



Yorkshire Local Councils Associations

TRAINING DAY – TALKING TABLES

**Wednesday 30 September 2026, Fairfield Manor Hotel,
Shipton Road, YORK YO30 1XW**

Cost: £105.00 (£55.00 for smaller councils)

Please note – no price increase from 1 April 2026

Email admin@yorkshirelca.gov.uk to request a booking form

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GOOD INVESTMENT

DRAFT PROGRAMME

(YLCA reserves the right to alter this programme at any time)

Details	Time	End time
Registration with refreshments	9:00	
Welcome and Introductions	9:30	
Session 1	9:45	10:35
Session 2	10:45	11:35
Refreshments and visit to Exhibitors and Sponsors	11:35	12:00
Session 3	12:00	12:50
Lunch and visit to Exhibitors and Sponsors	12:50	14:00
Session 4	14:00	14:50
Session 5	15:00	15:50
Close of Training Day	16:00	

There will be **nine tables** of different topics with presenters who will provide an interactive session using discussion, scenarios, case studies, quizzes, demonstrations and shared problem-solving.

Delegates will have the opportunity to attend the sessions at **five of the tables** during the day, selecting the topics of interest. Each session will be strictly controlled to **50 minutes** to manage movement between tables.

When you arrive, please sit at the table with the topic that you have chosen first.

The Training Day will be opened by YLCA Chairman at 9.30am.

Table 1	Planning Reform: Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Andrew Towlerton, Planning Consultant The planning system is evolving, and councils need to understand what the latest reforms mean for their communities. Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) are shaping how development is planned, assessed and delivered across the country, with implications for local councils, neighbourhood planning and community engagement. This informative session will provide an overview of the key changes to the NPPF, explaining what has changed, why it matters, and how these reforms may affect planning decisions at the local level.
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Participants will explore the impact of planning reform on housing delivery, local plan making, decision-taking, neighbourhood planning and the ability of local councils to influence development in their area. The session will also consider the opportunities and challenges arising from the changes and provide practical guidance on engaging effectively with the planning process.

Whether you regularly comment on planning applications or simply want to understand the direction of travel for planning policy, this session will help you navigate the changing planning landscape with confidence.

Table 2

Common HR Mistakes Councils Make and How to Avoid Them – James Corrigan, Managing Director, Council HR and Governance Support

Employment issues can be time-consuming, costly and, if handled incorrectly, expose councils to significant legal and reputational risks. Many workplace disputes arise not from deliberate wrongdoing, but from a lack of understanding of employment procedures, roles and responsibilities.

This practical session will explore some of the most common HR mistakes made by councils, including issues relating to recruitment, contracts of employment, performance management, grievances, disciplinary matters, absence management and confidentiality. Participants will gain a clearer understanding of the council's responsibilities as an employer, the respective roles of councillors and staff, and the importance of following policies and procedures consistently and fairly. Through real-world examples and case studies, we will identify common pitfalls and provide practical steps to help councils minimise risk, improve workplace relationships and manage employment matters with confidence.

Whether your council employs one member of staff or a larger team, this session will help ensure you have the knowledge and awareness needed to avoid costly HR mistakes before they occur.

Table 3

Highways: From Policy to Pavement - Sharon Fox, Highways Customer Communications Officer

Potholes, parking, speeding, footpaths, road safety, maintenance and public rights of way are among the issues residents raise most frequently with their councillors. But who is responsible for what, and how can councils effectively influence decisions on local highways matters? This practical and engaging session will demystify the highways system, helping council understand how highways authorities operate, where decisions are made, and how local councils can work effectively with county and unitary authorities to achieve positive outcomes for their communities.

From policy and funding to maintenance and infrastructure projects, we will explore the processes behind highways management and provide practical advice on responding to residents' concerns, advocating for local priorities and navigating the highways landscape with confidence.

Whether you are dealing with a persistent pothole problem, road safety concerns or plans for future development, this session will help bridge the gap between policy and pavement.

Table 4

Event Management and Martyn's Law – Helen Thackeray, Events and Sports Ground Safety Manager, Hull City Council

From community celebrations and remembrance events to markets, festivals and public gatherings, councils play a key role in organising safe and successful events. But are you confident that your event planning processes meet current expectations and emerging legal requirements?

This informative session will provide practical guidance on effective event management, including risk assessments, safety planning, roles and responsibilities, and working with partners and contractors.

