
REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

Reason for this Report

1. The purpose of this report is update the Democratic Services Committee on the progress that has been made with the Learning and Development programme to date and to consider potential option for inclusion in the ongoing development programmes between September to December 2019.

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.

Progress to date

3. The Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy

The Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy was approved by Council on 28 March 2019. At the meeting the strategy was well received and a number of queries were raised by elected Members in respect of their support and development. A summary and update on these queries is attached at Appendix A.

4. Democratic Services Committee Annual Report

The Committee's Annual report was presented to Council on 28 March 2019. During the consideration of the report Elected Members also identified additional queries for the Committee to consider. A summary and update on these queries is included in Appendix A.

5. Learning and Development Sessions

The following learning and development sessions were provided since the last meeting and the attendance information is attached at Appendix B.

- Wellbeing of Future Generations Act
- Financial Management and Budget Preparation

- EU Citizen Settlement Scheme
- Children's Rights in Practice, Part 1
- Children's Rights in Practice, Part 2
- Corporate Safeguarding Guide

6. It was anticipated that session regarding **Elected Member Role as Corporate Parents** to update and refresh Members on their guardianship role would be provided during this period, however the Corporate Parenting policy is under revision and it was considered that it would be appropriate to defer this learning opportunity to the September to December period.
7. **Members Personal Safety & Security** has been agreed to be delivered in sessions at Group meetings. It should be noted that the current process is outlined in Appendix A in response to the queries raised at Council.
8. Requests for Learning

There have been a number of requests for learning and development sessions to be provided:

a. **Chairing Skills**

A request to provide development sessions for those Elected Members who are keen to develop Chairing skills has been received which would also support those Chairs and vice chairs appointed at the Annual Meeting of Council.

There are 2 possible options to facilitate this learning

- **Option 1**

That the experience chairpersons be invited to mentor those members who would benefit from this opportunity to enhance their skills. Given the previous views of the Committee that external providers be used for development sessions this may not be the preferred option.

- **Option 2**

The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) provide specific Chairing Skills session which could be provide at a cost of approximately £200 per session. Initial indications from the WLGA that this could be provided in the September to December period.

b. **Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence**

A request was received for an awareness session regarding domestic violence. Although it was suggested that Elected Members could undertake the Welsh Government e-learning package on this topic it was requested that a face to face option could be provided.

It is proposed that initially the e-learning module be made available to Elected Members via the Councils e-learning portal on Cardiff Academy. The Committee is requested to advise on the requirement for the provision of face to face sessions on this topic which may be able to be provided by appropriate officers.

c. Welsh Language

Elected Members raised queries regarding the provision of Welsh Language learning opportunities. Following discussions with the Cardiff Academy it was advised that Elected Members would be able to attend the Welsh language sessions provided by staff but if this is not suitable for all Elected Members other arrangements can be made. Democratic Services Officers will distribute an invite expressions of interest from Elected Members to determine if they would like to attend Welsh language sessions.

d. PREVENT

A request has been received for a PREVENT awareness and update session. This is the duty for specified authorities in England and Wales in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 which to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

9. New Member Induction

A number of By-Elections have been held in recent months with another likely later this year. To support the newly elected member it is proposed that the political parties provide informal mentoring to the new members based on the WLGA Member Mentor role description at Appendix D.

This will enable the newly elected members to be supported during their induction and will assist in identifying if the Draft Member Mentor role description is fit for purpose.

10. Implementation of Office 365

The roll out the Office 365 cloud-based software to the whole authority is planned to be completed by April 2020. There are significant cost savings to the Authority using these cloud based services rather than conventional Office software in the work environment.

The transition was initially piloted by officers and many of the problems were identified and addressed. It was intended that a number of Elected Members undertake a pilot to identify and address any difficulties which other Elected Members may experience when transitioning to Office 365.

At the initial briefing some of these Elected Members were identified as already using Office 365 in their other roles which created some technical difficulties. It was then decided that the further recruitment to the Elected Members Pilot would be needed and volunteers would be requested from the Democratic Services Committee.

