

Title: Training Programme for Councillors  
Lead Officer: Graham Leach Democratic Services Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer.  
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Day  
Wards of the District directly affected: None

<b>Approvals required</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>
<b>Portfolio Holder</b>	13/2/23	Andrew Day
<b>Finance</b>	13/2/23	Lorraine Henson
<b>Legal Services</b>		
<b>Chief Executive</b>	13/2/23	Chris Elliott
<b>Programme Director for Climate Change</b>	13/2/23	Dave Barber
<b>Head of Service(s)</b>	13/2/23	Andrew Jones
<b>Section 151 Officer</b>	13/2/23	Andrew Rollins
<b>Monitoring Officer</b>	13/2/23	Andrew Jones
<b>Leadership Co-ordination Group</b>		
<b>Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Cttee / Council?</b>	No recommendation to Council 27 February 2023	
<b>Contrary to Policy / Budget framework?</b>	No	
<b>Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?</b>	No	
<b>Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?</b>	No	
<b>Accessibility Checked?</b>	Yes	

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## Summary

The report brings forward proposals for endorsement by Council in February 2023 in respect of training for all Councillors.

## Recommendation(s)

- (1) That the Committee recommends to Council that all Councillors must attend mandatory training in respect of the Code of Conduct, Finance, Safeguarding, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and Information Governance.
- (2) That the Committee highlights to Council the provision within the Code of Conduct in respect of training and the failure to attend mandatory training would be considered as a breach of the Code.
- (3) That training attendance and committee attendance records for all Councillors are reported to Group Leaders on a quarterly and to this Committee annually, and that these will be publicly available on the Council's website.
- (4) That the Audit & Standards Committee supports the following and recommends to Council that it:
  - (a) endorses the agreement of Group Leaders in respect of behaviour of Group Members as set out at Appendix 1 to the report;
  - (b) confirms the expectation that all Group Leaders after the election sign up to this protocol; and
  - (c) supports the Audit & Standards Committee being notified at its first meeting of the new Municipal year if Group Leaders have or have not signed up to the protocol.
- (5) The Committee notes the outline of the training to be provided to Councillors after the election in May 2023 and the wider aims of training for the first year as set out at Appendix 2.
- (6) The Committee recommends to Council that the Monitoring Officer be delegated authority, in consultation with Group Leaders and Chair of the Council, to set any further courses over the next four years as mandatory attendance, where it is considered appropriate.

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## 1 Reasons for the Recommendation

- 1.1 It is recognised that in both 2015 and 2019 District Elections, over half of the Councillors returned by the electorate were new to both the Council and role of a Councillor. Training and development of the new Council, including those returning to the Council, presents a significant challenge to ensure the Council can operate effectively and provide the necessary strategic direction.
- 1.2 While attendance at training has been reasonably good, it is considered that some areas should be mandatory for Councillors to attend due to them providing core skills and awareness of their roles and responsibilities. This was supported by the Strategic PAB who identified that the Code of Conduct, Information Governance, Safeguarding and basic training on the Council finances should be mandatory for all Councillors. The Safeguarding training was also recommended by the Children's Champions of the Council. The finance training has also been raised as an area of concern by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Audit & Standards Committee, Monitoring officer and Section 151 Officer. Information Governance is considered Mandatory due to the significant

sanctions that can be imposed on the Council and that it provides a building block to good governance and work with the community.

