

Elected Members
Learning and Development Programme
2023/24



Walsall Council

PROUD OF OUR **PAST**, OUR **PRESENT** AND FOR OUR **FUTURE**

Learning and Development

'Making a positive difference'

This Programme has been compiled by Democratic Services with support from the Learning and Development Team within Human Resources. It includes development opportunities that aim to support our Elected Members to carry out their roles, making a positive difference to the lives of Walsall residents.

Our commitment to Elected Member development

'We recognise the important role our Elected Members play in establishing and delivering the ambitions of our council plan. We recognise their professionalism and commitment to delivering quality services in increasingly challenging financial circumstances. In order to support the Council's core purpose of serving the people and communities of Walsall by representing and working with them to protect and improve the quality of life for all, particularly the most vulnerable, we need to ensure that our Elected Members, like our workforce, are effectively supported and appropriately skilled and trained to fulfil their increasingly challenging roles.

This Programme has been designed with this in mind. We know there is a direct link between an organisation's investment in its people and how well the organisation performs. Our elected members will be the key to leading the Council's overarching priorities including its transformation ambitions and to its overall success'.

Growth for all people, communities and businesses

Increased independence, improved wellbeing

Children have the best possible start in life and are safe from harm

Communities are prospering and resilient

Tony Cox, Director of Governance

Introduction

This programme is aimed at promoting learning and development opportunities for Walsall Council's Elected Members.

Here in Walsall we are committed to:

- Identifying the individual and collective learning needs of our Elected Members and prioritising them accordingly
- Ensuring that any learning programmes reflect Council and national objectives
- Promoting learning and development opportunities through traditional and electronic communication methods
- Disseminating learning and development to Members within each political group in a timely fashion
- Monitoring the implementation of the Annual Learning and Development Plan for Elected Members and reporting take-up to Standards Board/individual Groups
- Evaluating learning and development programmes and reviewing the outcomes
- Practicing accessibility, promoting equality and valuing diversity

We believe Member development is essential if local government is to thrive and prosper. This programme is designed to build Elected Member capacity and is therefore based upon the principles of:

- Developing Electing Members as effective community leaders
- Adopting a strategic approach to Member development which has the backing of all parties
- Having a development programme in place that clearly identifies the difference development can make
- Ensuring that learning and development is effective in building capacity
- Addressing wider development matters to promote work-life balance and citizenship

Members are encouraged to share their knowledge and expertise with fellow Members, where appropriate, by:

- Supporting newly elected Members (through mentoring)
- Sharing knowledge from attendance at courses, external conferences and seminars
- Engaging in peer mentoring

The role of Democratic Services

Democratic Services provides professional advice, guidance and support to officers and Elected Members (Councillors) including the identification of Members' learning needs. They administer the Programme and are the key point of contact in respect of booking onto face to face learning opportunities and initial resolution of any difficulties members may have with accessing their One Source Learn account.

Democratic Services support Members by:

- Ensuring all Members are aware of learning and development opportunities in a timely manner
- Devising and delivering a programme of induction training for newly elected and returning Members, including 1 to 1 support
- Devising a personal learning and development programme for individual members, upon request, based on needs identified at a personal review meeting with a Peer Member or a Senior Officer.
- Providing administrative support for all learning and development events including communication, bookings, evaluations and feedback requirements

Contacts in Democratic Services:

Tony Cox	Director – Governance
	Email anthony.cox@walsall.gov.uk
	Telephone 01922 654822 or through MS Teams
Sarah Read	Senior Legal Support Officer
	Email sarah.read@walsall.gov.uk
	Telephone 01922 654824 or through MS Teams
Neil Picken	Principal Democratic Services Officer
	Email neil.picken@walsall.gov.uk
	Telephone 01922 654369 or through MS Teams
Craig Goodall	Principal Democratic Services Officer
	Email craig.goodall@walsall.gov.uk
	Telephone 01922 654765 or through MS Teams

The role of the Learning and Development Team

The Learning and Development Team is part of the Organisational Development service, managed by Jacky Matthews, Organisational Development Manager. The team is committed to providing high quality learning and development solutions that are pragmatic and innovative and offer value for money. The Team aims to provide a responsive service that reflects the needs of the organisation, as articulated in the Council Plan and the various Directorate plans, supporting staff and Elected Members to achieve the council's goals in challenging times.

The team develops learning programmes that are available to the whole council workforce, including Elected Members (corporate/core training) as well as specific learning programmes for the Adult Social Care Workforce and for Elected Members.