The Elected Member Pilot would be undertaken in July and August to enable the lessons learned to be provided to other during the main roll out period of September to December 2019.

The main roll out would provide 2 x 2hour sessions to be identified each week between September and December with at least 3 Elected Members attending each session. The Elected Members would have their equipment tested and software converted to Office 365. It was anticipated that all Elected Members would be using Office 365

before the Christmas period. To support this expectation the Democratic Services Team will be transferred to office 365 during August 2019.

The Chief Digital Officer is keen to ensure that all Elected Members have a good understanding of cyber security and has identified that undertaking the Cyber Security modules would be beneficial to all Elected Members when transferring to Office 365.

An additional verbal update will be provided to further inform Elected Member regarding the implementation of Office 365 and the cyber security e-learning modules.

11. WLGA Leadership Programme

The following nominations have been made to attend the Academi Wales Leadership Programme for Elected Members 2019/2020:

- Councillor Thomas Parkhill – Conservative
- Councillor Emma Sandrey – Liberal Democrat
- Councillor Norma Mackie – Labour (Reserve)
- Councillor Peter Wong – Labour (Reserve)

12. Evaluation of Learning and Development

To monitor the provision of learning and development an evaluation form has been developed and is planned to be used for all Learning and Development sessions. The team have now been trained in the use of SNAP electronic survey software and it is hoped that this form will be adapted into an electronic version which will be easier to administrate and evaluate. The views of the committee are requested on the evaluation form and the use of an electronic version of the form.

13. E – Learning

Following discussion with the WLGA the use of the All Wales Academy e-learning facility has been improved and can now be used by Elected Members. Officers from across Wales have been allocated some priority learning topics to be developed for use on this website. The following topics are available on the AWA website.

Topic
Chairing Meetings
Corporate Parenting
Data Protection Awareness
Decisions for Future Generations
Effective Writing
Emotional Intelligence
Ethics and Standards old
Freedom of Information
Introduction to Equality & Diversity
Introduction to Scrutiny
Public Speaking Skills
Social Media
Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014
Stress Awareness
Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence

Further work has been undertaken with Cardiff Academy to provide easy access for Elected Members to the Council e-learning facilities. Plans are being developed to provide a dedicated portal for Elected Members which can be accessed from the Member Services intranet webpage.

14. Elected Member Survey

A copy of the survey completed by Elected Members in 2017/18 is attached at Appendix E. It is anticipated that this survey will be repeated during the autumn and its results compared to the previous year's information to determine any changes to the outcomes identified in 2017/18.

The previous survey was undertaken using Survey Monkey which has now been superseded by the use of the SNAP survey software which should assist in the analysis of the data submitted.

The Committee is requested to confirm that the survey be undertaken by all Members before December 2019 and the completion of the survey is to be considered as "Essential".

The committee is also requested to identify any additional questions it considers could be useful to support the provision of Learning and Development for Elected Members.

15. Proposed Learning and Development September to December 2019

The following topics are proposed for inclusion on the Member Development programme September to December 2019

General:

- Elected Member Role as Corporate Parents (Essential)
- Elected Member Survey 2019(Essential)
- Implementation of Office 365 (Essential)

Specialist:

- Consistency of webcasting for Chairs of webcast meetings
- Chaining Skills
- Welsh Language

E-learning

- Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence
- Cyber Security 1-3

Legal Implications

16. 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.

17. 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).
18. 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

19. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The 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

The Democratic Services Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Note the content of the report;
- (2) Consider the proposals for inclusion in the Member Development Programme September – December 2019 as outlined in Paragraph 15;
- (3) Determine those topics to be included in the Member Development programme

GP JONES
HEAD of DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

16 July 2019

The following Appendices are attached:

- Appendix A - Queries and responses from Council on 28 March 2019
- Appendix B - Learning and Development Details 2019
- Appendix C - Learning and Development Evaluation Template
- Appendix D - Member Mentor Role Description
- Appendix E - 2017 Elected Member Survey

Background Papers - None

