



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

5th July 2023

MEMBER'S TRAINING - DRAFT MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to provide Members with the Draft Member Development Programme to assist Members with the skills necessary to undertake their roles.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Members:

- (i) Consider the proposed draft Member Development Programme appended at Appendix 1
- (ii) Subject to Members comments to agree the proposed programme and to monitor its delivery throughout the Municipal Year.
- (iii) Subject to 2.1(ii) notification of the training scheduled is provided to all Members at the earliest opportunity to maximize attendance.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The role of an Elected Member can be complex and challenging. Constantly changing priorities and legislation require difficult decisions for which Members need to be well informed. It is therefore essential that Members are equipped and supported to allow them to undertake their role confidently
- 3.2 The Head of Democratic Services, in conjunction with the Democratic Services Committee seeks to ensure that Members are provided with sufficient training to assist them in undertaking all aspects of their role.
- 3.3 The Head of Democratic Services along with colleagues in the Council Business Unit have identified training support and opportunities through the Member Personal Development Review programme, which was recently undertaken with Elected Members.
- 3.4 Other training opportunities have also been identified through the Members survey that was undertaken and Members direct requests to the Head of Democratic Services and requests through Committee meetings. The

programme also reflects upon the Welsh Government Competency Framework and modules identified through this framework as general good practice.

- 3.5 At the meeting of the Democratic Services Committee on the 27th April 2023, Members considered a report in relation to training, which advised upon the training undertaken to date following the Local Government Elections. The report also identified future training opportunities. This report seeks to further support the training opportunities for Members and provide a robust training programme for the Municipal Year.
- 3.6 It was pleasing to note that 92% of respondents to the Member Survey indicated either being very satisfied or satisfied with the training provided to Members, however, 8% also identified that they were dissatisfied with the training provided. It is important that we ensure that the training opportunities are available for all Members to assist them in their role, hence the need for regular monitoring and evaluation of the training provided.
- 3.7 A response within the Member Survey in respect of training was the suggestion of a 'rolling programme of training' which will hopefully be accommodated within the suggested draft programme. The suggestion for a brochure of training has been considered by the Head of Democratic Services however, it has been considered that the provision of a training brochure might restrict Members requesting training not detailed within the brochure. The current system allows for the Council to respond to training requests, regardless of the subject.
- 3.8 It was pleasing to note from the Member Survey that Members found the Personal Development Review Process helpful and a further round of these meetings will be taken forward later in the year.

4 MEMBER TRAINING PROGRAMME.

- 4.1 Through the work of the Democratic Services Committee the Council are working to support the development of all of its Elected Members and to ensure that they are able meet the demands of their roles. As a Council we would look to ensure that:
- There is a planned and structured approach to Elected Member Learning and Development;
 - Elected Members have access to appropriate means to assist them to acquire relevant knowledge and develop the skills necessary for their roles;
 - Learning and development, wherever possible, is linked to the roles of Elected Members;
 - Access to learning and development activities is equitable;
 - Elected Members are encouraged to identify their own development needs and participate fully in learning and development activities;
 - Elected Member learning and development activity is adequately resourced within available budgets;

- The Member Development Programme will be produced, updated and monitored on a regular basis, to support the needs of Members.

- 4.2 Attached as appendix 1 to the report is the draft Member Development programme which outlines training opportunities that have been identified. The programme outlines how this training will be delivered and where necessary proposed timeframes for delivery.
- 4.3 The Programme outlines a tiered approach with 'open' training which will be delivered to all Members either through open briefing sessions or through online learning opportunities. And 'bespoke' training requested by individual Members which will be taken forward either through 1:1 settings or smaller group settings depending on the requests received and the nature of the request.
- 4.4 During the Member Induction Programme, 'essential' training was taken forward with all Members in respect of Code of Conduct, Corporate Parenting and understanding of a Member's role within a Committee membership setting. This latter training approach has continued with any changes in Committee membership, providing that no Member can take part in a meeting until they have received the required training.
- 4.5 Members will recall that during the Member Induction programme the Head of Democratic Services had proposed training in respect of 'Resonant Leadership'. Unfortunately this was not taken forward at the time but will be looked to be built into the current training programme. It is proposed that this event may be delivered through an 'away day session' to try to capitalise on networking opportunities for Members. Training in respect of Emergency planning will also look to take on a more interactive workshop setting, subject to Officers availability.
- 4.6 Political Group Leaders now have a duty to take reasonable steps to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the members of their group. A standards committee must also provide advice and training or arrange to train group leaders on the new duty. The Council's Monitoring Officer will work with the Standards Committee to put such training in place during the Municipal Year.
- 4.7 Going forward, it is proposed that the programme (appended as appendix 1) is shared with all Members to allow all Members a further opportunity to identify any further training they would like to consider or to be included in. It is anticipated that such an approach will help ensure all Elected Members will have equal access and opportunity to learning and development opportunities.
- 4.8 A flexible approach to the delivery of learning and development opportunities will be adopted to meet the identified needs of individuals and groups. A variety of methods may be used to deliver these opportunities which could include: Member Briefings, workshops and e-learning opportunities through RCT Source and the Members Portal.

- 4.9 Subject to Members comments it is proposed that the delivery of the training programme is regularly monitored by the Democratic Services Committee, so that Members can further shape its delivery over the Municipal Year. The Head of Democratic Services will also provide updates to Group Leaders during their diarised meetings.
- 4.10 To capitalise on Member Attendance at the scheduled training events, diary markers will be utilised at all opportunities and details of training will be provided within the Members Weekly Update.
- 4.11 Members attendance at training will be logged by the Council Business unit and will be available under each Members profile on the Council website.
- 4.12 Where appropriate an evaluation of any training will be undertaken to enable Elected Members to identify and record any additional learning needs which may arise from a completed learning activity.
- 4.13 Elected Member learning and development, will be resourced from the allocated Member Development budget. Where appropriate, In house training will be provided by Directorates if the topic relates to their service areas. The Council will look to capitalise on any free training that is offered by the WLGA and other organisations as appropriate.

5 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 5.1 This report supports the need for all Members to have equal access to support regardless of political allegiance. The report encourages the authority to examine the way that business is conducted to ensure the equality of access and involvement of all people as councillors. The provision of E-learning Modules and hybrid meetings / training sessions will ensure all Members have equal access to training provision.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Members PDRs were conducted to allow information to be gathered in respect of any training requirements to assist Members in their roles.
- 6.2 Members should continue to advise of any training requests at any opportunity and discussions will be taken forward by the Head of Democratic Services with Group Leaders to ensure all Members are supported with development opportunities.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 7.1 Members training is an important aspect to allow Members to feel equipped to undertake their duties and roles required of them. The Council have a Members training budget, which is accessed to provide any external training needed. Where practical in-house training is also provided to Members.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None

9. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

9.1 The work of all Councillors is fundamental to the work of the Council and subsequently the delivery of the Corporate Plan, hence ensuring Members are fully supported in undertaking their roles is important to the work of the Council overall.

9.2 Ensuring all Members are supported and have equal access to support and development links to the future generations well being goals of a more equal Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities.

10 CONCLUSION

10.1 The Council Business unit will continue to support Members with any training opportunities identified to assist Members in undertaking their roles.

10.2 Members are reminded that they may request any form of training that they feel would assist them in undertaking their role to the Head of Democratic Services.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATION

Free Standing Matter.