

Meeting of:	STANDARDS COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	7 OCTOBER 2026
Report Title:	LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS 2027
Report Owner: Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member	MONITORING OFFICER
Responsible Officer:	GROUP MANAGER LEGAL, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & EMERGENCY PLANNING
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.
Executive Summary:	To update the Committee on work being undertaken for the Local Government Elections in May 2027.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Members on the work being undertaken as the Authority approaches the election cycle to ensure high standards of conduct, transparency and political impartiality.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Standards Committee has a statutory role in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members. In the pre-election period, this includes reminding councillors of their obligations under the Members' Code of Conduct, particularly around respect, integrity, misuse of resources, confidentiality and bringing the office into disrepute.
- 2.2 The Committee will maintain active oversight of emerging conduct issues, public complaints, and the neutrality of Council communications as we move towards the formal pre-election period beginning in March 2027. Following the election, the Committee will continue to play a key role in member induction, ensuring that the Member Code of Conduct training and wider ethical governance expectations are embedded from the outset. Continued post-election monitoring will also help identify early trends and inform any necessary targeted support.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 The Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy has provided the framework for provision and delivery of Member Development for Elected Members from induction and throughout their term of office. The Strategy is coming towards the end of its effective life and in preparation for the 2027 Local Government Elections, and the subsequent induction of newly Elected Members, a desktop review of the Strategy is currently being undertaken to ensure that it is fit for purpose and updated to reflect a number of factors which have changed since the approval of the original Strategy. The revised Strategy will then be presented to the Democratic Services Committee for approval prior to endorsement by Council.
- 3.2 The Democratic Services Committee has previously determined that any Member Development Programme following the elections should meet the following expectations and outcomes:

Expectations:

- 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 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.

Outcomes:

Phase 1 – Administration

- All Acceptances of Office completed;
- Member induction administration completed.

Phase 2 – Essentials

- All Members have a basic knowledge of the Council and its structure and role;
- Member Code of Conduct training completed by all Members as soon as possible;
- Elected Members are able to effectively undertake their role at Council meetings.

Phase 3 – The Core Functions

- Members understand their roles to which they have been appointed by Council

- or Cabinet;
- Members understand their role in their wards;
- Members are aware of their responsibilities when representing the Authority.

Phase 4 – Identifying the Needs of Individual Councillors

- Members undertake a Personal Development Review annually to identify their support and development needs;
- Members are offered a Member Mentor or suitably trained officer to assist their development.

Phase 5 – Continuing Development

- The Member Development Programme is compiled and approved by the Democratic Services Committee to meet Corporate and Elected Member priorities;
- Member Development activities are relevant, cost effective and delivered to a high standard;
- The training and support provided meets the developing needs of Elected Members;
- Collaboration with other local authorities will be considered for the delivery of learning activities where appropriate.

- 3.3 Following the election, it is proposed that the Standards Committee will have a central role on the induction of newly elected and returning members. Ethical governance will feature prominently in the Member Induction Programme, including early delivery of Code of Conduct training by the Monitoring Officer to ensure all members understand their obligations from the outset.
- 3.4 Democratic Services will also ensure that member materials cover declarations of interest, confidentiality, relationships with officers, social media conduct, and expectations of respectful behaviour. Case studies will be provided to support understanding of ethical principles. After the initial induction period, it is proposed that the Standards Committee monitor early behavioral trends among new members by observing committee meetings, reviewing complaints or enquiries, officer feedback and identify any recurring issues to identify learning points. Where necessary, the Committee may recommend additional targeted training and awareness activities. It is proposed that the Committee also review the Member/Officer Protocol within the Council's Constitution and make any recommendations.

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

- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act 2010, 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 will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of wellbeing goals/objectives as a result of this report.

5.2 Standards are an implicit requirement in the successful implementation of the corporate well-being objectives.

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

6.1 There are no climate change or nature implications.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no safeguarding and corporate parent implications.

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. Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the report.

Background documents:

None