no specific ward implications arising from this report.

### **11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications**

11.1 There are no specific health, social and economic implications arising from this report.

### **12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications**

12.1 There are no specific equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

### **13.0 Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental Implications**

13.1 There are no specific climate change and environmental implication arising from this report.

### **14.0 Background Papers**

1 Member Learning and Development Programme 2027-2031 Update

2 Member Learning & Development Programme Update

# Member Development Update Report

## 15.0 Appendices

A Proposed Personal Development Plan Doc

## 16.0 Report Sign Off

<b>Signed off by</b>	<b>Date sent</b>	<b>Date signed off</b>	<b>Initials</b>
Legal	08/04/2026	08/04/2026	RP