

West Surrey Shadow Authority		
Report title: Member Development Programme – Update Report September 2026		
Report to: West Surrey Shadow Authority Standards Committee		
Date: 2 September 2026		
Executive Portfolio Holder: Cllr Victoria Kiehl – Executive Member for Governance, Democracy and Corporate Services		
Report of Lead Officer: Susan Sale, Monitoring Officer (interim)		
Report author(s): Anna Miller, Member Development Sub-Workstream Lead		
Wards affected: All		
Ward councillors informed: No		
Exempt from publication: No		
Key Decision: No	If a Key Decision, date registered on Forward Plan: N/A	
Report cleared for publication by:		
People Workstream	Name	Date
Equalities Impact Assessment complete	N/A	N/A
Senior Responsible Officer (or their delegate)	Name	Date
S151 Officer	Vicky Radford	7 August 2026
Monitoring Officer	Susan Sale	6 August 2026
Executive Portfolio Holder consultation	Cllr Kiehl	6 August 2026
Committee Chair consultation	Cllr Wilson	6 August 2026
Head of Paid Service	Susan Sale on behalf of Andy Brown	6 August 2026

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Standards Committee on Shadow Authority member training and development, including:
- Training completed by members as part of Phase 1 (May – July 2026)
 - Training principles and approach agreed for Phase 2 (September 2026– April 2027)
- 1.2 Members are asked to note the progress to date, the approach underway for Phase 2 and to provide feedback on any training gaps.

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Standards Committee resolves to:

2.1.1 Note the update on Phase 1 delivery of the induction programme

2.1.2 Note the Phase 2 Member Development Principles and Training Plan

2.1.3 Provide feedback on the approach to delivery and any identified training gaps and additional requirements for members.

3. Reason(s) for recommendation:

- 3.1 To ensure that a robust and comprehensive programme of member development activities is in place for the duration of the shadow period. This will enable councillors to be equipped with the skills and information to ensure the authority is able to operate safely and legally from Vesting Day (1 April 2027).

4. Next steps

- 4.1 Planning and delivery for Phase 2 Member Development Sessions will continue, with regular feedback from members and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Implementation Programme Themes about content and delivery.

5. Exemption from publication

- 5.1 None of this report is exempt from publication.

6. Background and Proposal

Phase 1

- 6.1 Phase 1 of the Shadow Authority member development programme took place between May and July 2026 and focused on the initial induction and mandatory training requirements for members.

- 6.2** Sessions in Phase 1 included the initial induction day, specific training for councillors to enable them to participate in committees that they are members of (including completing mandatory training where required) and training on key aspects of local authority governance, finance and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), to enable councillors to participate in decision making and discussions relating to the LGR implementation plan and the budget setting process.
- 6.3** A West Surrey Councillor SharePoint site has been created to provide access to training presentations and recordings, where available, for sessions councillors were unable to attend.
- 6.4** Attendance at all training sessions is recorded. Councillors may also ask for their record to be updated where they confirm they have watched a training recording. The Committee is asked to note the mandatory training completed to date, as set out in Appendix 1.

Phase 2

- 6.5** Work has continued to develop Phase 2 of the programme, which will run from September to Vesting Day. Following feedback at the July Standards Committee meeting, the initial list of topics has been further reviewed and structured into clearer categories.
- 6.6** The refreshed approach also distinguishes between formal training, committee-specific development and briefing sessions, and identifies where further input is required from the Statutory Officers and relevant LGR Implementation Programme Themes to confirm priorities, content and delivery arrangements.
- 6.7** Indicative scheduling has been provided for sessions, to help organise the flow of training, to ensure that members are provided with relevant training and information at appropriate times.
- 6.8** LGR Implementation Programme Theme Leads have been engaged with the development of sessions within their remit.
- 6.9** The West Surrey Shadow Authority includes members with a wide range of experience, from newly elected councillors to those who have served for many years across different councils at many tiers of local government. The programme is designed to give all councillors access to the learning and information they need to carry out their roles effectively.

Member Development Principles

- 6.10** A set of Member Development Principles has been developed to guide the planning and delivery of Phase 2. These draw on feedback from the Shadow Standards Committee and Interim Monitoring Officer, alongside best practice from sovereign councils. The principles are intended to provide a consistent framework for deciding what training is required, how it should be

delivered and how member participation will be supported. The principles are included in Appendix 2.

7. Consultation

- 7.1** The Phase 2 topic list has been developed through engagement with the West Surrey Shadow Standards Committee and the Interim Monitoring Officer. Feedback received through these routes has been used to refine the proposed programme and identify areas where further engagement is required.
- 7.2** Further consultation and coordination is ongoing with the wider Implementation Team, including relevant Themes, to confirm ownership, scheduling, content and delivery of sessions.
- 7.3** Councillors are encouraged to provide further feedback on the training plan, including any individual or collective training needs, through the Interim Monitoring Officer or their political group leaders. This will help ensure the programme remains responsive to members' needs, reflects the range of experience across the Shadow Authority, and supports councillors to carry out their roles effectively during the shadow period and from Vesting Day.
- 7.3.1** Consultation has taken place with the relevant Portfolio Holder and the Chair of the Standards Committee; their comments will be fed back verbally to the meeting in due course.

