

Meeting of:	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	13 JUNE 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 February 2024 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 8th February 2024.

3.2 Training requests continue to be 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 'Personal Safety for Members' and 'Anti Racism' training, both of which have been requested by Members and also 'Local Government Finance' following the 2023-24 Budget consultation process.

Development Control Committee Training Sessions

3.3 The following Development Control Committee training sessions have been provided since the last update to the Committee:

- 22nd February 2024 - Green Infrastructure Statements
- 6th March 2024 - Local Development Plan (training extended to all members)
- 15th May 2024 - Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust

Council Briefings

3.4 The following Local Authority partners have also attended Full Council meetings to provide update briefings to all Members on the services they deliver:

- 17th April 2024 – Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations

Future Member Development and Member Personal Development Reviews

3.5 Attached at **Appendix B** is a schedule for continued training over the next few months. The Council's Complaints Procedure and Department for Work and Pensions briefing are examples of training requested for Members by the

Governance and Audit Committee. 'Climate Change', 'The New Estyn Inspection Framework' and 'Safeguarding' training have been requested by officers to update Members on changes and assist them in their various roles and responsibilities.

E-Learning

- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 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
 - New - Introduction to Equality and Diversity; and
 - New - Welsh Language Awareness.
- 3.8 At the time of drafting this report, 35 Members have accessed the Learning and Development site and commenced their e-learning modules but only 8 Members have completed all nine mandatory modules with 14 having completed the initial seven as listed above.
- 3.9 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.'

- 3.10 Members are therefore encouraged to re-visit the e-learning website and undertake these additional modules if not yet completed.

Learning and Development Website

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

Member Development Survey

- 3.12 Following the local government elections in May 2022, a survey was undertaken to determine the timings of Member Development activities. This is soon to be

repeated, however it is planned that this survey will ask for more detail from Members on their views on past and future training. Suggested areas for consideration include:

- The frequency of training sessions;
- Preferred methods and format for training;
- Quality of training information provided;
- Satisfaction over topic choices.

3.13 The survey will also be used as an opportunity to ask all Members for suggested topics for future training and could also seek their views on how well-informed they feel over a list of prescribed subjects which might help identify key areas where further development is required.

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 appendices;
- b) Identify any additional Member development topics or briefings for inclusion in the Member Development Programme and prioritise them accordingly; and
- c) Identify any further aspects for inclusion in the Member Development Survey.

Background documents

None