

**DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE:**

**4 September 2023**

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## **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

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### **MEMBER DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

#### **Reason for this Report**

1. The purpose of this report is for the Committee to:
  - a. note the Member development activities for the remainder of 2023-24;
  - b. note the decision of Council (June 2023) in relation to training which has been designated by the Democratic Services Committee as mandatory, and agree consequential changes to the Member Development Strategy to include the list of training topics identified as mandatory, subject to the approval of full Council; and
  - c. agree that a review of the Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy be undertaken in 2024.

#### **Background**

##### Role of the Democratic Services Committee

2. The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, Part 1, Chapter 2, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/4/part/1/chapter/2> requires local authorities to appoint a Democratic Services Committee to oversee the Democratic Services functions of the Council, ensure that the work is adequately resourced and report to the full Council accordingly. The Democratic Services functions include Members' Services, Committee Services and Scrutiny Services, but not Cabinet Support Services.
3. Council approved an update to the Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy on 25 November 2021 which included the matrix for the categorisation of member development topics as Mandatory, Recommended, Beneficial or Useful by the Democratic Services Committee.
4. On 24 January 2022, the Democratic Services Committee considered the updated proposals report for the 2022 Member Induction Programme which identified the following five topics as mandatory for the induction:
  - What Councillors need to know (including Members Code of Conduct)
  - Information Governance and Data Protection
  - Supporting Equality in Cardiff's Diverse Communities

- Corporate Parenting
- Safeguarding

## Issues

### Completed Learning:

5. The following Member Development sessions have been held since the previous meeting of the Committee in February 2023 and the attendance details included for information:

Serial	Date	Topic	Numbers Attended (since Feb 2023)	Total % Attended
1.	E-Learning	Safeguarding (Mandatory)	22	97.47% (77)
3.	E-Learning	Corporate Parenting (Mandatory)	10	97.47% (77)
4.	E-Learning	Information Governance and Data Protection (Mandatory)	50	97.47% (77)
5.	E-Learning	Supporting Equality in Cardiff's Diverse Communities (Mandatory)	14	96.20% (76)
6.	20 Jul 23	What Councillors need to know (Mandatory)	1	100.00% 79
7.	30 Jan 23 03 Feb 23 08 Feb 23	Civil Parking Enforcement	16 8 13	46.84% (37)
8.	21 Feb 23	Elections Act 2022	19	24.05% (24)
9.	23 Feb 23	The Budget Process	20	25.32% (20)
10.	23 Mar 23 29 Mar 23	MES Update	20	25.32% (20)
11.	26 Apr 23	Introduction to Rights of A Child	3	46.84% (37)
12.	30 Jan 23 22 Jun 23 27 Jun 23	Corporate Dashboard	4 18 3	31.65% (25)
13.	24 Jul 23	Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) Consultation Briefing	22	27.85% (22)

### Note:

The total % Attended column reflects the percentage of all current Elected Members who have completed the topic with the number who have completed the training in brackets

### Scheduled Learning

6. The following learning opportunities were previously added to the Member Development Programme and work has been undertaken with providers to deliver the sessions as follows:

a. Fast Track Cities

A recorded online session will inform Elected Members of the work being undertaken by Fast Track Cardiff and Vale working with partners in Cardiff and across Wales to bring the Fast Track Cities initiative to the Welsh capital. The FastTrack Cities initiative is a global partnership between cities and municipalities around the world and four core partners – the International Association of Providers of AIDS Care (IAPAC), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat), and the City of Paris.

Date: 11 September from 17:00 – 18:00 using MS Teams

Planned Learning:

7. The following learning and development topics were agreed for delivery at previous Committee meetings and work is ongoing to schedule these activities.

a. Age Friendly Cardiff Awareness Sessions

Cardiff became the first Local Authority to be accepted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as members of the Global Network for Age Friendly Cities and Communities in March 2022. The ambition of a Cardiff is to be a great place to grow older. This session will describe the good work that has been undertaken and to enable Elected Members to share age friendly information with their communities.

b. South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS)

A one hour briefing on the SWFRS from the Chair of the Fire Authority, Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer of the SWFR Authority showcasing what the Fire and Rescue Service provides to communities and will include a question-and-answer session.

c. Biodiversity and Natural Resources

This “beneficial” session was identified from a scrutiny recommendation and initial discussions with the Head of Planning to support the use of external facilitators Natural Resources Wales and Wildlife Trust to support the wider requirements of this topic.

Delivery of this topic has been deferred due to prioritisation of the consultation for the latest phase of the RLDP and will be scheduled as soon as practicably possible.

d. Social Housing and Section 106

This “beneficial” session relating to Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 allows a local planning authority, to enter into a legally-binding agreement or planning obligation with a landowner as part of the granting of planning permission. These agreements are used for new developments, and they usually would be the preferred method to secure affordable housing at the site.

