



**Governance and Audit
Committee**

Tuesday, 21 July 2026

**Subject: Member Training and Development: Updated Terms of Reference
and Draft Plan 2026 - 2030**

Report by:

Monitoring Officer

Contact Officer:

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Executive Summary:

This report seeks the approval of the Governance and Audit Committee for the updated Terms of Reference for the Member Development Group, and also presents the initial draft of the updated Member Training and Development Plan for 2026 – 2030.

The Committee are asked to consider both documents and provide comments and/or approval of next steps.

Appendices to Report

- Appendix 1: Updated Terms of Reference for the Member Development Group
- Appendix 2: Draft Member Training and Development Plan 2026 - 2030

RECOMMENDATION(S):

- a) That the updated Terms of Reference for the Member Development Group be approved, and the Group renamed to be the 'Member Training and Development Group'; and
- b) That the draft Member Training and Development Plan 2026 – 2030 be reviewed, and suggested amendments be shared for inclusion in the final plan, to be presented to the Committee no later than September 2026; and
- c) That the Member Training and Development Annual Report,

including relevant proposals in relation to LGR, be presented to the Committee no later than September 2026.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Governance and Audit Committee is responsible for the monitoring of Member Development and receives, at minimum, an annual report in order to maintain oversight. The Committee also has parentage of the Member Development Group and as such is required to consider and approve any amendments to the Terms of Reference, and review and approve their work programme.
- 1.2 With the announcement of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), the purpose and intent of 'Member Development' has been revisited, with a view to focusing on not just development opportunity, but also recognised training, which will better equip our Councillors to navigate the transition from West Lindsey District Council to the new unitary authority. This is to run alongside the ongoing opportunities provided and offered to Councillors.
- 1.3 With this in mind, all aspects of 'Member Development' have been re-written as 'Member Training and Development', to emphasise the importance of this commitment to our Councillors. Whilst current documents refer only to Member Development, throughout this report and beyond, reference will be to Member Training and Development.
- 1.4 West Lindsey Councillors are currently in the final year of their four-year term of office and ordinarily, at this time, the Governance and Audit Committee would receive the Annual Report, detailing training and development provided in the preceding 12 months. The report would also provide details of the upcoming project work for the Full Induction of all Councillors, which would take place following all-out elections.
- 1.5 In light of the awaited decision regarding LGR, Officers have committed to focus on the current training and development opportunities, using the engagement of the Member Development Group to promote such opportunities with their peers. Therefore, whilst the Annual Report will be presented to the Committee no later than September 2026, taking into account the LGR decisions and timelines Members are asked, at this stage, to approve the updated Terms of Reference for the Member Development Group, as well as provide comment on the draft of the Member Training and Development Plan 2026 – 2030.

2 Member Development Group Terms of Reference

- 2.1 First and foremost, approval is sought for the name of the Group to be amended to the 'Member Training and Development Group', to reflect the renewed focus on recognised training alongside wide-ranging development opportunities. For the purpose of this report, and until the decision be approved, the Group is referred to as the MDG.
- 2.2 The MDG has been re-energised since the appointment of the Civic Engagement and Member Development Officer in November 2025. One of the Group's first actions was to review the Terms of Reference,

with the amended version requiring approval by Governance and Audit Committee as the parent committee.

- 2.3 The updated Terms of Reference can be found at appendix one, with changes highlighted, and a summary of changes is provided below.

- 2.4 Table of Amendments:

Paragraph No.	Amendment	Purpose
Title and throughout	Inclusion of 'Training and'	To emphasise targeted training opportunities as well as development sessions
1.1	Identification of the parent committee	Not previously specified therefore required for clarity
3.1	Membership increased from 7 to 8	Reflective of actual membership
	Specify Chairmanship of the Group	Moved from later in the document for clarity Additional detail provided should Chairman of the Cttee not wish or be able to Chair the Group
4.4	Priority of online meetings	In line with 'virtual first' approach to non-legislated meetings
4.5	'behaviour' replaced with 'non-attendance'	To provide clarity
5.3	Paragraph added	To emphasise the accountability of Members to promote opportunities to their peers

- 2.5 The Committee is asked to approve the updated Terms of Reference.

