

## **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 to:
  - a. Provide an update to the Democratic Services Committee on the progress made in scheduling topics as part of the Member Development Programme.
  - b. Seek the views of the committee in respect of the proposed categorisation of member learning

#### **Background**

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.
3. The Member Development Programme is intended to support all Elected Members and provide opportunities for collective and individual development. The programme should include 'specialist' areas of development reflecting the needs of members in developing skills and understanding in corporate governance, thematic or service areas and to support their role as a Councillor.
4. The programme should offer choice or variety of opportunities to attend. Elected Members should be notified of learning and development events with sufficient notice to enable them to attend.

#### **Issues**

##### Member Development programme

5. Following the Democratic Services Committee meeting on 22 July 2019, a number of topics were agreed for inclusion on the Member Development Programme and initial plans to schedule these activities were prepared. However, many of the topics identified were to be provided from external providers who were not able to agree suitable dates and times. This was then compounded by the announcement of the Parliamentary Election which required further revision of planned dates due to the unavailability of Elected Members. Since the election some work has been

undertaken to re-schedule these activities but to date this has not been fully achieved. The provisional plans for the period between January and April 2020 are currently as follows:

Topic	Number of Sessions	Planning Date(s)
<b>January</b>		
Treasury Management (Audit Committee)	1	7 <sup>th</sup> January
Children's Rights in Practice Part 1	TBC	As available
Children's Rights in Practice Part 2	TBC	As available
<b>February</b>		
Planning for Ward Members	3	between 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 14 <sup>th</sup>
Corporate Budget Briefing	TBC	Between 10 <sup>th</sup> and 14 <sup>th</sup>
Scrutiny Budget Briefings	TBC	Between 17 <sup>th</sup> and 19 <sup>th</sup>
<b>March</b>		
Chairing Skills (WLGA)	2	10 <sup>th</sup> , 11 <sup>th</sup> or 18 <sup>th</sup> TBC
PREVENT – Home Office Briefing	1	Awaiting Home Office availability but hoping to arrange session before the end of March
<b>April</b>		
Wellbeing of Future Generations Act		To be dovetailed with the development of Officer Briefings

6. Further work will be undertaken to develop these events and Elected Members be notified of the details with as much advance notice as possible.

### E-Learning

7. The Elected Member E-Learning portal has now been established and members have been provided with the relevant information to access this facility. Elected Members were also advised of that the Democratic Services Committee had requested that all Members undertook the following E-Learning modules as soon as possible.

- Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence;
- Cyber Security Module 1.
- Cyber Security Module 2.
- Cyber Security Module 3.
- Corporate Safeguarding
- Corporate Parenting

It is anticipated that Elected Member will complete all of the above modules by 30 April 2020

8. The Head of Democratic Services has discussed an enquiry from the Wales Audit Office with the Audit Manager regarding Elected Member completion of the Fraud Awareness module. It is recommended that that this topic be included in the list of

topics in the E-Learning portal and that all Elected Members complete the module by 31 July 2020.

### Prioritising and Categorising Learning Events.

9. At its meeting on 22 July 2019 the Committee determined that:

*“the Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy be revised to remove the term ‘essential’ from the categorisation of Member Development activities unless it is Code of Conduct or Planning and Licensing training; and that a suitable grading system be developed for the Democratic Services Committee to allocate the importance of Members to attend learning opportunities”*

10. The existing grading system is as follows:

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|-----------|--|
| Essential | - Those development topics for quasi-judicial functions such as Planning for Planning Committee, Licensing etc where members who have not attended the training will not be able to take part in the decision making. This category will also include those topics which are key to an Elected Member’s role e.g. Corporate Parenting, Code of Conduct, Corporate/Council Policies, GDPR and Safeguarding. |
| Advisory  | - This category may include topics which are important but not essential such as Risk Management and Scrutiny Questioning Skills which are very informative and support a Councillor’s role.   |
| Optional  | - This category identifies topics that may be useful to some Councillors but these are not a priority and could be considered as interesting and useful in supporting a Councillor’s role.   |

11. In reviewing this grading system it was identified that a number of options could be used to achieve this requirement. The most simplistic option is to change the word “Essential” to a similar word such as Necessary, Important, Crucial or Critical. However this would not address the effective categorisation and prioritisation of the learning event.

12. The requirement to undertake a specific learning activities is also a factor in prioritising and categorising learning activities. A constitutional, corporate or other requirement assists in determining the importance of the activity and therefore activities can be prioritised accordingly.

