Appendix 1

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

ELECTED MEMBER
LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY

2012-2017

Contents

Introduction

Elected Members today face increasing challenges. Under the modernisation agenda, there are heightened expectations on them to undertake a diversity of roles ranging from that of community leader to assuming additional responsibilities within their Council. Throughout Wales, Authorities are striving to provide the best possible support for their Members to enable them to meet these challenges. This takes the form of skills and knowledge development, support facilities, and support services.

Increasing attention has been given to Elected Member Development. The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 directs that local authorities place more emphasis on Member Development. This supports the aims of the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development which was created to give structure and impetus to the growing body of support services for Elected Members within Welsh Local Government. The Charter has been developed collaboratively by the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), Members and Member Support Officers. It aims to provide a broad framework for local planning, self assessment, action and review. This can be enhanced by working together with relevant networks by comparison with other Authorities and in sharing good and innovative practice.

Bridgend County Borough Council currently holds entry level Charter Status. The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Charter will provide focus and guidance for future work. The needs of Members in this Authority are of paramount importance.

The Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy sets out the development priorities for the induction of newly Elected Members, the identification of their development needs and the subsequent delivery of development activities.

The strategy will assist in equipping all Members with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet future challenges.

Expectations of the Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy

Elected Members are an integral part of ensuring that the strategic aims and objectives of the Council are met and that high quality cost effective services are delivered to the residents of the County Borough of Bridgend.
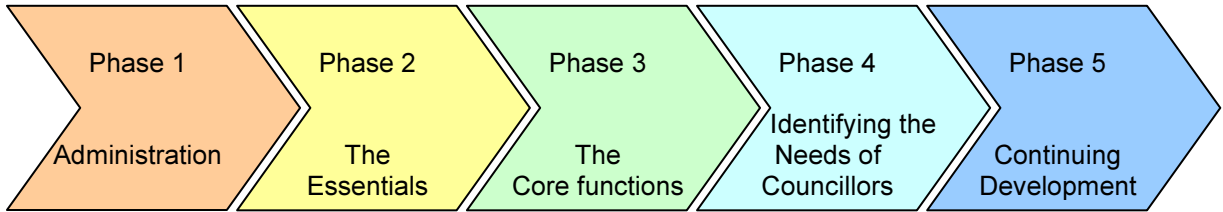
The Council is working to support the development of all of its Elected Members and to ensure that they are able meet the demands of their roles. Bridgend County Borough Council is therefore committed to ensuring that:

- There is a planned and structured approach to Elected Member learning and development.

- Elected Members have access to appropriate learning and development activities to enable them to acquire the knowledge and skills required to be an effective Elected Member.

- Learning and development, wherever possible, is linked to the roles of Elected Members.

- Access to learning and development activities is equitable.

- Members are encouraged to identify their own development needs and participate fully in learning and development activities.

- All Members will have access to a Personal Development Review (PDR) process that identifies learning and development needs with any additional support that may be required.

- All Members will have the opportunity to compile a Personal Development Portfolio (PDP) which details their learning and development activities and records their achievements

- The Member Development Programme will be produced and updated on a quarterly basis in order to support the Council's strategic plans, the roles and functions of Members and key changes affecting the Council's priorities.

- Member learning and development activity is adequately resourced within available budgets.

- It is the intention of BCBC to gain the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) Charter for Member Support and Development.
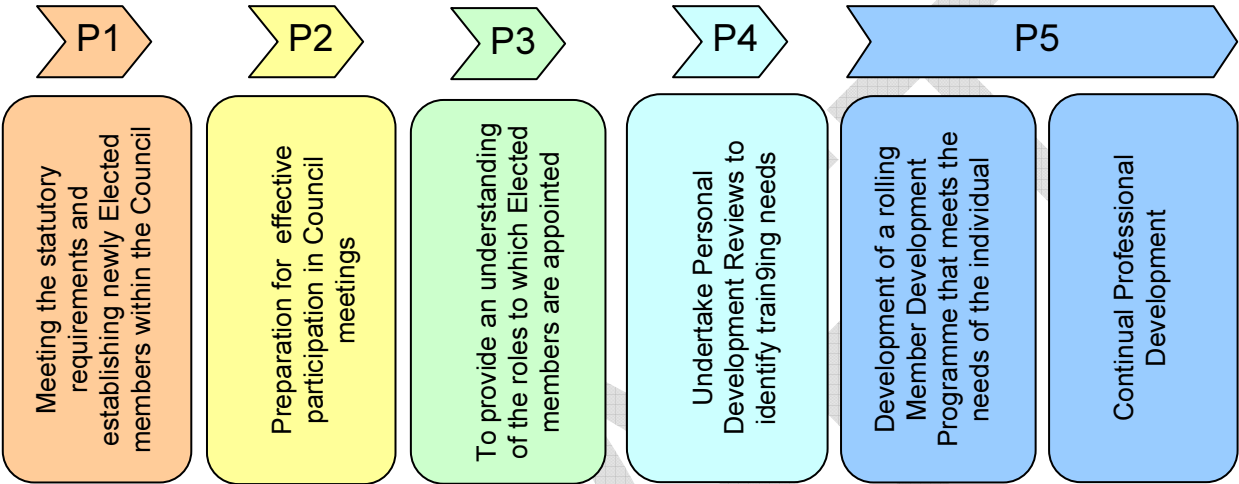

