

Member Development – Phase 2 Principles

This document sets out the principles for developing and delivering Phase 2 of the member development programme for East and West Surrey.

These principles provide a framework for planning training during the shadow period, helping councillors understand their roles, responsibilities and decision-making functions as the new councils are established.

Aims of the member development programme

The member development programme aims to provide councillors with the knowledge, skills and support needed to fulfil their roles effectively during the Shadow year and post Vesting Day.

The aims of the programme are:

- ensuring councillors understand their roles, responsibilities, statutory obligations and decision-making functions during the transition
- supporting effective governance, scrutiny and member/officer relationships within the new councils
- preparing councillors for specific committee, executive, regulatory and civic responsibilities
- providing a consistent core training offer across East and West Surrey
- supporting councillors to understand the range of services delivered by a unitary council, local priorities and transformation activity
- building confidence in practical skills, including chairing, questioning, scrutiny, community leadership and casework
- ensuring training is timely, proportionate, accessible and responsive to councillor needs
- supporting a positive learning culture that continues beyond the initial transition period.

Delivery principles

The following principles will be followed when planning and arranging training:

- prioritise online delivery where this supports accessibility and efficient use of councillors' time
- use in-person delivery where the session is skills-based, interactive or would benefit from facilitated discussion
- consider hybrid delivery only where it can be supported effectively
- make training available to all councillors unless there is a clear reason to limit attendance
- separate sessions to be held for East and West Surrey, with consistent content across both authorities, except where area-specific elements are required.

Scheduling principles

Training should be scheduled in a way that supports councillor availability, makes effective use of time and aligns with the Shadow Council timetable, key decision points and councillors' practical needs.

- training sessions should normally be no longer than two hours and should include a short break where appropriate
- briefing sessions should normally be around 30 minutes of presentation, followed by time for questions on the topic. More detailed or complex topics may require longer sessions or be split across two sessions
- Fridays and school holidays should be avoided where practicable
- evening sessions should be considered to support councillors with work, caring or other daytime commitments
- ideally it is envisaged that training should be offered across two regular time slots (e.g. an afternoon and an early evening slot), to reduce repeated barriers to attendance. The intention is for sessions to alternate slots weekly for each authority. However, due to the number of existing diary commitments across all 14 councils this may not be possible initially.
- sessions should be prioritised according to when councillors need the information, particularly ahead of committee appointments, key decisions or Vesting Day.

Training providers and contributors

Training should be delivered by the provider or contributor best placed to support the learning outcome, recognising that different types of session may require different expertise.

- LGA, interim statutory officers and officers from the existing sovereign councils may all have a role in delivering Phase 2 training
- briefing sessions may be delivered by officers from the existing sovereign councils where the content is primarily informational or service-specific
- external trainers should be considered where a session would benefit from specialist training skills, facilitation techniques or a neutral, independent perspective, for example, where services or functions are currently delivered in different ways across Surrey
- the choice of trainer should take account of the session format required, the sensitivity of the topic, the level of interaction required and also ensuring value for money.