Delivery of this topic has been deferred due to prioritisation of the consultation for the latest phase of the RLDP and will be scheduled as soon as practicably possible.

## Future Training

### Media and Social Media skills

8. The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 places new duties on councils to encourage the public to participate in decision making. The social and environmental context in which councillors undertake their roles is constantly changing, new developments in social media, structural change in the way the public services are organised and the way councils interact with individuals and communities.
9. [Part 2 of the Statutory and Non-Statutory Guidance for Principal Councils](#) indicates the benefits of training in the effective use of social media and the opportunities for better engagement between councillors and the communities they serve. The training should also include the risks of councillors being victimised or harassed by opponents or campaigners overstepping the bounds of reasonable debate and how these issues can be managed.
10. The Council's draft Participation Strategy is currently being consulted upon. It includes the provision of media and social media training for Elected Members to encourage them to use these facilities to inform and engage with their constituents. The current target date for the delivery of this training is December 2024.
11. To support this objective it is planned to develop a training package which will provide Elected Members with the opportunity to improve their skills and confidence when engaging with the media and on social media and could include:
  - a. Public Speaking & Working with the Media

This E-Learning module is available on the Cardiff Academy and provides and introduction to:

    - the benefits of good communication
    - using different communication channels
    - working with the media
    - public speaking
  - b. Media Skills
    - Understand how the media works and what journalists are looking for
    - Look and sound confident and credible – voice and body language.
    - Be effective at connecting with audiences.
    - Seamlessly deliver key messages
    - Ways to deal with difficult questions.
    - Practical tips for giving an effective and engaging interview.
  - c. Social media skills
    - Which are the right social media platforms for me
    - Creating appropriate content
    - Managing your social media presence

- The importance of performance measurement – like sharing and followers
- Avoiding or managing the pitfalls – harassment and abuse

12. The committee is requested to identify any additional training content that would benefit their use of media and social media when engaging with their communities.

PREVENT

13. Elected Member workshops to raise awareness of Prevent were offered by the Prevent Team in 2021/2022 on a rolling programme. These workshops will be offered again in 2024/25. A 40 minute E-Learning course plus a range of other useful courses are available on the Home Office webpage and this will be advertised to all Elected Members. These sessions are proposed to be categorised as follows:

<i>Requirement</i>	<i>Newly Elected Members</i>	<i>Experienced Members</i>	<i>Committee Members</i>	<i>Executive Members / Chairpersons/ Group Spokesperson</i>
<i>Service Area / provision</i>	<i>Beneficial</i>	<i>Beneficial</i>	<i>Beneficial</i>	<i>Beneficial</i>

Introduction to Rights of a Child

14. Following a survey undertaken by elected Members as part of the Child Friendly Cities application identified that more training on Children’s Rights. A training session was held on 26 April 2023, but Elected Members can now access an Introduction to Rights of a Child E-Learning Module. This module has been categorised as beneficial and will be advertised for Elected members to in the next few weeks.

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Welsh Language Courses

15. The following are the introductory Welsh Language Courses available with the Cardiff Academi:

### Welsh taster course / half day

- a. This is a virtually delivered half day session with a tutor in a group setting. It can be used to learn some basics for Welsh in a local authority including phrases, pronunciation, common office or reception words, and some very easy conversations focusing on simple but effective communication.

The course offers:

- Learning in a group setting
- More confidence with some very basic phrases
- An opportunity to try out virtual Welsh learning
- Greater confidence with pronouncing names or places
- One part of development in conjunction with other beginners' short courses

### Welsh 2-day beginner course

- b. This is a virtually delivered course over four half days or two full days, with a tutor in a group setting. It is similar to the half day course but more in depth. Delegates will learn a series of phrases for different common workplace situations, in particular with customers or service users. Short conversations are also covered such as directing people, providing time, date and location details, and asking how you are.

The course offers:

- Learning in a group setting
- Greater confidence to use phrases in real scenarios
- Greater confidence with pronunciation
- Skills to engage in several simple conversations
- An opportunity to try out virtual learning
- One part of learning in conjunction with other short courses

The following table shows the dates for the training sessions:

Type of course	Start date	End date	Session dates	Time
Welsh taster course	11/09/2023	11/09/2023	One session - 11/09/23	12.30-4.00
Welsh taster course	15/09/2023	15/09/2023	One session - 15/09/23	09.30-1.00
Welsh two day beginners	11/10/2023	18/10/2023	2 full days: 11/10, 18/10	09.30-4.30
Welsh taster course	22/11/2023	22/11/2023	One session - 22/11/23	01.30-4.30
Welsh two day beginners	29/11/2023	06/12/2023	2 full days: 29/11, 06/12	09.30-4.30
Welsh taster course	11/12/2023	11/12/2023	One session - 11/12/23	10.00-1.30

### Mandatory Training

16. At the Council meeting on 29 June 2023, the Council agreed to amend the Members' Code of Conduct to include a duty to attend all mandatory training within 6 months from the date on which the training is made available (but this 6 month period shall not start before the new duty was introduced, ie. 29<sup>th</sup> June 2023), unless the Member (i) can provide evidence of having attended equivalent and up to date training; or (ii) has a reasonable excuse for requiring an extension of time, which, in either case,

should be agreed in advance with the Head of Democratic Services – Members' Code of Conduct paragraph 8(c).