Responding to new initiatives and identified learning needs, the team will continually review its offer and introduce new learning opportunities as appropriate, either face-to-face or as a self-paced elearning package.

Contacts in Learning and Development

Jacky Matthews Organisational Development Manager

Email	jacky.matthews@walsall.gov.uk
Telephone	01922 653826 or through MS Teams

Or through the generic L&D Mailbox –
learninganddevelopment@walsall.gov.uk

What you will find in this document

The learning opportunities in this Programme have been developed or commissioned to meet the changing needs of the organisation and the increasingly demanding roles of our elected members. Opportunities will be continually reviewed and evaluated to assess their relevance and value for money, and unless stated under 'target audience' are open to all elected members.

Some learning events are designed as development workshops aimed at equipping Members with the necessary knowledge and skills to fulfil their roles, while others might take the form of briefings, 1-to-1s or facilitated sessions whereby Members can share their knowledge and experience.

Our catalogue of e-learning is available on the council's One Source Learn platform, which can be accessed outside of normal hours thereby offering maximum flexibility to learners. Support on how to access the platform is available from Democratic Services.

Elected Member Induction

A comprehensive induction programme is available for all members, whether newly elected or returning Members. In addition to the New Member Training facilitated by Democratic Services, there will also be the opportunity to meet with other Members and key senior officers to learn more about corporate and constitutional processes.

Each Member will be provided with an Induction Pack setting out the support and guidance available, together with other useful information about the Council. They will also be allocated an appropriate member colleague as a buddy/mentor.

To complement the Member induction programme, the e-learning package – 'Your role as Councillor' should also be completed. This is available on the One Source platform.

The Induction Process will help to identify any gaps in members' skills or knowledge which need to be developed. This information will then form the basis of a development plan to accompany the recommended and mandatory learning set out in this brochure.

Core Annual Learning and Development Programme

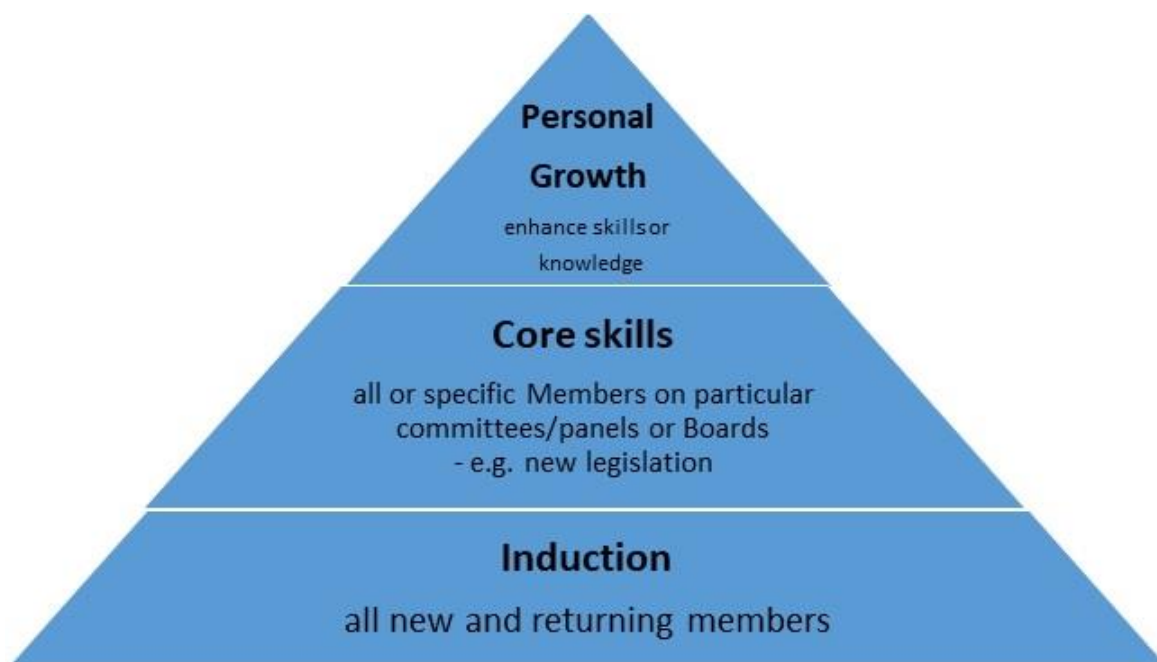
Each year a core learning programme will be developed, in consultation with Elected Members themselves. It will include the requirements of any new legislation and emerging corporate themes, ethical and governance requirements and changing standards, and the impact of any Scrutiny recommendations in terms of changing corporate practices.

