



Local Government Finance for Elected Members

All you need to know about finance, but haven't dared to ask...

No maths in the course! Don't bring your calculator!

Rachel Eden, APSE Associate

Jo Harding, APSE Associate

Local Government Finance for Elected Members

Are you a councillor who is responsible for a budget or who needs to understand how your council's money is managed? Do you have to read financial reports, question, and scrutinise spending decisions, or explain budgets to local residents?

Local government finance can be a complex and specialist area. Councillors work alongside qualified and skilled officers to support decision making and plan for the short, medium, and long-term success of both council services and the local economy. As an effective Councillor you need a basic grasp of how council budgets work, where the money comes from, how money is spent and what the risks are. Understanding the finances helps you scrutinise reports and business cases confidently; make informed decisions about spending and investment; spot risks early; and explain financial choices clearly to your community

This course has been designed in response to issues raised by elected members and is delivered by experienced local councillors with a track record in navigating complex finance, from a member perspective, and communicating it without jargon!

Who should attend?

This course is suitable for ALL elected members, not just those with financial responsibilities. Equally appropriate if you are newly elected, or a seasoned portfolio holder, member of cabinet, scrutiny or a committee, or a ward councillor interested in the council's finance.

Learning Outcomes:

This course will enable you to:

1. Develop confidence in interpreting and using the language of local government finance.
2. Create a narrative to explain the constraints and choices which drive financial decision-making with residents, officers, other councillors.
3. Appreciate the financial roles and legal duties held by both officers and councillors.
4. Understand where local government money comes from, how this is categorised and where public money goes.
5. Appraise financial risk and control (checks and balances) within the political life cycle.
6. Recognize the different time horizons for financial planning (to avoid upstreaming and more costly futures).
7. Assess performance indicators and how they support the economy, the council's efficiency and effective outcomes for residents.

Agenda

Join 15 minutes before the start for Registration and Tech Check

	Welcome and introductions
Unit 1	Local Government Finance Terminology, sector challenges and legal implications.
Unit 2	Money In and Money Out Revenue, capital and audit.
Unit 3	Treasury Management Reserves, interest, risks and rewards.
Unit 4	Risk and Scrutiny Due diligence to true cost.
	Plenary

Trainer Profile

Rachel Eden

Rachel is an experienced trainer and qualified accountant with specialisms in communications and financial management. Rachel is a Member of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants. Before moving into training Rachel practised as a management accountant working for a large software company and now runs a boutique accountancy practice alongside her training work. Rachel has also served as an elected member on Reading Borough Council since 2010 and has run for parliament twice.

Joanne Harding

Joanne is a senior consultant and trainer with over 25 years' experience across local government, the NHS, and the voluntary sector. She works with organisations to improve services, strengthen partnerships and deliver better outcomes for communities. Trusted for her ability to navigate complex systems, build strong relationships and bring people together around shared goal, she combines strategic insight with a practical, collaborative approach that supports lasting change. Joanne was elected to Trafford Council in 2011.

In-house packages – tailored training to meet your needs.

Any of our courses can be customised to meet the needs of your team, service or authority. The package includes:

- A pre-course consultation so we can tailor the course to meet your needs.
- Trainee Needs Analysis.
- Customisation of the slide pack.
- Delivery of the course on a mutually convenient date and time to meet your authority's needs and working patterns.
- Analysis of trainee feedback, which we share with you.
- Trainer feedback, if required.
- Post-course materials on password-protected hidden webpage.

If delivered online, the course is suitable for up to 15 participants and over two half-days or one full day, via Microsoft Teams

If delivered onsite, it is suitable for up to 20 participants. Trainer travel, subsistence and accommodation is charged at cost.

About APSE Training

APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence) is a not-for-profit local government think tank, working with over 300 councils throughout the UK, promoting excellence in public services.

APSE is the foremost specialist in local authority front line services, hosting a network for front line service providers in areas such as waste and refuse collection, parks and environmental services, leisure, school meals, cleaning, housing, and building maintenance.

APSE Training aims to provide inspiring and impactful lifelong learning and development opportunities, nurturing talent and enabling growth. A broad range of courses are available via the APSE website and as bespoke in-house courses.

APSE Training is compliant with APSE's Quality Assurance processes under ISO 9001, ISO 14001, ISO 27001 and GDPR. We are also a Platinum Carbon Literate Organisation, which demonstrates our commitment to raising awareness of the climate crisis.



The team is ready to help.

Please direct enquiries to: training@apse.org.uk | 0161 772 1810

APSE Head of Training: [Fiona Sutton-Wilson](#)

Training Co-ordinator: [Helen Reed](#)

Business Support Assistant (Finance): [Daniel Lee](#)



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