

<b>Meeting of:</b>	<b>CABINET COMMITTEE EQUALITIES AND EMPLOYEE RELATIONS</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>3 SEPTEMBER 2025</b>
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>LEARNING &amp; DEVELOPMENT</b>
<b>Report Owner / Corporate Director:</b>	<b>CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL &amp; REGULATORY SERVICES, HR &amp; CORPORATE POLICY</b>
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>PAUL MILES, GROUP MANAGER – HUMAN RESOURCES &amp; ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>
<b>Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:</b>	<b>There is no impact on the policy framework or procedure rules.</b>
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	<b>To provide on annual report on apprentice/graduate schemes, organisational development and staff training.</b>

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide information of the Council's grow your own schemes and staff training during 2024/2025.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The development of the workforce is essential to enhance the skills and knowledge of our employees. The use of grow your own schemes has supported the opportunity to develop staff in areas of recruitment challenges.

## **3 Current situation / proposal**

- 3.1 Prioritising learning and development, including continuous professional development, demonstrates a commitment to professional growth and retention, while addressing skills gaps and fostering innovation across the Council.

### **3.2 Apprenticeships & Graduates**

- 3.2.1 Apprenticeships combine practical training in a job with study, working alongside experienced staff and gaining job specific skills. The opportunity to gain a qualification whilst earning a salary has proved an attractive recruitment tool, noting that the rate of pay is determined through the job evaluation scheme and not the lower national apprenticeship rates.

3.2.2 Apprenticeships are open to anyone aged 16 or over (no upper age limit), with four different types or levels available:

- Foundation Apprenticeships (Level 2)
- Apprenticeships (Level 3)
- Higher Apprenticeships (Level 4 and 5)
- Degree Apprenticeships (Level 6 and 7)

3.2.3 Since 2013 the Council has appointed 170 apprentices, with 148 completing their qualification and an overall retention rate of 68% of these remaining employed.

3.2.4 During April 2024 – to March 2025 there were 22 apprenticeships in place.

3.2.5 The introduction of an in-house graduate scheme began in 2021. There have been 8 graduate posts and 1 remains in post at 31 March 2025.

### 3.3 **Workshops**

3.3.1 Training is crucial for fostering a skilled and adaptable workforce, ensuring high-quality public service delivery. Regular training is vital in addressing the constant changes in legislation, finances and staffing within the Council, equipping employees with up-to-date knowledge and skills to meet the demands of their roles and the needs of the community.

3.3.2 Organised by the Corporate Learning & Development Team, between April 2024 to March 2025 there were 19 workshops with a total of 129 delegates attending across a range of topics:

- Microsoft Excel Foundation
- Microsoft Excel Intermediate
- Welsh Language Meet and Greet
- Digital Skills for Business Level 1
- Ask and Act
- Mental Health Awareness
- Building Resilience
- Mindfulness

### 3.4 **E-Learning**

3.4.1 E-Learning has become an essential tool for ensuring that our employees are equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge, and understanding to carry out their duties effectively and in compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.

3.4.2 With the increasing complexity of public services, all local authorities face the challenge of keeping staff up to date with the latest policies, procedures, and technological advancements. E-Learning offers a flexible, scalable, and cost-effective solution to allow employees to access training materials remotely and at their own pace.

3.4.3 Below is a breakdown of mandatory completions as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025:

<b>BCBC</b>	<b>Completed</b>	
Display Screen Equipment (DSE)	4,067	68.26%
Fire Safety	5,110	85.77%
GDPR and Data Protection	4,847	81.35%
Introduction to Equality and Diversity	3,788	63.58%
ICT Code of Conduct	4,685	78.63%
Safeguarding Children and Adults	5,095	85.52%
Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)	4,514	75.76%
Welsh Language Awareness	3,721	62.45%

3.4.4 The updated mandatory E-Learning Modules are set out in **Appendix 1**.

### 3.5 **HR Briefings**

3.5.1 HR Briefings are delivered by Senior HR Professionals from the Human Resources and Organisational Development Service to employees and managers on a range of topics to give assist improve knowledge and performance. The topics covered include:

- Recruitment
- Health and Wellbeing
- Absence Management Welfare Meetings
- Local Government Pension Scheme

3.5.2 Managers are encouraged to view these briefings as a professional discussion where they can contribute, ask questions, take tips and advice away from other managers and can network with other managers from across the authority.

3.5.3 During the period April 2024 to March 2025 the HR Briefings were attended by 257 delegates.

### 3.6 **Funded Qualifications (Levy)**

3.6.1 The Council utilises the Apprenticeship Levy, a UK-wide tax on large employers, to fund apprenticeship training for new recruits, including apprenticeships, and to upskill our existing workforce.

3.6.2 The Welsh Government's apprenticeship program allocates funds, breaking the direct link between levy contributions and funds accessed by individual Councils. The Welsh Government focuses on aligning training with the needs of the Welsh economy, including addressing skills shortages in growth sectors like Construction, Engineering, and Financial Services, and developing higher-level skills at and above level 2.

3.6.3 The Learning and Development team collaborate with approved training providers to deliver programs tailored to our specific needs.

3.6.4 During 2024-2025 a total of 36 Post Entry Training applications were made of which all were approved.

#### **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. This is an information report, therefore it is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact assessment in the production of this report. 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 will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of the well-being goals as a result of this report.

#### **6 Climate Change and Nature Implications**

6.1 There are no climate change or nature implications arising from this report.

#### **7 Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications**

7.1 There are no safeguarding and corporate parent implications arising from this report.

#### **8 Financial Implications**

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report as it is an information report.

#### **9 Recommendation**

9.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet Committee Equalities and Employee Relations note the information contained in this report and within the Appendix.

#### **Background documents**

None

**Mandatory E-Learning Modules 2025/2026**

The mandatory E-Learning Modules are:

1. Corporate Induction
2. Display Screen Equipment - DSE
3. Fire Safety Awareness
4. GDPR and Data Protection
5. ICT Code of Conduct
6. Introduction to Equality and Diversity
7. Safeguarding Children and Adults
8. Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)
9. Welsh Language Awareness
10. Climate Change
11. Introduction to Health & Safety

Please note that the following 3 modules have refreshers so will need to be completed annually or every 3 years as set out below:

- Fire Safety – annually.
- Safeguarding Children and Adults – every 3 years
- Introduction to Health and Safety – every 3 years