13. The levels of requirement could be described as follows:

Requirement	Reason
Legislative/Constitutional	These are topics are those that must be completed in accordance with legislation i.e. Code of Conduct or as required in the Council's Constitution i.e. Planning training for Planning Committee Members.
Auditors, Inspectors & Regulators, Corporate Policy	These are topics that are recommended by the Auditors, Regulators and Inspectors (AIRs) i.e. the WAO recommending that learning opportunities be provided regarding the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. This category may also include Member learning identified in Council policies i.e. Those topics in support of Cardiff Council's decision to become a Child Friendly City.
Committee Specific	These topics are related to the specific role of an individual Committee or groups of Committees i.e. A Budget Briefing for Scrutiny Committees.
Service Area/Provision	These are topics requested by Service area to improve understanding of operational matters and how services are being provided developed or changed, i.e. Glass recycling or a briefing from an external service provider.
Personal/Individual	These are the topics which support the needs of individual Councillor's i.e. Personal Safety briefings or undertaking relevant E-Learning for their own personal development.
Regional/National	These topics are those which are held on a regional or national basis and may include attendance at conferences and seminars appropriate to the individual Councillors role, i.e. WLGA regional events

14. The use of the existing categorisation is very generic and does not allow for the range of experience, knowledge or skills of individual Elected Members. Newly Elected Members will have differing learning needs to those who have been in office for over

a year. The knowledge and skills of Committee Members and Committee Chairpersons or Executive Members may also be very different.

15. To reflect and acknowledge the existing skills of Elected Members the following table places Elected Members into groups which approximate their anticipated skills and experience.

Grouping	Description
Newly Elected Members	Newly Elected Members are considered to be those within the first year in office. This will also include those who are returning following a break in their term of office.
Experienced Members	These are councillors who have been an Elected Member for over one year and who have completed an induction in their current term of office. They may or may not be appointed to a Council committee
Committee Members	Committee Members are required to have additional skills and knowledge to undertake their role. This grouping includes Independent Members, Registered Representatives and other co-optees.
Executive Members / Chairpersons / Group Spokespersons	Executive Members, Chairpersons and Group Spokespersons have additional responsibilities which includes working at a Regional or National level

16. In line with possible changes to the use of “Essential” to explain the importance or relevance of an Elected Member attending the learning event, a range of other terminology could be used including beneficial and useful rather than advisory and optional.
17. The following matrix has been developed to reflect the requirement of a learning activity and recognises the likely knowledge and experience of Elected Members to identify the importance and relevance of how an Elected Members should consider the learning activity. The terminology used in this matrix could be revised as necessary by the Committee.

Requirement	Newly Elected Members	Experienced Members	Committee Members	Executive Members / Chairpersons / Group Spokespersons
Legislative/Constitutional	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
Auditors, Inspectors & Regulators, Corporate Policy	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary
Committee Specific	Beneficial	Useful	Necessary	Useful
Service Area/provision	Beneficial	Beneficial	Beneficial	Beneficial

Personal	Beneficial	Useful	Useful	Beneficial
Regional/National	Beneficial	Useful	Useful	Beneficial

18. This matrix could be used by the Democratic Services Committee to categorise and prioritise learning activities and with elements of the matrix being included when informing Elected Members of a learning event. The following are examples of how the matrix could be used:

- a. All Elected Members Undertaking the Fraud Awareness E-Learning module is a recommendation from the WAO and would be categorised as “Necessary” for all Elected Members

Newly Elected Members	Experienced Members	Committee Members	Executive Members / Chairperson s/ Group Spokesperson
Necessary	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary

- b. Corporate Parenting E-Learning Module could be considered as follows:

- Elected Members are required to have an understanding of their legal responsibilities under the Children Act 2004 and the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 as a corporate parent to the children in the care of Cardiff Council. This would be a legislative requirement and be identified as “Mandatory” for all Elected Members.

Newly Elected Members	Experienced Members	Committee Members	Executive Members / Chairperson s/ Group Spokesperson
Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory

- However, if this the topic has been previously undertaken within the term of office and a regular refresher is required by the Corporate Parenting Strategy this would make the learning a “Necessary” activity for all Elected Members.

Newly Elected Members	Experienced Members	Committee Members	Executive Members / Chairperson s/ Group Spokesperson
Necessary	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary

- c. Treasury Management is a requirement of the Audit Committee and therefore becomes “Necessary” for Members of the Audit Committee to attend the session. However other Members may find the session “Useful” or “Beneficial” and once informed of the event, could be invited to attend if they consider that they would gain any benefit from attending and there was capacity to widen the attendance.

All Members could be informed that the session was taking place and that it had been designated by the Democratic Services Committee as follows:

Newly Elected Members	Experienced Members	Audit Committee Members	Executive Members / Chairperson s/ Group Spokesperson
Beneficial	Useful	Necessary	Useful

Non-Committee Members would also be advised that they would have to inform Democratic Services in advance of the event to ensure that there was capacity for them to attend.

19. Learning activities arising in addition to the planned sessions agreed by the Democratic Services Committee could be categorised and prioritised by the Head of Democratic Services in consultation with the Chairperson.
20. The recording of attendance and the evaluation of each learning activity by the attendee is crucial. It will be necessary for the Democratic Services Team to liaise with the learning activity provider to ensure that accurate records are maintained and reported.

### Legal Implications

21. 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.
22. 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.

### Financial Implications

23. The cost of the member development programme is to be met within existing resources.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Democratic Services Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Note the topics being scheduled in the Member Development Programmes.

- (2) Approve the inclusion of the Fraud Awareness Module in the E-Learning Portal and for all Elected Members to complete this module by 31 July 2020.
- (3) Consider the proposal for the categorisation and prioritisation of learning activities and to approve the implementation of an appropriate pilot process until the full review of the Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy at the end of 2020.

**G JONES**  
**HEAD of DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**  
03 January 2020

Background Papers - None