The programme also includes learning in response to emerging themes and developments from partner agencies, including such things as your role as a corporate parent, disclosable pecuniary interests, chairing meetings, data protection training, Prevent training, safeguarding children and adults awareness, and training related to specific roles with regards to servicing planning, licensing or employment appeals/interview panels. Some topics have been designated as mandatory learning and members will be required to provide evidence of completion of these.

Learning for Personal Growth and Development

Members have access to a vast amount of learning modules aimed at enhancing knowledge providing useful information to help them learn more about their role, Council directorates, the borough of Walsall and to help develop their core skills.

In light of the tragic events which saw the murders of MPs Jo Cox and David Amess, learning about 'Personal Safety and Lone Working' is highly recommended, together with other health and safety related topics.



External Opportunities

Democratic Services often receive information on regional events or those offered by other local authorities that may be of interest to Walsall Council. When appropriate, these will be circulated to:

- All Members
- Members who have identified the topic as an area for development
- Members who would directly benefit from attending due to their specific role

Those wishing to take advantage of these events should notify Democratic Services who will in turn evaluate the request in line with business need and available budget. Decisions will be shared in an open and transparent way.

Promoting the sharing of learning

Members are strongly encouraged to share any learning from attendance at both internal and external events as this is a valuable way of acquiring information about a wide range of issues, including new and innovative practice, new legislation and other regional and national developments.

Members attending external events should make any relevant course material available to others by placing a copy in the Members/Group Rooms or sharing material electronically. Members may also be asked to produce short written report or briefing to share with their peers.

How to book onto a face to face course

Democratic Services Officers will advise Members of dates of any face to face learning opportunities which will be scheduled at key points during the Municipal Year and not less than quarterly.

Any communication will advise as to the exact booking process. However, Members should contact Democratic Services to indicate their interest in attending a specific event. Once successfully booked, Democratic Services will provide the necessary joining instructions including date, venue, timings, and any pre-course requirements.

Prior to booking onto any training, Members should consider:

- What they want to be able to do or do better
- How success will be recognised
- How personal improvement will be reviewed and measured

- What methods will be used to achieve learning objectives
- How such learning will be put into practice

Learning and Development for all

Democratic services, together with the learning and development team are committed to the active promotion and support of equality of opportunity in the way their respective services are managed and delivered, ensuring that:

- Marketing and booking processes are such that they give all learners equal access to development activities
- Any identified reasonable adjustments are provided to support members' attendance at a learning event, such as large print handouts or interpreters
- Individuals wishing to undertake any accredited programmes are selected on the basis of business need, merit and ability

Cancellation policy

In order to run a cost effective service and to maximise the opportunities for all to attend training they have identified, we ask that Members provide Democratic Services with as much notice as possible of any cancellations.

On the rare occasion that a course has to be cancelled, delegates will be notified at the earliest opportunity. Wherever possible delegates will be offered a replacement date.

Evaluation

To be effective, learning and development should match the needs of Members, as well as meeting the objectives of the Council and its partners, in achieving a shared vision for Walsall.

It is essential that all learning and development provision is reviewed for relevance and effectiveness, and Members are therefore requested to complete an Evaluation of the event post attendance.

Monitoring and evaluation should be:

- Open and constructive, enabling any necessary enhancements to be made to future delivery

- Regularly monitored by Democratic Services, the Learning and Development Team and the Standards Board to ensure delivery of objectives and continuous improvement
- Clearly communicated to Members through the various group Leaders

Processes include:

- Regular recognition and acknowledgement of Member achievements both individually and within political groups
- Encouragement for Members to be self-aware in recognising their own strengths and weaknesses

Recording completed learning

As per the constitution, Members are required to undertake at least 12 hours training per annum.

Whether face to face or via e-learning, completion of any learning needs to be captured on the council's HR platform, One Source.

The system will automatically capture completion of any elearning undertaken on the platform, whilst Democratic Services will inform the Learning and Development Team of any attendance at face to face training organised by the council.

Members are responsible for providing Democratic Services with full details of any training attended outside of these formal arrangements so that their learning transcript can be kept up to date.

Feedback and Complaints

Both Democratic Services and the Learning and Development Team aim to provide Members with an excellent service that is responsive to the needs of the organisation and individual learners. All learning programmes are demand-led and continually monitored for quality, suitability and value for money.