A Phased Approach

A systematic induction programme will be provided for all newly Elected Members. The initial induction and subsequent Member Development Programme will be delivered as part of the following phased approach:
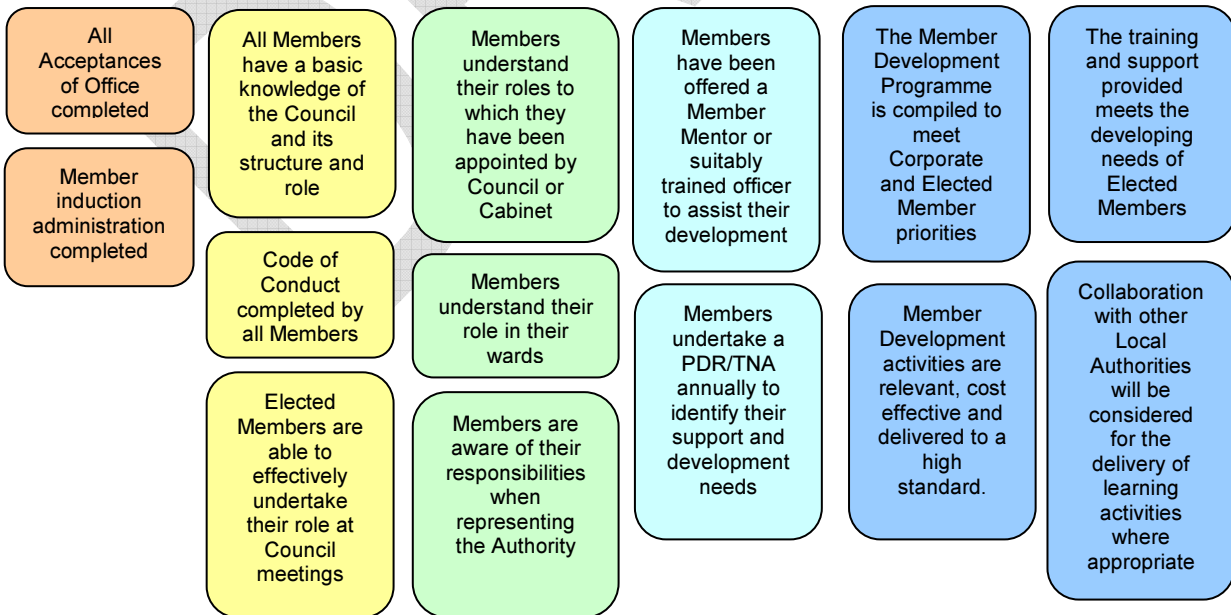
MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5
Administration	The Essentials	The Core functions	Identifying the Needs of Councillors	Continuing Development

Core Learning

Individual Learning

P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	
Meeting the statutory requirements and establishing newly Elected members within the Council	Preparation for effective participation in Council meetings	To provide an understanding of the roles to which Elected members are appointed	Undertake Personal Development Reviews to identify train9ing needs	Development of a rolling Member Development Programme that meets the needs of the individual	Continual Professional Development