17. Council noted that the Democratic Services Committee has responsibility for ensuring that Members are provided with appropriate training and support and may identify certain training as essential to enable Members to properly discharge their duties. However, it was agreed that if an enforceable duty to attend training was to be introduced, then the designation of mandatory training should be subject to approval by full Council.
18. It is therefore proposed that the 5 mandatory training courses currently set out within the Council's approved Member Induction Programme 2022 should be incorporated into the Member Development Strategy, along with corresponding amendments to refer to the new duty to attend mandatory training, and that the updated Strategy should be recommended to full Council for approval. Any further designations of mandatory training which may be recommended in future by the Democratic Services Committee will be included as amendments to the Member Development Strategy and submitted to full Council for approval.
19. The Strategy has also been updated to refer to the new statutory duties of Group Leaders and the arrangements for them to report to the Standards and Ethics Committee on steps taken to promote high standards of conduct within their group, which includes reference to encouraging attendance at relevant and mandatory training. Other minor amendments have also been made to the allocation of attendees at the 2022-27 Leadership Academy.
20. The proposed amendments to the Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy are shown at **Appendix A**.

### **Financial Implications**

21. Any costs from Member learning and development activities are to be monitored and contained within the existing Democratic Services funding sources and budgets.

### **Legal Implications**

22. Under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, Part 1, the Democratic Services Committee is responsible for overseeing the democratic services functions of the Council, ensuring this work is adequately resourced; and reporting to full Council accordingly.
23. The Democratic Services functions (which must be discharged by the Head of Democratic Services) are defined as follows:
  - a. to provide support and advice: to the authority in relation to its meetings; to committees of the authority and the members of those committees; to any joint committee which a local authority is responsible for organising and the members of that committee; in relation to the functions of the authority's scrutiny committees, to members of the authority, members of the executive and officers; to each member of the authority in carrying out the role of member of the authority (but excluding a member's role as an Executive member);

- b. to promote the role of the authority's Scrutiny Committees;
  - c. to make reports and recommendations to Council in respect of the number and grades of staff required to discharge democratic services functions and the appointment, organisation and proper management of those staff; and
  - d. any other functions prescribed by the Welsh Ministers.
24. In determining how to exercise its functions, the Committee must have regard to the statutory guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers. The Welsh Government has indicated that it is proposing to revoke the earlier guidance (Statutory Guidance from the Local Government Measure 2011) issued in June 2012 and has issued refreshed draft guidance for consultation (in Chapter 2 of the Consultation Document, Local Government: Guidance for Principal Councils, 17 March 2022): [Guidance for principal councils | GOV.WALES](#). The revised draft guidance on Democratic Services Committees is substantially unchanged but has been updated to reflected legislative changes, including the removal of the legislative prohibition on the monitoring officer also being the head of democratic services (under section 161 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021).
25. The information set out in the body of this report enables the Democratic Services Committee to oversee the work of democratic services, ensure the work is adequately resourced and report to full Council, as appropriate.
26. Other relevant legal provisions are referred to in the body of the report.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

27. The Democratic Services Committee is requested to:
- a. note the information set out in the report;
  - b. identify any additional media and social media training content that would benefit Members' use of media and social media when engaging with their communities;
  - c. recommend to full Council the proposed amendments to the Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy 2019-22 to include reference to designated mandatory training, as shown at **Appendix A**; and
  - d. agree that a review of the Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy be undertaken by the Democratic Services Committee and submitted to Council for approval in 2024.

**Gary Jones**  
**HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**  
**29 August 2023**



Background Papers:

[Amendment Of The Members' Code Of Conduct - Attendance At Mandatory Training](#) report to Council dated 29 June 2023.

[Updated Proposals - Draft Outline Member Induction Programme 2022](#) report to the Democratic Services Committee dated 24 January 2022.

[Elected Member Learning and Development](#) report to Council dated 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021

[The Statutory and Non-Statutory Guidance for Principal Councils in Wales – supporting provisions within the Local Government Act 2000, the Local Government \(Wales\) Measure 2011 and the Local Government and Elections \(Wales\) Act 2021](#)