



Berkshire Association of Local Councils

Newsletter

JANUARY 2025

Inside This Issue

- Announcements
- Training and Events
- Member Services Information (Current Consultations and Event opportunities)
- Local Council Opportunities

Happy New Year and welcome to the January edition of the BALC Newsletter.

Inside this edition, as well as details of the current training offering there is also information on two current government consultations and some event information that may be of use to those Councils who are looking for new ways to engage with their communities.

***** STOP PRESS *** Please be advised that the BALC AGM this year will be held on Thursday 13th November, please mark this date now on your calendar.**

Please let us have your good news stories for the next newsletter by emailing balcexec@balc.org.uk by the first week of March with any content for the next edition.

The BALC Executive Committee

TRAINING AND EVENTS

It was encouraging to see that the Knowledge & Core Skills Councillor induction course being held this month is fully subscribed. The fact that is online and, in the evening, may have contributed to this, and we will ensure that this format is repeated this coming year. We are currently in the process of planning the training provision for Berkshire members, so if there are any courses that you believe are important in your roles as Councillors and Clerks, please email the BALC Executive at balcexec@balc.org.uk so they can be considered.

Full details of all courses will be shared on the website and in newsletters throughout the year.

The Executive Committee are delighted to announce that the fee for attending training courses offered for Berkshire ALC members, continues to be included within your membership package. **However, unfortunately we continue to see a high amount of 'no shows' or last minute cancellations on all courses and in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of booking, if attendees cancel within 14 days, or do not attend the course without good reason, the respective Councils will be charged 100% of the delegate fee.**

Please note that BALC members are welcome to book onto any courses run by Hampshire ALC, details as below of the courses available until March, but please note there will be a fee payable for these courses. For further information on any of the courses below please following the training link from the BALC website [here](#).

January 2025				
Officer Development	Intro to Finance for Clerks	Thursday 30th January	10:00 - 12:30	Weybrook Park, Basingstoke
February 2025				
Officer Development	<i>What You Need to Know Pt. 1</i>	<i>Wednesday 5th February</i>	<i>10:00 - 12:30</i>	<i>Eastleigh House, Eastleigh</i>
Officer Development	Intro to CiLCA	Thursday 6th February	10:00 - 12:30	Weybrook Park, Basingstoke
Officer Development	<i>What You Need to Know – Pt. 2</i>	<i>Wednesday 12th February</i>	<i>10:00 - 12:30</i>	<i>Eastleigh House, Eastleigh</i>
March 2025				
Development for All	<i>Managing Absence and Capability</i>	<i>Wednesday 5th March</i>	<i>10:00 - 14:30</i>	<i>Eastleigh House, Eastleigh</i>
Officer Development	Year End for Officers	Tuesday 11th March	10:00 - 12:30	Weybrook Park, Basingstoke
Development for All	Preventing Sexual Harassment	Wednesday 12th March	10:00 – 13:00	Weybrook Park, Basingstoke
Councillor Development	Year End for Councillors	Thursday 13th March	10:00 - 12:30	Weybrook Park, Basingstoke

MEMBER SERVICES INFORMATION

Current Government Consultations

[Strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England](#)

The government is seeking views on proposals to introduce measures to strengthen the standards and conduct regime for local authorities in England. The proposals being consulted upon include:

The introduction of a mandatory minimum code of conduct for local authorities in England

A requirement that all principal authorities convene formal standards committees to make decisions on code of conduct breaches, and publish the outcomes of all formal investigations

The introduction of the power for all local authorities (including combined authorities) to suspend councillors or mayors found in serious breach of their code of conduct and, as appropriate, interim suspension for the most serious and complex cases that may involve police investigations

A new category of disqualification for gross misconduct and those subject to a sanction of suspension more than once in a 5 year period

A role for a national body to deal with appeals.

The Consultation was published on 18th December 2024 for 10 weeks, the consultation ends on 26th February 2025.

[Local Audit Reform: A Strategy For Overhauling The Local Audit System in England'](#)

As part of its devolution plan, the government is looking to transform the local audit system, 'to give greater clarity on the purpose of audit and accounts, and ensure they take centre stage in local scrutiny'. In-line with Sir Tony Redmond's recommendations, the government will legislate to radically simplify the system, bringing as many audit functions as possible into one body, and is now engaging with the sector on how to do this, subject to legislation.

The Consultation was published on 18th December 2024 for 6 weeks, the consultation ends on 29th January 2025.

Event Opportunities

[Covid-19 Day of Reflection 9th March 2025](#)

The secretary of state for culture, media and sport has announced a UK wide Day of Reflection to commemorate the 5th anniversary of the pandemic.

This provides an opportunity for communities to come together to remember those who lost their lives since the pandemic began and to honour the tireless work and acts of kindness shown during this unprecedented time and mark the day in ways that feel meaningful to them.

Railway 200 - National Event 2025

A message from 'Railway 200' which they have asked us to pass on to Council's on their behalf.

In 2025, we will commemorate the 200th anniversary of the birth of the modern railway, a milestone in our national heritage. We kindly seek your assistance in connecting with local councils in Berkshire as we prepare for the upcoming anniversary. This layered approach will ensure widespread awareness and across communities, enhancing the impact of the historic commemoration.

Should you have any question about Railway 200, or require any additional information, please go to their website www.railway200.co.uk

The Big Lunch Webinar

Join the Eden Project, the organisation behind The Big Lunch campaign, for a lunchtime webinar on Thursday 30 January 2025 at 12pm to explore how The Big Lunch can help councils and housing associations support safer, healthier and more cohesive communities.

Over 10 million people participated in 2024, with 76% reporting a positive impact on their community, and 71% saying it helped reduce loneliness (7.1m people).

The Big Lunch 2025 will take place on 7 – 8 June and can also complement VE Day 80 activities in May. As always, the key is communities coming together. You can find out more information and sign up for the webinar [here](#).



LOCAL COUNCIL OPPORTUNITIES

Woodley Town Council - Vacancy for a Responsible Financial Officer / Finance Manager

Barkham Parish Council - Vacancy for a Deputy Clerk

For more details on the above vacancies in Berkshire please see the following link:

<https://www.balc.org.uk/local-council-opportunities>

Don't forget, members can advertise an employment or voluntary opportunity on the BALC website included in their membership. Further information can be found on the following [link](#).