Generic

Bespoke

Outcomes

All Acceptances of Office completed	All Members have a basic knowledge of the Council and its structure and role	Members understand their roles to which they have been appointed by Council or Cabinet	Members have been offered a Member Mentor or suitably trained officer to assist their development	The Member Development Programme is compiled to meet Corporate and Elected Member priorities	The training and support provided meets the developing needs of Elected Members
Member induction administration completed	Code of Conduct completed by all Members	Members understand their role in their wards	Members undertake a PDR/TNA annually to identify their support and development needs	Member Development activities are relevant, cost effective and delivered to a high standard.	Collaboration with other Local Authorities will be considered for the delivery of learning activities where appropriate
	Elected Members are able to effectively undertake their role at Council meetings	Members are aware of their responsibilities when representing the Authority			

Evaluation to ensure that the required outcomes are achieved

Roles and Responsibilities for Elected Member Learning and Development

Head of Democratic Services

The role of the Head of Democratic Services is to produce and monitor the Member Development Programme, to collate any identified learning and development needs, and to subsequently use these to inform and plan the on-going Member Development Programme.

Democratic Services Committee

The Democratic Services Committee will provide direction to the Head of Democratic Services in respect of the development and support requirements of Elected Members. This will include the priorities for learning and development and appropriate use of the Member Development budget.

Political Leaders

The role of political leaders from all groups is to pledge commitment to learning and development for Elected Members and to actively support and promote the Member Learning and Development Strategy.

Directorates and Departments

Directorates and Departments are responsible for identifying and delivering service specific learning and development in co-ordination with the Head of Democratic Services and the Democratic Services Committee

Individual Members

Individual Members are responsible for:

- identifying their own development needs;
- seeking opportunities to improve their effectiveness and increase their potential;
- attending arranged learning and development activities;
- sharing their knowledge and skills with their peers;
- reviewing their learning and development activities;
- applying the knowledge and skills developed through the activities; and for
- completing their Personal Development Reviews and Personal Development Portfolio.

Co-ordination

The day-to-day co-ordination of learning and development activities will be the responsibility of the Head of Democratic Services and the Democratic Services Team in liaison with Organisational Development.

Details of each phase of the strategy are as follows:

Phase 1 - Administration

To establish the newly Elected Members within the Council and will include:

- Fulfilling their statutory requirements regarding their Acceptance of Office and the declaration of Personal Interests,
- Creation of ICT accounts and identifying ICT equipment requirements
- The provision of personal information in order to set up remuneration payments, web pages and enable officers to carry out other necessary administrative functions.
- A briefing of the facilities available to Elected Members within the Authority
- Introduction to the Corporate Communications team and initial advice for dealing with the media
- An overview of Democratic Services to establish points of contact/liaison and support provided.
- The taking of official photographs for use on the BCBC website and ID cards

Phase 2 – The Essentials

To provide Elected Members with sufficient knowledge to prepare them to undertake their initial role in the support of Council business. This phase may include briefings on the following topics from key officers:

The Chief Executive:

- Overview of the Council its services and structures
- Achievements and challenges for the Authority and services
- The Members role in the delivery of the vision for "working together to improve lives"

The Monitoring Officer:
- Code of Conduct

Head of Democratic Services

- Roles of and appointment to committees
- Meeting procedures including the council chamber voting system

Phase 3 – The Core Functions

To provide Elected Members with the knowledge and skills to enable them to undertake their core functions as Elected Members. It is intended to provide a sound basis for decision making which is required by councillors to carry out their role effectively.

- Audit Committee
- Development Control Committee
- Overview and Scrutiny Committees
- Democratic Services Committee
- Licensing Committee

- Appeals Panel
- Delegated Powers
- Chairing & Questioning Skills
- Referrals
- Ward Work

Phase 4 – Identifying the Needs of Individual Councillors

With the possibility of a large number of new Elected Members after an election, it will be necessary to undertake a Personal Development Review (PDR) processes with either an Elected Member peer or with assistance from suitably trained officers as soon as possible. This will be carried out in conjunction with Member Mentoring and the use of the Personal Development Portfolio (PDP) process

Identification of learning and development needs

Learning and development needs will be identified at a number of levels.

As an individual

- Newly Elected Members will have an opportunity to discuss their learning and development needs with a suitable mentor as part of their induction.
- As part of the PDR process where learning and development needs can be identified.

Role Specific

- Role descriptions will be used as an aid to identify development needs particularly during the PDR process.

- Members whose roles change will be required to review their learning and development needs.