- 1.3 After discussions with Group Leaders, the Leader has also included Equality Diversity & Inclusion training as mandatory for Councillors. Overall making equality, diversity, and inclusion training mandatory for councillors is essential for promoting cultural competence, addressing systemic inequalities, and fostering a more inclusive and equitable society. This will:
- By undergoing equality, diversity, and inclusion training, councillors can develop a greater appreciation and understanding of the diverse communities they serve.
  - Councillors play a critical role in addressing systemic inequalities and promoting social justice. By making equality, diversity, and inclusion training mandatory, our council can ensure that all members are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to address these issues effectively.
  - By promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion, councillors can build more trust with the communities they serve and demonstrate their commitment to serving all members of their communities fairly and equitably.
  - By having a better understanding of diversity and inclusion, councillors can make more informed decisions that take into account the needs and perspectives of all members of their communities.
  - By promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion, making this training mandatory can enhance WDC reputation and demonstrate our commitment to serving members of all communities equitably and fairly.
- 1.4 There will also be the usual required training for Licensing & Regulatory and Planning Committee members ahead of them determining applications. Training will also be provided on recruitment and selection (for Employment Committee members) as necessary before they consider any relevant cases.
- 1.5 The Strategy PAB recognized that previously, some allowance had been made in respect of mandatory training. However, they are now of the view that these areas are so important, no allowance should be made for any Councillor not to attend. They are also of the opinion that sanctions should be applied if Councillors do not engage with these sessions.
- 1.6 The Code of Conduct, adopted by this Council reads as follows:
- “8. Complying with the Code of Conduct**  
**As a Councillor:**  
**I undertake Code of Conduct training provided by my local authority.**  
“It is extremely important for you as a councillor to demonstrate high standards, for you to have your actions open to scrutiny and for you not to undermine public trust in the local authority or its governance.”
- 1.7 The guidance associated with the Code goes on to say  
*“8.1 I undertake Code of Conduct training provided by my local authority. Councillors should be competent for the work they undertake, and this includes the way in which you conduct yourself when carrying out your role as a councillor. Training helps to develop such competence, ensuring that you understand the Code of Conduct and how it applies to you. As a councillor you are responsible for your own actions and will be held personally responsible if you breach your local authority’s Code of Conduct. Therefore, it is essential that, where you are offered the opportunity by your*

*local authority, you equip yourself with sufficient knowledge of the code to ensure that you comply with it at all times."*

- 1.8 While this appears to focus on the Code of Conduct, the opening statement is about being competent for the work. It can also be considered that failure to engage in training the Council has said is mandatory can be considered as bringing the Council into disrepute.
- 1.9 It is recognised that the sanctions available under the Code of Conduct are limited and therefore work has been undertaken with Group Leaders, for them to make a commitment to taking action through their political group procedures if Councillors within their Group are not meeting the expected standards in respect of training or the Code of Conduct.
- 1.10 The initial training programme is set out within the report, at Appendix 2, with further dates highlighted as "keep free training". The overall plan is that the initial and mandatory training will be in person, allowing for new Councillors to be set up with IT, followed by more general training to be held online and recorded, so the Members can access it at a later date if they wish to review the course. In addition to this, there will be online courses available to Members, including those provided by the LGA.
- 1.11 The Committee should note the proposal from the Strategy PAB for a training session on Saturday 13 May 2023 (which would be mandatory), of Safeguarding and Information governance. The view of the Strategy PAB was that to provide this at an early stage starting at 10am, with lunch provided, and finishing by no later than 3.30pm, provided an opportunity for socializing for Councillors, and removed the need for two evening sessions of training.
- 1.12 There are areas of training which need to be built into the plan, for example, the role and importance of the Audit & Standards Committee. In respect of understanding but also promotion of these core values of good governance. In this instance, it is likely to be with an informal discussion ahead of their first meeting with the meeting starting later to allow for this. Then with more detailed training throughout the year.
- 1.13 The Committee should also be aware that the Chief Executive will be holding one last event on 11 April 2023 for all Candidates on the role of a Councillor and the challenges faced. As this is online and after the close of nominations, this should see significant attendance. Once nominations have closed, all candidates will also be provided the Calendar of meetings and the outline training programme. This will (if agreed by the Committee) also set out the expectations in respect of mandatory training.

## **2 Alternative Options**

- 2.1 The Committee could choose not to support mandatory training and / or propose further areas which should be compulsory training for Councillors. If Members were minded to add further training areas to be mandatory, caution needs to be exercised in respect of making too many courses mandatory as this then loses its impact. Reflecting on the 2019 post-elections training schedule, officers feel that maybe there were too many mandatory training sessions, which put a lot of pressure on Councillors, especially those new to the Council, who were on a steep learning curve and having to adjust to a large number of evening meetings and training sessions. As a result, the proposed training plan is trying to strike a balance between Members' need for training, but also making it achievable and boosting attendance.

