
REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

DRAFT ELECTED MEMBER LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Reason for this Report

1. The purpose of this report is recommend that the Democratic Services Committee endorse the Draft Elected Member Learning & Development Strategy 2019-22 as attached at **Appendix A** and that the agreed strategy be presented to Council in March 2019 with a recommendation for its approval and adoption from this Committee.

Background

2. The role of a Councillor is complex and challenging and the political, legislative and local landscape in which they work is changing constantly. Communities have high expectations of their elected representatives from the day of their election throughout their period of office. Both new and experienced Councillors need appropriate support, information and professional development to undertake their complex and evolving roles.
3. An Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy sets out the approach that an Authority via its Democratic Services Committee takes regarding the development and support of its Elected Members. It should include:
 - a commitment to support the development needs of all Elected Members in order to assist them in carrying out the roles which they undertake during their term of office.
 - a process for identifying the local and national, collective and individual development needs of all members.
 - the provision of a personal review process which is available to all Members and which will enable them to review and identify their personal development needs.
 - a methodology for responding to the development needs of Members identified in their personal reviews.
4. At its meeting on 01 October 2018 the Democratic Services Committee agreed that the Head of Democratic Services, in consultation with the Party Group Whips and an Independent Member, develop a Member Development Strategy for approval by the Committee at the next meeting in January 2019.

Development of the Strategy

5. The Head of Democratic Services worked with officers including Senior Management Team and the Monitoring Officer to develop the initial draft Elected Member Learning

and Development Strategy. Development meetings were established with the Group Whips and the Independent Member on 19 November and 10 December 2018.

6. The initial feedback on the draft strategy for the Group Whips was generally positive and the following feedback was provided:
 - Support for the Wellbeing of Elected Members should be enhanced within the strategy.
 - That Members be supported when undertaking e-learning which supplements or replaces formal learning sessions.
 - That a bespoke WLGA Leadership Programme for the Elected Members from Cardiff Council be considered if there was sufficient interest (12 - 15 Elected Members).
 - Further consideration and review of the Strategy would be undertaken by email rather than using formal meetings.
7. Revisions were made to the draft strategy which was then reviewed by the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee. The revised draft strategy was re-circulated to all Group Whips and the Independent Member.
8. Further minor changes were proposed which included :
 - The amendment of Phase 4 – Identifying the Needs of Individual Councillors – Page 9 to read:
“All Elected Members and in particular those who have been newly elected, will have an opportunity to discuss their learning and development needs:
 - *with a suitable mentor as part of their induction;*
 - *as part of a peer review process where learning and development requirements can be identified.”*rather than “Newly Elected Members” as stated in the original version.
 - Member Development Activity Survey – Page 13
Elected Members will be surveyed within the first twelve ~~six~~ months following the Local Government Elections to help inform the number of topics, frequency and timings of development events that will be held.

This amendment will provide the newly Elected Members more time to settle into their role as a Councillor before undertaking the survey.

Approval and Adoption

9. Following endorsement by the Democratic Services Committee the formatting of the Draft Learning and Development Strategy will be updated with appropriate graphics and layouts.
10. It is anticipated that the a report from the Democratic Services Committee will be submitted to Council on 28th March 2019 requesting approval and adoption of the Draft Learning and Development Strategy.

11. Following approval and adoption the Strategy will be translated into Welsh and uploaded to the Modern.gov Library and made publically available on the internet.

Review of the Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy

12. To ensure that the Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy remains an effective tool for Elected Members, it is planned that the strategy will be reviewed in the autumn of 2020 or in response to relevant changes to legislation or to the Authority.

Legal Implications

13. Section 7 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires local authorities to secure the provision of reasonable training and development opportunities for its members. Each member should also have the opportunity to have a review of their training and development needs on an annual basis. If a member decides to have an annual review of their training and development needs, the authority must ensure that the review includes an opportunity for an interview with someone who they consider to be “suitably qualified” to advise about the training and development needs of a member.
14. In considering these requirements, regard must be had to the statutory guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers. The guidance recommends that the Democratic Services Committee (DSC) has overall responsibility for deciding what should be regarded as reasonable training and development opportunities as part of its function of providing support to members to carry out their functions. It also notes that ‘The agreed, training and development opportunities could be contained within a published development strategy. The Welsh Local Government Association’s Charter for Member Support and Development (“the Charter”) could be used for guidance purposes by local authorities in developing their strategies. Local authorities may wish to consider the requirements to achieve the Charter when developing their strategies and programmes.’ (Guidance paragraph 2.10).
15. The Democratic Services Committee has responsibility for overseeing the support services provided to Members, ensuring they are adequately resourced and reporting any recommendations to Council.

Financial Implications

13. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The Draft Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy includes a section on ‘Resources’, which outlines how learning and development, in-house training and attendance at relevant conferences and events are to be resourced within existing budgets.

RECOMMENDATIONS

14. The Democratic Services Committee is recommended to:
 - a. endorse the Draft Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy.
 - b. approve the submission of the Draft Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy to Council on 28 March 2019 and recommends that Council approves and adopts the strategy.

GP JONES
HEAD of DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
08 January 2019

The following appendix is attached:

Appendix A - Draft Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy

Background Papers - None