

Cabinet

03 March 2026

Part 1 - Public

Executive Key Decision



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Cabinet Member	Not Applicable
Responsible Officer	Adrian Stanfield, Central Services Director & Deputy Chief Executive
Report Author	Mathew Brooks, Head of HR & Development

Learning & Development Resources

1 Summary and Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report seeks Members' approval to fund a two-year fixed term Learning & Development Manager post from the Local Government Reorganisation Reserve.

2 Corporate Strategy Priority Area

- 2.1 Efficient services for all our residents, maintaining an effective council.
- 2.2 The additional capacity will support the Council in maintaining an effective and resilient workforce, particularly during the transition associated with Local Government Reorganisation.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 Approve the funding of a two-year fixed term Learning & Development Manager post from the Local Government Reorganisation Reserve.

4 Introduction and Background

- 4.1 The Council has adopted an ambitious Workforce Development Strategy (2025-2028) which requires consistent professional support, structured delivery, and ongoing oversight.
- 4.2 Alongside this, Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) represents the most significant organisational change for over 50 years, requiring staff and members to develop the skills, confidence and readiness needed to transition effectively into new structures, systems, and ways of working. It is crucial that we are therefore able to resource the support needed for this impending change.

- 4.3 Current capacity within the HR & Development Team is very limited (3 full time officers) and cannot absorb the scale of development activity planned for the next two years, especially in relation to the Workforce Development Strategy priorities linked to LGR. We are therefore proposing that a new temporary (2 year) role is created to concentrate on this area of activity.
- 4.4 Workforce planning, leadership development, cultural alignment, and change readiness are key priorities within the role's draft job description as will be support the full implementation of the new appraisal process for 2026/27 by analysing themes, identifying emerging priorities and advising on development needs.
- 4.5 The post holder will be expected to directly design and deliver in-house L&D activities to a wide range of staff, reducing reliance on (and expenditure for) external trainers.
- 4.6 Demand for learning and development support is expected to increase substantially as staff across all services prepare for the impact of LGR. Without additional specialist capacity, delivery of essential development programmes will be severely constrained.

5 Proposal

- 5.1 It is proposed that a full-time Learning and Development Manager be appointed on a two-year fixed-term contract at grade M8. The total cost of the post, calculated using the top of the salary scale inclusive of oncosts over the two-year period, is £143,000.
- 5.2 The purpose of the post is to strengthen the Council's capacity to deliver its Workforce Development Strategy, ensuring that key programmes are effectively implemented, monitored and evaluated.
- 5.3 In addition, the role would provide organisational development support in preparation for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). This would include work relating to change readiness, cultural development, collaborative working, and leadership capability.
- 5.4 The postholder would design, procure and deliver a range of learning and development interventions to meet the increased organisational demand anticipated during the LGR transition period.
- 5.5 The post would also provide professional learning and development expertise which the HR & Development Team is currently unable to deliver within existing resources.
- 5.6 The postholder would also assume responsibility for coordinating and delivering the principal elements of the Member Development Strategy.

- 5.7 In February 2026, the Council's Management Team approved the establishment of a two-year fixed-term Learning & Development Manager post (Annex 1: Job Description).
- 5.8 While the Council's Constitution confers delegated authority upon the Management Team to approve temporary and fixed-term posts, Member approval is required in this instance due to the proposed funding arrangement, namely that the post be financed from the Local Government Reorganisation Reserve.

6 Other Options

- 6.1 Consideration was given to sharing learning and development capacity with neighbouring authorities; however, discussions confirmed that they do not have the capacity to provide the level of support required.
- 6.2 The use of an agency or locum appointment was also explored, but this was assessed to be significantly more costly and carried a heightened risk of the individual leaving at short notice, which would undermine continuity during a critical period of organisational change.

7 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 8 The total cost of the post calculated using the top of the salary scale inclusive of oncosts over the two year period, is £143,000. This would be funded from the Transformation Reserve earmarked for Local Government Reorganisation.

9 Risk Assessment

- 9.1 Without the addition of this fixed-term resource, there is a significant risk that the Council will be unable to deliver the core elements of the Workforce Development Strategy.
- 9.2 There is also a risk that organisational readiness for LGR will be insufficient, which may adversely affect staff confidence, service resilience and the effectiveness of transition planning.
- 9.3 Furthermore, the existing HR & Development Team would be placed under considerable pressure, increasing the likelihood of delays, reduced quality and missed opportunities to embed the cultural and capability improvements required for the new authority.

10 Legal Implications

- 10.1 The proposals outlined in this report are compliant with the Council's Pay Policy Statement.
- 10.2 By adhering to these policies, the Council has ensured that the recommendations outlined in this report are legally compliant and have been undertaken in

accordance with recognised best practice thus continuing to foster the Council's constructive approach to employee relations with its workforce.

11 Consultation and Communications

11.1 The proposals to establish a fixed term Learning and Development Manager post do not require formal staff consultation.

12 Implementation

12.1 It is proposed to recruit to the post as soon as possible.

13 Cross Cutting Issues

13.1 Climate Change and Biodiversity

13.1.1 A moderate source of emissions is likely to be maintained at current levels or increased.

13.1.2 Climate change advice has not been sought in the preparation of the options and recommendations in this report.

13.2 Equalities and Diversity

13.2.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

13.3 Other If Relevant

- Human Resources
- Business Continuity / Resilience

Background Papers	None
Annex 1	Job description