### **3 Legal Implications**

- 3.1 There are no legal implications of the report over there could be significant consequences and challenges for the Council if Councillors do not receive appropriate training.

### **4 Financial**

- 4.1 An annual budget is provided for Member training. While this is limited for the first year of the new Council, this has been increased to allow for greater demand in year 1.

### **5 Business Strategy**

- 5.1 Warwick District Council has adopted a Business Strategy which sets out key areas for service delivery. The closest aspect of this strategy is about Effective Staff and ensuring that Councillors have the appropriate knowledge and skills to undertake their role and make informed decisions.

### **6 Environmental/Climate Change Implications**

- 6.1 There are no direct implications or environmental impact of the proposal.

### **7 Analysis of the effects on Equality**

- 7.1 There may be an impact for individuals with some protected characteristics and these will be looked at with individuals and their Group Leader once the elections have taken place.

### **8 Data Protection**

- 8.1 The information being proposed within the report is about publishing training and attendance records of Councillors. In respect of attendance at meetings, this is a matter for public records therefore there are no issues considered. In respect of training, this has not been public so far, but it is considered if this was asked for the public interest would be served in making it available and therefore equivalent to publishing online. The only exemption may be (in both instances) where a Councillor cannot attend for a long period due to personal circumstances. If this was the case, a discussion would be held with the specific Councillor and their Group Leader.

### **9 Health and Wellbeing**

- 9.1 There are no significant health and wellbeing implications of the proposal, and the proposed plan of training seeks to minimise training demands on Councillors between election and the end of July.

### **10 Risk Assessment**

- 10.1 As outlined within the alternative options, there is a risk that by specifying too many training sessions as mandatory that Members may not engage.

### **11 Consultation**

- 11.1 The Strategic Programme Advisory Board have considered, developed, and support the proposals within the report.

### **Background papers:**

Please provide a list of any papers which you have referred to in compiling this report and are not published documents. This is a legal requirement.

You must also supply these when submitting the report.

**Supporting documents:**

This is not a legal requirement but may assist others in identifying documents you have referred to in producing the report.

**Agreement between Group Leaders in respect of adherence to the Code of Conduct**

As Group Leaders within Warwick District Council, that if a Member of our respective Group fails to undertake the mandatory training as prescribed by this Council or is found to breach the Code of Conduct adopted by this Council, I commit to taking all reasonable steps within the rules of my political party to take disciplinary action against that Councillor including, if appropriate, having them removed from the Group.

Signed

Date

## Appendix 2

### Calendar of Meetings 2023/2024 (including training)

All meetings start at 6.00pm unless stated otherwise

		May 2023			June 2023			July 2023
1	M	Bank Holiday	1	Th	Mop up planning training 1/2	1	S	
2	Tu		2	F		2	S	
3	W		3	S		3	M	Group
4	Th	<i>Elections</i>	4	S		4	Tu	O&S
5	F	<i>Elections</i>	5	M	SLT to meet Members, 3 min presentation each Group	5	W	Cabinet
6	S	<b>Coronation</b>	6	Tu	Finance - training	6	Th	
7	S		7	W	Cabinet - training	7	F	
8	M	<b>Bank Holiday</b>	8	Th	Licensing Panel B* Mop up planning training 2/2	8	S	
9	Tu	Welcome to Council 6pm - SLT to attend Council Structure / Roles and Responsibilities (1/2)	9	F		9	S	
10	W	Code of Conduct Training (pm)	10	S		10	M	
11	Th		11	S		11	Tu	Licensing Panel E* Planning training
12	F		12	M	Code of Conduct Training (pm)	12	W	
13	S	<b>Training day Safeguarding &amp; IG</b>	13	Tu	Audit & Standards	13	Th	CAF**
14	S		14	W	Overview of service areas and key strategic projects	14	F	
15	M	Licensing Committee Training (daytime) Council Structure / Roles and Responsibilities (2/2) Group	15	Th	Licensing Panel C* CAF**	15	S	Planning Site Visits
16	Tu	Planning committee training (PM) 1/2	16	F		16	S	
17	W	6.30pm Annual Council L&R Committee	17	S	Planning Site Visits	17	M	
18	Th	CAF**	18	S		18	Tu	Planning
19	F		19	M		19	W	Reserve Planning
20	S	Planning Site Visits	20	Tu	Planning	20	Th	O&S
21	S		21	W	Reserve Planning	21	F	
22	M	Planning Committee Training (PM) 2/2	22	Th		22	S	
23	Tu	Planning	23	F		23	S	
24	W	L&R Committee Training (daytime) Reserve Planning	24	S		24	M	L&R Committee *** Group
25	Th		25	S		25	Tu	Licensing Panel A*
26	F		26	M	MTU****	26	W	Council
27	S		27	Tu	Employment	27	Th	
28	S		28	W	Local government finance & the WDC budgets (General and HRA) - Andrew Rollins and Team	28	F	
29	M	Bank Holiday	29	Th	Licensing Panel D*	29	S	
30	Tu	Licensing Panel A*	30	F		30	S	
31	W	Scrutiny training				31	M	



