

Broads Authority

15 May 2026

Agenda item number 20

Member training

Report by Head of Governance

Purpose

Members of the Broads Authority are required to undertake training to ensure they can perform their duties effectively, safely, and legally. This report sets out the recommended mandatory and essential training and how this would be delivered.

Recommended decision

(i) Approve the designated mandatory training as set out in 4.2 of the report;

(ii) Attendance of mandatory training becomes a code of conduct requirement; and

(iii) That Member training attendance records are published annually.

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1. Introduction

1.1. The overall purpose of the Chair and Members of the Broads Authority is to ensure that the Authority carries out the functions set out in the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988 as amended. They have a duty to achieve the efficient, effective and accountable governance of the Authority in the best interests of the National Park and to provide leadership, scrutiny and direction for the organisation as a whole in pursuing the aim of sustainable development – balancing and integrating the environment, social and economic considerations. The primary purpose of the role of the Member is to work with the Chair, Chief Executive and other Members to discharge the functions of the

Authority and to steer and champion the management of the Authority so that it delivers benefits to the nation and its local communities in accordance with the Act and other relevant legislation.

- 1.2. Our Members (including co-opted members) bring a wide range of knowledge and skills to the Broads Authority, complementing the capabilities of our staff. In turn, we are committed to supporting our members' continuing development.
- 1.3. The Broads Authority operates a Member Development Programme which helps to enhance our Members' understanding of the key issues the Authority faces in managing the Broads, as well as supporting Members in making informed strategic decisions for the benefit of the Authority, the Broads and all its stakeholders.
- 1.4. Members are expected to attend appropriate training courses, briefing sessions and events arranged or sponsored by the Authority.
- 1.5. At its meeting on 19 March 2026, the Standards Committee discussed the take-up of Member training and how the Authority could encourage more Members to attend the various training sessions and workshops which are put on throughout the year.
- 1.6. The Standards Committee recommended that the Monitoring Officer and Head of Governance: recommend to the Authority the designation of essential training items as mandatory and report how this training would be delivered; that attendance of mandatory training becomes a Code of Conduct requirement; and that Member training attendance records are published.

2. Uptake of training, briefing and workshops

- 2.1. Between September 2024 and November 2025, fourteen events were held either online or in person. These included training sessions, briefings, workshops and site visits. Table 1 sets out the attendance rate for these events.

Table 1: Summary of attendance

Type of event	Attendance (%)
Briefings and Workshops	39%
Planning Training (PC Committee members only)	56%
Other Training (Annual Site Visits etc.)	40%
Finance and Tolls briefings/training	46%
Mandatory training (Code of Conduct/Chair's Training)	54%

- 2.2. It is important to remember that all events are put on to provide Members with information to help them understand relevant legislation and key issues affecting the

Authority. The Standards Committee recognised that Officers would spend a large amount of time preparing for these sessions.

3. Overview of mandatory and essential training

- 3.1. The Standards Committee recommended that the Broads Authority consider designating some of the training provided to members as mandatory and that the attendance of these becomes a Code of Conduct requirement.
- 3.2. Code of Conduct training is a requirement of Member induction. Members will sign to confirm that they have received and read the Code of Conduct which includes the requirement to undertake the Code of Conduct training provided by the Authority. It is important that Members are provided refresher training if and when legislation changes.
- 3.3. Cyber security and Data Protection training provides essential skills to protect against data breaches, comply with GDPR, and manage risks. The Authority's online training courses cover phishing awareness, secure data handling, and legal obligations.
- 3.4. As from October 2024, a new duty under the Equality Act 2010 requires employers to take "reasonable steps" to prevent sexual harassment of their employees. This duty covers employees, workers, and third parties. The Authority provides an online Sexual Harassment at Work training through the ELMS training system, which all employees are required to undertake annually.
- 3.5. Under the Equality Act 2010 employers are liable for discrimination or harassment in the workplace unless they can show they took "all reasonable steps" to prevent it. The Authority's Equality Policy applies to all individuals associated with the Broads Authority which includes Members of the Authority. Online training on 'Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging' is provided through the ELMS training system.
- 3.6. Members of the Planning Committee must undertake planning training before they are able to attend a Planning Committee meeting. The Authority also provides a Planning Design Quality Tour (PDQT) every other year. The purpose of PDQT is to evaluate completed projects as to whether or not they are a success – specifically in terms of design. The intended outcome is to study and discuss the issue of design and to inform future Planning Committee decision making.
- 3.7. In addition to the mandatory training, each July prior to the Risk, Audit and Governance Committee meeting and Broads Authority Annual meeting, the finance team provides a Statement of Accounts and Finance briefing. Although not designated as mandatory, the briefing is essential for all Members and Co-opted Members.
- 3.8. For Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Committees, Chair's training is provided by the Governance Team which has been designed to give both Chairs and Vice-Chairs the tools to ensure that the various Committee meetings follow the Authority's Standing Orders and Members adhere to the Code of Conduct.

4. Designating mandatory and essential training

4.1. It is proposed that the following would be designated as mandatory and essential training:

4.2. **Mandatory training** would include the following:

- Code of Conduct and Conflicts of Interest training (on joining the Broads Authority as a Member or Co-opted Member, plus refresher training if needed – for example if legislation changes)
- Planning training – for Members of the Planning Committee only
- Ports & Marine Facilities Safety Code training
- Data Protection Essentials (Annually - online through the Broads Authority's ELMS training system)
- Broads Authority Cyber Security Course (Annually - online through the Broads Authority's ELMS training system)
- Combating Bribery and Corruption (Annually - online through the Broads Authority's ELMS training system)
- Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (Every three years - online through the Broads Authority's ELMS training system)
- Sexual Harassment at Work (Every three years - online through the Broads Authority's ELMS training system)

4.3. **Essential training**, although not mandatory, it is expected that all Members and Co-opted Members would attend these sessions. Essential training would include the following:

- Statement of Accounts and Finance training (July each year)
- Tolls briefing and workshop (October each year)
- Annual Site Visit (usually in July each year, but for 2026 will be held in August)
- Chair's training

4.4. Throughout the year, Officers of the Authority will hold various briefings and workshops. These are designed to provide Members with information on current issues, such as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) and Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). Following feedback from Members who were unsure whether invitations to briefings and workshops were relevant to their role as Member, it is suggested that when sending out invitations to these events, it is made clear what the objectives are.

4.5. The Standards Committee stressed that it was important that any mandatory training was easily available to all Members. Most training would therefore be provided through

online training or, if in person, Members would have the opportunity to join the meeting through Teams.

- 4.6. Members appointed by local authorities have the option of watching a pre-recorded Code of Conduct training as they would have already attended Code of Conduct training with their local authority, however, this option would not be available to Secretary of State appointed Members and Co-opted Members.

5. Financial implications

- 5.1. To provide access to the online ELMS training system, the Authority would be charged £13 per licence for each Member per annum, totalling £351 per annum. With the exception of the Annual Site Visit and Planning Design Quality Tour, other courses would be provided by Officers and therefore would not incur any charges other than the Officers' time.

6. Risk implications

- 6.1. The risks associated with Members not undertaking training could be significant due to stricter regulatory scrutiny, proposed mandatory codes, and the complex nature of the Broads Authority's duties.
- 6.2. Failure of an Authority to train members can lead to legal, financial, and reputational damage to the Authority, as well as personal liability for Members.

Author: Lorraine Taylor

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