- The identification of learning and development needs at political group level be achieved by consultation with the Head of Democratic Services and through the feedback from the Democratic Services Committee.

Corporate and Constitutional

- Member Development will be linked to corporate and constitutional priorities by the Head of Democratic Services in liaison with the Chief Officers, Heads of Service and the Democratic Services Committee.

Regional and National Initiatives

- Requests are often received from regional bodies or national organisations to provide development opportunities on key issues. These events will be integrated by the Head of Democratic Services into the Member Development Programme but may be in addition to the usual monthly activities.

<u>Mentoring</u>

The formal mentoring of Elected Members by experienced Members is strongly recommended and will be offered to all newly Elected Members. This will enable the mentee to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding and behaviours required for the Elected Member role. This is not a prescriptive or directive relationship but one which allows the mentee to find their own way, guided by the mentor.

Guidance for Member mentors has been developed by the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA). Some Member mentors have been identified and initial training has been provided by the WLGA.

Further recruitment of Member mentors will be undertaken to ensure that all Members are able to receive the appropriate level of support for their personal development. Workshops based on the WLGA guidance will be available for those identified to undertake a mentoring role.

Returning Members that do not require mentoring will be provided with the opportunity to discuss their personal development as part of the PDR process with an Elected Member peer or a suitably trained officer. These officers/peers will be able to assist Members with identifying their training needs, arranging attendance at events and updating their PDPs and undertaking PDRs.

Phase 5 – Continuing Development

To provide Members with knowledge and skills related to:

- leading the community,
- working with external partners
- developing those individual and specialist requirements identified within the PDR process and
- learning and development identified by the Democratic Services Committee.

Member Development Activity Survey

Elected Members will be surveyed shortly after their election to determine the number of topics, frequency and timings of development events that will be held each month. This survey will be repeated at the mid-point of a term of office or when requested to do so by the Democratic Services Committee.

The survey carried out in 2012 identified that:

- Members be provided with one Member development topic each month.
- the monthly topic will be delivered on two occasions - the second occasion being a repeat of the first.
- one of the sessions will be held on a Monday or Tuesday with the other session being held on a Wednesday or Thursday
- one of the monthly development sessions will start at 10.00 am with the other having a starting time rotating between 2.00 pm and 4.00 pm
- that the pre-council briefings be held at 2.00pm and be approximately 45 minutes duration.

These outcomes were approved by the Democratic Services Committee and were to be used when planning the Member Development Programme

Prioritisation of Member Development activities

To manage and prioritise Member Development activities, all requests to provide training opportunities for Elected Members will include the following key information to assist when prioritising the delivery of Member Development events:

- The subject of the learning activity
- A brief outline description of the subject
- The requirement/justification to undertake this learning? i.e. is there a statutory requirement, is it part of an on-going initiative.
- Who forms the target audience? i.e. All Members, Scrutiny Members etc.
- What are the expected/desired learning outcome/objectives?
- Which officers/organisations will be delivering/facilitating this event?
- What is the anticipated duration of the session
- What type of training activity is suggested i.e. 1 hour presentation with questions, 45 minute briefing, 2 hour interactive workshop etc.
- How will this activity be evaluated to show that the anticipated benefits have been achieved

The Head of Democratic Services will evaluate all requests and recommend to the Democratic Services Committee how these requests should be prioritised in the Member Development Programme

Member Development Programme

It will be the responsibility of the Head of Democratic Services to prepare the Member Development Programme in line with the priorities determined by the Democratic Services Committee. This will be a rolling programme that will confirm the Member Development events for the following three months with subsequent topics for further development activities being identified but not confirmed. This will allow the programme to be flexible and adapt to the changing needs and priorities of Elected Members and the Authority.

The programme may also identify topics and events that will be suitable for representatives from the Town & Community Councils to also attend.

Methods of learning and development

A flexible approach to the delivery of learning and development opportunities will be adopted to meet the identified needs of individuals and groups. A variety of methods may be used to deliver these opportunities and could include: seminars, workshops, e-learning and briefing sessions. Where appropriate, shared Member and officer development activities will be encouraged.

Opportunities may arise for regional development activities to be undertaken. This will include topics of common interest on a regional or national basis. These events may reduce costs and enhance outcomes because of the diversity of knowledge and experience of attendees, whilst also providing an opportunity for cross-council communication and collaboration.