		August 2023			September 2023			October 2023
1	Tu	Keep free for training	1	F		1	S	
2	W		2	S		2	M	Keep free for training- Carbon literacy
3	Th		3	S		3	Tu	Keep free for training- Carbon literacy O&S
4	F		4	M	MTU****	4	W	Keep free for training- Carbon literacy
5	S		5	Tu	Employment	5	Th	CAF** Keep free for training - Carbon literacy
6	S		6	W	Planning Committee Training (PM)	6	F	
7	M	Group	7	Th	CAF**	7	S	Planning Site Visits
8	Tu	O&S	8	F		8	S	
9	W	Cabinet	9	S	Planning Site Visits	9	M	
10	Th	CAF**	10	S		10	Tu	Planning Committee
11	F		11	M		11	W	Reserve Planning Committee
12	S	Planning Site Visits	12	Tu	Planning	12	Th	Licensing Panel A*
13	S		13	W	Reserve Planning	13	F	
14	M		14	Th	Licensing Panel D*	14	S	
15	Tu	Planning	15	F		15	S	
16	W	Reserve Planning	16	S		16	M	L&R Committee*** Group
17	Th	Licensing Panel B*	17	S		17	Tu	
18	F		18	M	Group	18	W	Council
19	S		19	Tu	O&S	19	Th	
20	S		20	W	Cabinet	20	F	
21	M		21	Th		21	S	
22	Tu		22	F		22	S	
23	W	Keep free for training	23	S		23	M	
24	Th		24	S		24	Tu	
25	F		25	M	Audit & Standards	25	W	Licensing PSPO training
26	S		26	T	Councillors' role in procurement and new procurement regulations - Becky Reading	26	Th	
27	S		27	W	Licensing Panel E*	27	F	
28	M	Bank Holiday	28	Th		28	S	
29	Tu		29	F		29	S	
30	W		30	S		30	M	Group
31	Th	Licensing Panel C*				31	Tu	O&S