In order to continue to deliver an effective service, Members are requested to provide any feedback (good or bad) as often as possible. All course evaluations are reviewed, and any issues raised will be followed up.

If Members are dissatisfied in any way, please contact any member of the Democratic Services or Learning and Development Team directly.

All concerns are treated seriously and dealt with promptly with feedback used to inform and improve our services.

Equally if Members feel that they have received an excellent service or support, or have benefitted greatly from one of our learning opportunities, please let us know.

Democratic Services will notify Members as and when specific learning opportunities become available or are required to be undertaken. However Members are advised to check out additional opportunities available through the Learning and Development Team and Walsall Safeguarding Partnership.

These are available at

[A to Z list of courses \(walsall.gov.uk\)](https://walsall.gov.uk) – Inside Walsall

Walsall Safeguarding Partnership [WSP training programme \(walsall.gov.uk\)](https://walsall.gov.uk) – public accessible site

Alternatively Members can access their One Source account and search for a keyword to see what is available.



Click on the image to access the One Source portal or contact Democratic Services for support or take a look at our training and support documentation that is [One Source - Learn \(walsall.gov.uk\)](https://walsall.gov.uk)

Below is a list of currently relevant courses for Members.

Induction

Course Title/ subject area	Method of delivery		Status
	Face to face/ virtual	Elearning – self paced	
New Councillor Training including rules for debate			Mandatory
Your role as a Councillor			Mandatory
Introduction to Local Government			Mandatory
Code of Conduct and Declaration of Interest for New Councillors			Mandatory

Core Skills

Course Title/ subject area	Method of delivery		Status
	Face to face/ virtual	Elearning – self paced	
Code of Conduct and Declaration of Interest			Mandatory
GDPR (Data Protection)		Annual requirement	Mandatory
Planning Committee			Mandatory for Committee Members
Licensing and Safety Committee			Mandatory for Committee members/substitutes
Personnel Committee/Appointments and Dismissals			Mandatory for Committee members/substitutes
Employment and Appeals Committee (A&B)			Mandatory for Committee members/substitutes
Scrutiny Skills A) Financial scrutiny B) Question setting C) Legislation			Highly recommended
WSP Training - Level 1 - Basic Neglect Awareness for Children		<u>Through Walsall Safe-guarding Partnership</u>	Mandatory for those who have contact with children whether this be direct or indirect contact
Equality, Diversity and	Additional	A suite of	Mandatory

Inclusion (EDI) and Belonging	I face to face courses may also be available	EDI elearning is available	
WSP Training - Level 1 - Safeguarding Adults Introduction		available through Walsall Safe-guarding Partnership	Mandatory for those who have contact with vulnerable adults, this could be direct or in-direct.
Prevent		See induction webpages for details	Mandatory for new starters and refreshed every 3 years
The Council's finances/budget setting/medium term financial planning			Highly recommended
Social Media – do's and don'ts			Highly recommended
Unconscious Bias			Highly recommended
Public Speaking/ getting the best from the Media			Highly recommended
The role of the corporate parent			Highly recommended
Chairing Meetings			Highly recommended
Human Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery			Highly recommended
Total Respect Training			Highly recommended
Child Sexual Exploitation			Highly recommended
Management of change – tools/techniques and impact			Optional

Personal Growth and Development

Course Title/ subject area	Method of delivery		Status
	Face to face/ virtual	Elearning – self paced	
Meeting Skills			Optional
Presentation Skills			Optional
Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation			Optional
Optimising Team Performance – Introduction to Coaching			Optional
Leadership Skills – finance for non- financial managers			Optional
Mental Health First Aid	Courses are available as a half day awareness or in-depth 2-day course		Optional – 2 day course highly recommended
Display Screen Equipment (DSE)			Optional
Fire Safety awareness		General awareness – building specific guidance should be observed	Highly recommended
Personal Safety and lone working – street safe			Highly recommended
Assertive communication			Optional

Confidence and Assertiveness			Optional
Effective Time Management			Optional
Facilitation Skills			Optional
Managing your priorities			Optional
Stress awareness			Optional
Email Stress – how to use emails effectively			Optional
Microsoft Office365	Microsoft Office tutorials available on line at Microsoft 365 Training		Optional
Change and Transition			Optional
Learning to Learn			Optional
Self-Development			Optional
Personal Resilience	Resilience and Me also available		Optional
Debt Management and Collection			Optional
Agile working – generic			Optional
Introduction to sustainability and carbon management			Optional
Introduction to Dementia			Optional