3 Draft Member Training and Development Plan 2026 – 2030

- 3.1 The MDG has also re-visited the previous version of the Member Development Plan and offered suggestions for improvement and amendment. The initial draft of this Plan is attached at appendix two. Members are asked to review the draft Plan and offer comments and feedback.
- 3.2 Subject to comments received from the MDG and the Governance and Audit Committee, the final Plan will be presented for approval no later than September 2026.

4 Alternative Options

	Option	Rational for not recommending
1	Do not approve the Terms of Reference	This would mean the Group was working under outdated ToRs and potentially impact the effectiveness of the Group

2	Do not have a Member Training and Development Plan	Continuity and growth of skillset is key for WLDC Councillors to continue to fulfil their roles. To not have a Plan would remove the clear commitment from the Council, and also minimise the responsibility on Councillors to remain committed to their own development.
3	Leave all documents 'as is'	Information is outdated and inaccurate, thereby impacting the effectiveness and relevance of the documents.

ASSOCIATED IMPLICATIONS

Legal: Members must receive training to sit on certain previously agreed Committees. If this training is not provided, the Council could be open to judicial review.

Under the Local Government Act 1999, Councils must legally deliver 'Best Value', i.e. each council must be able to show that it has arrangements to secure continuous improvement in how it carries out its work. The Best Value Statutory Guidance, published in 2024, provides examples of where a council may be deemed as 'failing' by not upholding its statutory duty, which may, in turn, trigger a statutory Best Value Inspection to determine whether a Council is upholding its legal duties.

One of the indicators of failure listed in the statutory guidance is "lack of engagement with, and/or poor quality or non-existent member and officer training and development offer." West Lindsey's member training and development offer is designed and reviewed with the Member Development Group to ensure it is fit for purpose, engaging and meaningful, as well as meeting the requirements for statutory training, such as Planning and Licensing. Members are supported and encouraged to attend the training and development events on offer and attendance is monitored and evaluated to ensure continuous learning and improvement.

Financial: FIN/65/27/GA/TMN

Member Development has an allocated budget of £10,000 per financial year, with a rolling budget of £9,000 per 'term of office' (i.e. between each all-out election).

There are no new financial implications at this stage, and it is hoped that any proposals could be contained within existing budget provision.

Staffing: Any staffing requirements for training events or development opportunities would be met within existing staff numbers. The Civic Engagement and Member Development Officer is a dedicated officer resources for this area of work.

LGR implications: The impact of the impending decision on LGR is not yet known. Potential actions could include, for example, the roll-out of the usual Full Induction, or a version thereof; focus and support to be provided to the shadow authority Councillors; a 'fifth' year be added to the usual term of office requiring repeats of mandatory training. West Lindsey District Council may be invited to work with other authorities to complete training and development programmes in the lead up to vesting day, or responsibility may be transferred to an alternate authority entirely.

Given the level of uncertainty at this stage, Officers have committed to presenting a subsequent report to the Governance and Audit Committee, no later than September 2026, which will take into account the LGR decision and present the

next steps for West Lindsey District Council in relation to Member training and development.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights: As far as possible, sessions are provided in differing formats and at a variety of times in order to accommodate individual requirements.

Data Protection Implications: There are no implications identified.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities: It is acknowledged that entirely online provision of sessions does provide increased opportunities for supporting the Council's climate and sustainability aspirations. However, it is also acknowledged that the hybrid model of delivery (ie, the option to attend in person or online) has proved popular amongst Councillors and the climate related risks and opportunities have to be balanced with the need to provide effective and valuable development opportunities, in a format that is supported by Councillors.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations: There are no implications arising from this report.

Health Implications: There are no implications arising from this report.

Risk Assessment: N/A

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

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No

X

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

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No

X