

Meeting of:	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	25 JUNE 2026
Report Title:	MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE
Report Owner: Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member	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:	• 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 November 2025 and sets out the process for informing and planning the future programme. • The report also highlights the work of the Democratic Services Committee Member Development Working Group and their plan going forward. • Members are asked to put forward suggestions for inclusion in the ongoing development 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 20 November 2025.

3.2 Training requests continue to be regularly forthcoming from both Members and Officers which are always extremely welcomed and encouraged as it enables the programme to be specifically targeted to needs. Examples of this include a presentation and engagement session with Citizens Advice Bridgend, requested by Members, a briefing on the Regional Exploitation Strategy, requested by Officers, as well as requests from Scrutiny Committees, such as briefings on the Shared Prosperity Fund and another on Highways, which were opened up to, and benefited, all Members.

Development Control Committee Training Sessions

3.3 The following Development Control Committee training session has been provided since the last update to the Committee:

- 5 February 2026 – Education Supplementary Planning Guidance

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:

- 19 November 2025 – Mental Health Matters
- 14 January 2026 – Halo Leisure

Future Member Development

3.5 Attached at **Appendix B** is a schedule for continued training over the next few months and includes some external training as a result of recommendations from the Scrutiny Review undertaken earlier this year. It also includes a training/briefing session on the new South-East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) which could be a combined session with other Local Authorities involved in the CJC.

Member Briefings have also been requested by Scrutiny Members as well as the Corporate Management Team and there are ongoing sessions related to Member Personal Safety.

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 give 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 (Annual refresher)
 - ICT Code of Conduct
 - Safeguarding Children and Adults (3 yearly refresher)
 - Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
 - Introduction to Equality and Diversity
 - Welsh Language Awareness
 - Climate Change
 - Introduction to Health and Safety (3 yearly refresher)
- 3.8 At the time of drafting this report, 50 Members have accessed the Learning and Development site and commenced their e-learning modules but only 37 Members have completed all eleven mandatory modules. At the request of this Committee the details for all Members and their e-learning modules are provided at **Appendix C**.
- 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 any outstanding modules as well as any refresher training.

Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) Training

- 3.11 Over the last Electoral term the Council have been involved in the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) Leadership Programme which is the flagship leadership development support for Councillors in Wales. It also provides the WLGA with intelligence on the key issues facing local government. Feedback in 2025 from participants has focused on the need to build resilience within the local government leadership and the need to succession plan for developing new leaders. As a result of this, and the restricted places per Local Authority, the WLGA has tried to encourage a focus on Executive Members or potential future Executive Members.

Following its latest round in January 2026, nine of our current Members have attended this training and found it extremely beneficial.

Learning and Development Website

- 3.12 All Members have been provided with the link to the Learning and Development (L&D) website with instructions on how to access the e-learning training. Members can now also click directly onto the icon for the L&D page from their homepage when they open Microsoft Edge on their laptops which should make access much easier.
- 3.13 In addition to accessing e-learning modules, all recordings and associated power point presentations of hybrid or remote training have been uploaded to this site, available either as refresher training for Members or simply for those who may have been unable to make the session.

Member Development Strategy and Member Induction 2027

- 3.14 Part of the role of the Democratic Services Committee (DSC) is developing the Authority's member support and development strategy. The Welsh Local Government Association are already undertaking preparations for their training programme for 2027. It was therefore agreed at the Committee's last meeting to establish a Working Group to assist with preparations for Member Development ready for the upcoming local election in May 2027.
- 3.15 The Working Group have subsequently agreed the following plan for their work over the forthcoming months:

Date	Item	Invitees/Resources
June 5	Candidate Engagement Sessions	Officers from Communications & Elections teams Draft Candidate booklet Documentation from last candidate events Video
July 17	Training Methods, E-learning & Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) Online L&D webpages	Learning & Development Officers WLGA Induction Survey Report BCBC Democratic Services (DS) Survey report
Sept 17	Mentoring/ Performance Development Reviews	Current Performance Development Review Forms
Oct 1	Member Induction/Essential, Recommended and Optional training	Previous BCBC Member Induction programme 2022 and new Member Induction Programme 2027 WLGA Induction Survey Report BCBC DS Survey report

		WLGA proposed induction framework
Date TBC	Resources, Support and Budget Draft Member Development Strategy	ICT Officers

3.16 Further aspects raised by Members of the Working Group included whether to hold a Marketplace event as part of the induction, a possible separate intranet for Members as well as training suggestions such as data handling, Delegated Powers and Social Media. A suggestion has also been made to consider having a separate Cabinet Member Induction programme.

3.17 The outcomes of the Working Group, including a final draft of the Member Development Strategy and Member Induction Programme will be presented to the Committee at its next meeting in November for approval. All Members are however encouraged to share any views or thoughts on the Member Induction and Development Programmes before this time with their colleagues on the Working Group, in order that they can be considered as part of this work.

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 and Nature Implications

6.1 There are no climate change and nature 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;
- c) Note the work of the DSC Member Development Working Group.

Background documents

None