8. Key Risks

- 8.1** Without an agreed programme-wide approach to Member Development, there is a risk that training will not be sufficiently coordinated across the programme, leading to duplication, gaps in provision or sessions that do not meet members' needs. A programme-wide approach will apply the agreed principles and training plan as a clear framework for ownership, prioritisation and delivery, helping ensure members receive the training and information they need to carry out their roles.
- 8.2** Without suitable training in place there is a risk of members not being ready to take on responsibility for sovereign council functions at Vesting Day. This programme-wide approach ensures that councillors will be equipped with the skills and information to ensure the authority is able to operate safely and legally on Vesting Day.

9. Options

- 9.1** Option 1: Note and endorse the proposals in this report and agree that officers continue to deliver the Member Development Programme, with any additional sessions that members consider necessary. This option is recommended as it will ensure that members are supported to carry out their roles during the

shadow period effectively and are best placed to take on full responsibilities from Vesting Day

- 9.2** Option 2: Do not endorse the refreshed Member Development Programme proposals and request that officers re-look at the programme. This option is not recommended as it creates a risk that members are unable to discharge their statutory and other duties.

10. Issues for consideration

10.1 Financial Implications

- 10.1.1** There is no dedicated shadow member development budget for 2026/27; however, the cost will come from the D&LGR Implementation fund.
- 10.1.2** The proposed approach is expected to make use of internal expertise and available external support where appropriate. The Local Government Association has offered several sessions free of charge, which have been included in the draft plan and support the value for money of the programme.
- 10.1.3** Any additional costs associated with delivery, including external facilitation if required, will need to be identified and confirmed as delivery of the programme continues.

10.2 Section 151 Officer Commentary

- 10.2.1** West Surrey Council will operate in a very challenging financial environment, with significant budgetary pressures due to increasing demand and costs of service delivery and reducing government funding. The new unitary will be increasingly reliant on Council Tax as the primary source of income.
- 10.2.2** Decisions made by the sovereign councils and the West Surrey Shadow Authority will need to consider the ongoing financial impact and ensure that expenditure does not exceed the resources available. It is vital that significant importance is placed on effective financial management and medium-term financial sustainability to protect service delivery and achieve a balanced budget position going forward.
- 10.2.3** Councillors need to be appropriately trained in order to carry out their functions. There are a range of training options available ensuring value for money for the Council.

10.3 Legal Implications

- 10.3.1** The West Surrey Shadow Authority Constitution requires that Members may not sit as Members of either the Standards Committee or Audit & Governance Committee without completing mandatory training. The same provision applies to Members who may wish to sit on these committees as Substitute Members. Training has been provided in advance of both first substantive meetings of those Committees.

10.3.2 All members are also strongly encouraged to attend Code of Conduct Training and one session has been provided, and the recording made available, with another live session scheduled for September. This is important training to ensure that Members are aware of their obligations in respect of interests and their declarations for the register to ensure they don't inadvertently fall foul of the criminal offence of the Localism Act 2011.

10.4 Monitoring Officer Commentary

10.4.1 A strong Member Development Programme is essential to ensure the conduct of effective and lawful decision making, by well equipped, skilled and knowledgeable members, to ensure a robust governance framework and compliance with the Council's best value duty.

10.5 People/Human Resources Implications

10.5.1 There are no significant workforce implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report. Delivery of the Member Development Programme will require some officer input and capacity from within the implementation programme and, where relevant, sovereign authorities to support the design and delivery of topic-specific training for members. However, this is not considered to give rise to any substantive staffing issues and can be managed within existing arrangements.

10.6 Equality and Diversity Implications

10.6.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:

- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

10.6.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

10.6.3 This duty has been considered in the context of this report, and it has been concluded that there are no equality and diversity implications arising directly from this report.

10.7 Climate Change and Sustainability Implications

10.7.1 There are no direct climate change or sustainability implications arising from this update report. Where possible, online or hybrid delivery and electronic materials may help reduce travel and printing associated with the programme.

10.8 Stakeholders Implications

10.8.1 Councillors are the primary stakeholders for this work. Their input is summarised in the Consultation section of this report.

11 Overview & Scrutiny Comments

11.1 Not applicable

12 List of Appendices

12.1 Appendix 1 - West Surrey Training attendance

12.2 Appendix 2 - Member Development Principles

13 List of Background papers

13.1 [West Surrey Standard Committee – 6 July 2026 – Member Development Programme Report](#)