We will also provide an update on Martyn's Law (the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act), exploring what the legislation means for councils, event organisers and community venues. Participants will gain an understanding of the requirements, timescales for implementation, and the practical steps councils can take now to prepare.

Whether your council hosts large-scale community events or smaller local gatherings, this session will help ensure you are planning with confidence, managing risks effectively and keeping your communities safe.

Table 5

The Effective Councillor: Confidence, Clarity and Impact - Lewis Anderson, Director - Lewis Anderson Enterprises Ltd

This session is focused on supporting councillors to build confidence and effectiveness in their role. It would cover understanding what the councillor role looks like in practice, contributing effectively in meetings, making informed decisions, and working constructively with officers and fellow members. The emphasis is on helping councillors feel clearer in their role and more confident in how they contribute to council outcomes.

Table 6

Digitisation of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) - Lance Allan, Project Manager, Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments (SAAA)

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) process is changing. As the sector moves towards greater digitalisation, councils need to understand what these developments mean in practice and how to prepare for new ways of completing, submitting and managing annual accountability requirements.

This timely session will provide an overview of the digitisation of the AGAR process, exploring the benefits, challenges and practical implications for councils and clerks. We will examine what is changing, how digital systems may affect existing processes, and the steps councils can take now to ensure they are ready for future implementation. Participants will gain a clearer understanding of digital record keeping, governance considerations, internal controls and the importance of maintaining accurate financial and administrative records in an increasingly digital environment.

Whether you are responsible for preparing the AGAR or overseeing the council's governance arrangements, this session will help you understand the direction of travel and prepare confidently for the future of local council accountability.

Table 7

How your area can help contribute to nature's recovery across Yorkshire – Jon Parkes-Withers, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

Nature recovery is one of the most important challenges facing our communities, but local councils are uniquely placed to make a positive impact. From creating wildlife-friendly spaces and protecting habitats to influencing local decision-making and engaging residents, every council can play a role in supporting nature's recovery. This inspiring and practical session will explore how local councils can contribute to nature recovery across Yorkshire and support wider environmental ambitions within their communities. Participants will learn about current initiatives, opportunities for partnership working, and simple, achievable actions that can enhance biodiversity and create greener, healthier places for people and wildlife.

We will examine the role of councils in supporting Local Nature Recovery Strategies, managing green spaces, influencing development, and encouraging community involvement in environmental projects.

The session will also showcase examples of successful local initiatives and provide ideas that can be adapted to councils of all sizes.

Whether your council is already leading environmental projects or looking for ways to get started, this session will provide practical inspiration and guidance on how your area can contribute to a more nature-rich Yorkshire.

Table 8

Measuring Council Success and Communicating its Role to Residents – , CEO at Civic.ly

How do you know if your council is succeeding? Unlike businesses, which are judged by sales figures, profits, customer reviews and public reputation, councils often find it more difficult to measure and communicate their impact.

This engaging and interactive session will explore the fundamental question: **What is a council here to achieve?** From there, we will identify meaningful ways to measure success, demonstrate value for money, and show residents the difference their council is making to the community. Through facilitated discussion and practical examples, participants will consider how to define clear outcomes, develop effective measures of success, and communicate achievements in a way that builds public understanding, trust and engagement.

Table 9

The Modern Council: Digital Working for Clerks and Councillors – Steve Walker, Head of Local Government Services

This informal talking table explores how councils can get more from the tools and technology they already have without big budgets or technical expertise.

Steve Walker and Tina Cunnell will share practical insights on modern digital working practices for clerks and councillors, covering topics such as:

- Managing meetings, agendas, and minutes more efficiently
- Communicating effectively with residents and members
- Getting the most from Microsoft 365 and everyday digital tools
- Staying organised and reducing administrative burden

The session is conversation-led and jargon-free. Whether your council is just starting its digital journey or looking to sharpen existing practices, come along to share ideas, ask questions, and pick up tips you can use straight away.

The day is planned to finish at approximately 4.00pm. All delegates will be provided with any handouts from the speakers on the day or emailed after the training day.

As well as the Sponsors we have additional Exhibitors at the event in attendance, that you will be able to speak to throughout the day - these are: Scribe, Unity Trust Bank, Council HR & Governance Support, Eibe Play Ltd, Worknest and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust.

