

Meeting of:	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	8 FEBRUARY 2024
Report Title:	MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
Responsible Officer:	RACHEL KEEPINS DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules
Executive Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is the role of the Democratic Services Committee to develop a Member support and development strategy and ensure Members have access to a reasonable level of training and development and sufficient budget to do so. • This report provides an update on the Member Development Programme since June 2023 and sets out the process for informing and planning the future programme including Member Performance and Development Reviews. • Members are also asked to put forward suggestions for inclusion in the programme and prioritise accordingly.

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- a) Provide the Committee with an update on the delivery of the Council's Member Training and Development Programme and related activities;
- b) Request the Committee to identify any further topics for inclusion in the Member Development Programme.

2. Background

- 2.1 Following the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, local authorities were directed to place more emphasis on Member Development. Members are encouraged to identify their own development needs and participate fully in learning and development activities.
- 2.2 Under the Council's Constitution, part of the role description of a Member on the Democratic Services Committee is:
- developing the Authority's member support and development strategy;
 - ensuring that members have access to a reasonable level of training and development as described in the member development strategy and the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development;
 - ensuring that the budget for member development is sufficient;
 - ensuring that members have access to personal development planning and annual personal development reviews.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 **Appendix A** details the training and development sessions that have taken place as part of the Member Development Programme since last reported to the Democratic Services Committee on 8 June 2023.
- 3.2 The record of attendance for these sessions is also attached at **Appendix B**.
- 3.3 Training requests have been regularly forthcoming from both Members and Officers which has been extremely welcomed and encouraged as it enables the programme to be specifically targeted to needs. Examples of this include Data training from Data Cymru, to assist Scrutiny Members in examining performance data, 'Primary Care – Access Standards' was provided at the request of the Deputy Leader to provide valuable information on Primary Care to all Members. There have also been Member safety related sessions on 'Cyber Ninjas' from Welsh Government, helping Members to stay safe online as well as 'Equality and Unconscious Bias' training has been provided in response to the Council's commitment in its Strategic Equality Plan.

Development Control Committee Training Sessions

- 3.4 The following Development Control Committee training sessions have also been provided since June 2023:
- 14th June 2023 - Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water and their involvement in the Planning Process
 - 27th July 2023 - Planning Aid Wales Network Event – Enforcement
 - 6th September 2023 - LDP Update and 20 Minute Neighbourhood
 - 11th January 2024 – Appeals – Statistics and Key Decisions from 2022/2023

Council Briefings

- 3.5 The following Local Authority partners have also attended Full Council meetings to provide update briefings to all Members on the services they deliver:
- 21 June 2023 – South Wales Police
 - 18 October 2023 – Awen Cultural Trust
 - 17 January 2024 – South Wales Fire & Rescue Service

Future Member Development and Member Personal Development Reviews

- 3.6 Attached at **Appendix C** is a schedule for continued training over the next few months. 'Personal Safety' and 'Anti-Racism' are just some examples of sessions specifically requested by Members with and Climate Change related training being championed by Officers to assist Members in their role in taking this agenda forward.
- 3.7 At a recent Governance and Audit (G&A) Committee meeting held on 9 November 2023, during consideration of a monitoring report on Corporate Complaints, Members highlighted that they sometimes experienced issues on this subject when engaging their local constituents. It was therefore proposed that Councillors could possibly benefit from additional guidance or training on handling potentially challenging situations involving constituents in respect of the complaints process. This was subsequently added to the G&A Committee's action record that was considered by the Committee in its meeting on 25 January 2024 and is therefore being put to this Committee for further exploration with the view to including the subject in the future Member Development Programme.

E-Learning

- 3.8 In addition to Member Development sessions, Members are also asked to undertake several e-learning modules via the online Learning and Development website. These e-learning courses have been devised by the Council for all staff and Members to support their learning and development needs and gives Members the opportunity to undertake this learning remotely at a convenient time at their own pace.
- 3.9 The following mandatory courses below have been previously provided:
- Corporate Induction
 - UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
 - Display Screen Equipment
 - Fire Safety Awareness
 - ICT Code of Conduct
 - Safeguarding Children and Adults
 - Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
- 3.10 So far 28 Members have accessed the Learning and Development site and commenced their e-learning modules but only 10 Members have completed the initial seven mandatory ones as listed above.

3.11 Since last reported, two more mandatory e-learning modules have been added, these are:

- Introduction to Equality and Diversity; and
- Welsh Language Awareness.

3.12 It is worth noting that following an internal Elected Members Audit undertaken in 2022/23, one of the recommendations from the report which was subsequently reported to the Governance and Audit Committee stated:

‘All elected Members are encouraged and reminded to complete their Code of conduct and mandatory e-learning modules training.’

3.13 Members are therefore encouraged to re-visit the e-learning website and undertake these additional modules, as well as those listed at paragraph 3.9, if not yet completed.

Learning and Development Website

3.14 All Members have been provided with the link to the Learning and Development website with instructions of how to access the e-learning training. The review of the site is unfortunately on hold and whilst it is hoped that this can be developed in the near future, this will depend on resources available.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations Implications and Connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there is no significant or unacceptable impact upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no Climate Change implications as a result of this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no Safeguarding or Corporate Parent implications as a result of this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 Elected Member learning and development is resourced from the allocated Member Development budget. Reasonable allocation will be made as part of the annual budget round and applied with regard to the corporate needs of the Authority. The Head of Democratic Services will monitor appropriate spend on the budget. In-house training will be provided by Directorates if the topic relates to their service areas. The costs for this type of event will be met from within Directorate budgets and not from the Member Development budget.

9. Recommendations

9.1 The Committee is recommended to:

- a) Note the report and its appendices; and
- b) Identify any additional Member development topics or briefings for inclusion in the Member Development Programme and prioritise them accordingly.

Background documents

None