November 2023			December 2023			January 2024		
1	W	Fees and Charges Review Group	1	F		1	M	Bank Holiday
2	Th	CAF** Cabinet	2	S		2	Tu	
3	F		3	S		3	W	
4	S	Planning Site Visits	4	M	Group	4	Th	
5	S		5	Tu	O&S	5	F	
6	M		6	W	Cabinet	6	S	
7	Tu	Planning	7	Th	CAF**	7	S	
8	W	Reserve Planning	8	F		8	M	Group
9	Th		9	S	Planning Site Visits	9	Tu	Keep free for training
10	F		10	S		10	W	Council
11	S		11	M	Keep free for training	11	Th	Licensing Panel E* CAF**
12	S		12	Tu	Planning	12	F	
13	M	Group	13	W	Reserve Planning	13	S	Planning Site Visit
14	Tu	Licensing Panel B* Keep free for training	14	Th	Licensing Panel D*	14	S	
15	W	Council	15	F		15	M	Keep free for training
16	Th		16	S		16	Tu	Licensing Panel A* Planning
17	F		17	S		17	W	Reserve Planning
18	S		18	M	Keep free for training	18	Th	
19	S		19	Tu	Audit & Standards	19	F	
20	M	MTU***	20	W		20	S	
21	Tu	Employment	21	Th		21	S	
22	W	Planning Committee Training (PM)	22	F		22	M	
23	Th		23	S		23	Tu	O&S
24	F		24	S		24	W	Keep free for training
25	S		25	M	Christmas Day	25	Th	
26	S		26	Tu	Boxing Day	26	F	
27	M		27	W	Bank Holiday	27	S	
28	Tu	Licensing Panel C*	28	Th	Keep free	28	S	
29	W		29	F	Keep free	29	M	
30	Th		30	S		30	Tu	
			31	S		31	W	

February 2024			March 2024			April 2024		
1	Th	Licensing Panel B*	1	F		1	M	<i>Easter Monday</i>
2	F		2	S		2	Tu	Licensing Panel A*
3	S		3	S		3	W	
4	S		4	M	Group	4	Th	Keep free for training
5	M	Budget briefing then Group	5	Tu	O&S	5	F	
6	Tu	O&S	6	W	Cabinet	6	S	
7	W	Budget Review Group	7	Th	CAF**	7	S	
8	Th	CAF** Cabinet	8	F		8	M	Group
9	F		9	S	Planning site visits	9	Tu	O&S
10	S	Planning Site Visit	10	S		10	W	Licensing Panel B* Cabinet
11	S		11	M	L&R Committee***	11	Th	CAF**
12	M	Keep free for training	12	Tu	Planning	12	F	
13	Tu	Planning	13	W	Reserve Planning Licensing Panel E*	13	S	Planning Site Visits
14	W	Reserve Planning Licensing Panel C*	14	Th		14	S	
15	Th		15	F		15	M	Group
16	F		16	S		16	Tu	Planning Committee
17	S		17	S		17	W	Council
18	S		18	M	MTU**** Group	18	Th	Reserve Planning
19	M	L&R Committee*** Group	19	Tu	Employment	19	F	
20	Tu	Keep free for training	20	W	Council	20	S	
21	W	Council	21	Th		21	S	
22	Th		22	F		22	M	
23	F		23	S		23	Tu	Postal vote opening – Chamber not available
24	S		24	S		24	W	As Above
25	S		25	M		25	Th	As Above
26	M		26	Tu	O&S	26	F	As Above
27	Tu	Audit & Standards	27	W	Planning Committee Training (PM)	27	S	
28	We		28	Th		28	S	
29	Th	Licensing Panel D*	29	F	<i>Good Friday</i>	29	M	As 23 April
			30	S		30	Tu	As 23 April
			31	S	<i>Easter Sunday</i>			

May 2024		
1	W	As 23 April
2	Th	<b>PCC Elections</b>
3	F	<b>Elections- keep free</b>
4	S	
5	S	
6	M	<i>Bank Holiday</i>
7	Tu	
8	W	Keep free for training
9	Th	
10	F	
11	S	
12	S	
13	M	Group
14	Tu	
15	W	6.30pm Annual Council
16	Th	
17	F	
18	S	
19	S	
20	M	
21	Tu	
22	W	Keep free for training
23	Th	
24	F	
25	S	
26	S	
27	M	<i>Bank Holiday</i>
28	Tu	
29	W	
30	Th	
31	F	

WDC
All meetings start at 6.00pm unless stated *= Start time of 10.00am, **= Start time of 2.30pm ***= Start time 4.30pm ****= Start time 3.30pm yellow shade training day

**Additional Areas to be covered within year 1 with date TBC**

- Health & Safety for Councillors (including personal Safety)
- Equality Diversity & Inclusion
- Handling the media including Social Media
- Recruitment & Selection
- Chairmanship of meetings (externally sourced)
- Major Emergency Plan