Access to learning and development opportunities

All Elected Members will have:

- the opportunity to benefit from learning and development opportunities, regardless of ability, race, colour, national ethic or social origin, gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, political or other personal beliefs.

- equal access to information relating to learning and development opportunities.

- equal access to participation in learning and development opportunities, taking into account the needs of their roles and responsibilities throughout their term of office with Authority, and their personal learning needs.

Attendance at Member Development Events

The Member Development Programme will be approved by the Democratic Services Committee and published on the Member Zone and in the Bridgemembers magazine. Announcements will also be made at Council meetings to advise Members of forthcoming Member Development events

Member Development events will be placed in individual Elected Members electronic calendars. Members will be requested to select the appropriate event to attend by accepting or declining the appointment. It is vital that these responses are accurate as the facilitators of the events are provided with the anticipated attendance numbers to tailor their delivery of the session.

At each session the attendance will be recorded and circulated to Organisational Development for recording on Trent.

A summary of attendance at training events will be compiled and circulated to Group Leaders on a regular basis in order that they can promote and encourage the attendance at Member Development activities to their Group.

The Learning Zone learning and development activities

The Learning Zone is the online portal for Member Development activities, where suitable development opportunities are provided specifically for them. If Elected Members wish to attend or undertake any of these learning activities they are to contact the Head of Democratic Services. Assistance can be provided by the Member Mentors, the Democratic Services Team and the Organisational Development Team to enable Members to register for learning activities.

Resources

Elected Member learning and development, will be 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 Democratic Services Committee 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

Directorates will also be responsible for funding designated Elected Members to attend relevant service area conferences and events. The Democratic Services Team will co-ordinate the funding for travelling and out of county subsistence allowances.

Certification

Certificates of attendance will be made available to all Elected Members who attend learning & development events. These can be used to demonstrate on-going development within the context of the Personal Development Portfolio and form the basis for discussion with Member Mentors throughout the period of office.

Learning and development records

It is the responsibility of the Organisational Development Team to maintain Member learning and development records. This will include information regarding the development activities that have been identified, the booking of events, attendance at learning opportunities and the evaluation of individual training events that have been undertaken.

The Organisational Development Team is to be notified of any other training that is undertaken by relevant departments. It is expected that all departments involved in providing Member Development events also provide the relevant training records to the Organisational Development Team.

These records can also be used to provide information for evaluation purposes and for the completion of Members Annual Reports which have been introduced as part of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

Potential Candidate Briefings

In order to promote local democracy and the understanding of the role of a councillor briefings for potential candidates will be held prior to Local Government elections. This event will inform those members of the public planning to stand for election of the:

- requirements they must meet in order to stand for election,
- election process
- roles and responsibilities they will be expected to undertake as a councillor
- skills, knowledge and commitment necessary to become an effective councillor
- structure and remit of the Council

Evaluation

It is the responsibility of the Head of Democratic Services to ensure that the evaluation of planned Member development events is carried out.

Evaluation of Individual Events:

All training providers are required to incorporate an evaluation of the event into their learning session and Members will be asked to complete a learning and development evaluation form.

Members are recommended to complete learning logs as part of their Personal Development Portfolio, this will help them to assess the impact of any development on their role and function.

Evaluation forms will be analysed and the feedback collated into a report which will be presented to the Democratic Services Committee on a regular basis. This will enable the Democratic Services Committee to evaluate the effectiveness of the Member Development Programme and ensure that the identified outcomes are achieved.

Evaluation of Phases of the Member Development Strategy

It is appropriate that an independent assessment of the phases or elements of the Member Learning & Development Strategy is undertaken. It has been agreed that the WLGA will assist in this process and facilitate focus groups with Elected Members to help determine the effectiveness of the strategy.

Evaluation of Training Facilitators

To ensure that any learning and development activity provided to Elected Members is delivered to the highest standards and that the aims and objectives of the event are met, it is planned for an internal subject matter expert or the Head of Democratic Services to attend the event and evaluate the provider/facilitator. This will be essential for events delivered by externally providers to ensure that value for money has been achieved and that effective training has been provided which meets the required outcomes.

Review of the Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy

To ensure that the Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy remains an effective tool for the development of Elected Members it will be necessary to plan a review the strategy. It is anticipated that the strategy will be reviewed during 2014 or at the request of the Democratic Services Committee and in response to relevant changes to legislation or to the Authority.