



DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE - 16TH SEPTEMBER 2015

SUBJECT: UPDATE MEMBER TRAINING AND SUPPORT PROGRAMME

REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR CORPORATE SERVICES AND SECTION 151 OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with an update on the Member Training and Support Programme to further strengthen the Council's corporate governance through the implementation of a range of Members' training and support sessions.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 On the 22nd April 2014 Council agreed a detailed programme of Members support and development training opportunities. This report will update Members on the progress of the training and support programme arrangements, the Requested Training Programme based on the outcome of the Training Needs Analysis (previously reported to the Democratic Services Committee) and the introduction of the new Senior Councillor Development Programme.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The report assists in the implementation of the Council's corporate governance framework the implementation of the Council's Governance Improvement Action Plan.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The Council has long since recognised the importance of supporting Members' many and varied roles with a programme of targeted training and development. Indeed, the Council was the first in Wales to be awarded the WLGA's Wales Charter for Member Support and Development in 2007.

The Training and Development Programme

- 4.2 On the 22nd April 2014 Council agreed a detailed programme of Members support and development training opportunities.
- 4.3 Based on the recommendations contained in that report, a framework of training and development for a full Council term (4 years) has been mapped and scheduled to follow three distinct categories namely Mandatory Training, Recommended Training and Requested Training.
- a. Mandatory Training – Certain training associated with Members' statutory responsibilities, regulatory committee membership and committees with personnel functions to ensure all councillors have the necessary knowledge to enable them to

operate within the Council's Code of Conduct, have an understanding of the Council's constitution, undertake common essential duties and, where appropriate, discharge regulatory or personnel committee functions.

- b. Recommended Training – This type of training is considered as important whilst recognising that Members have different levels of experience and knowledge of the councillor role. The amount of training commitment required will depend on individual Members specific committee roles.
- c. Requested Training – This type of training would be identified by individual Members as part of the councillor training needs analysis undertaken every 2 years. It is similar to Recommended Training in being considered helpful but not compulsory.

- 4.4 In 2014 the first of the recommended training options was initiated and a series of Annual Refresher Training sessions were introduced following the Annual General Meeting of Council that year.
- 4.5 Each Committee, Sub Committee and Panel has received a 30 minute Officer led, refresher training session prior to its scheduled meeting. These sessions updated Members on the terms of reference for that particular committee, provided updates on any relevant policies or legislation along with any decision making considerations and appeal processes that needed to be taken into account. Attendance levels at each of the individual sessions were good overall, ranging from 100% (Investigating and Disciplinary Committee) to 17% (SACRE) being the lowest level of attendance achieved. With a 57% attendance rate achieved for the recommended training programme as a whole. Full attendance details for the individual committees and panels are outlined in Appendix 1 of the report.
- 4.6 The first full year of the development and support programme commenced in 2015, with a timetable of the different training courses was sent out to all Members in early January (Appendix 2). The mandatory element of the training programme ran from February to March 2015 and was well received by Members. To date there have been no referrals to the Standards Committee for repeated failure to attend mandatory training sessions.
- 4.7 A feedback questionnaire was circulated at each session and the responses received collated and analysed in order to gauge the success of the individual courses. With the completion of the mandatory training programme an overarching questionnaire was compiled and sent out to Members in order to establish their views of the programme as a whole and this process will be repeated once the recommended and requested training programmes have been completed and will also be reported back to the Democratic Services Committee. The feedback from the mandatory training questionnaire is attached in Appendix 3 of the report.
- 4.8 The requested training or Member Development and Support Programme 2015-17 as attached in Appendix 4, are based on the outcome of the Training Needs Analysis (TNA) and will commence in September 2015. This training programme is in direct response to the training needs that Members have themselves identified and for the first time will include e-learning options. These on-line training modules, facilitated by the All Wales Academy in conjunction with the WLGA, will enable Members to undertake training at their own pace and at a time that is convenient to them. Modules include Standards and Ethics, The Effective Ward Councillor and Facilitation and Conflict Resolution. Officers are also considering other alternative methods of delivering training, such as the recording or webcasting of training sessions.
- 4.9 In order to maximise attendance, minimise the demand on Members time, provide value for money and offer an enhance learning experience some modules offered in the TNA with similar subject themes have been redesigned or offered as an e-learning option e.g. Community Leadership and Engagement and Communication Influencing and Negotiating Skills have been re-envisioned as Negotiating and Influencing Skills, with the Community and Officers and is further complemented by the e-learning module Facilitation and Conflict Resolution. Members will also note that a module suggested by Members on Evidence Based

Decision Making has not been included in the programme document. Unfortunately we are at present unable to source a facilitator but we are continuing to look at different provider options and hope to be able to offer this session as an addition to the programme at a later date.

- 4.10 The Senior Councillor Development Programme (Appendix 5) will also commence in September 2015 for a period of six months. Working in partnership with the WLGA this cross party programme will give Councillors an opportunity to develop some of the key skills and knowledge required by Members in a senior position.

In order to maximise Members ability to attend, this training is being provided on Saturday mornings from 9.30am to 12.30pm. Modules include Strategic and Political Leadership, Finance, Performance and Improvement, Charing Skills and Public Speaking and are facilitated by a mix of external facilitators, the WLGA and Officers.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no specific equalities implications arising as a result of this report.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 It is estimated that the Mandatory Induction Training will be delivered by officers and cost £1,000 per Council term. It is envisaged that the Mandatory Regulatory Committee Training will be provided by a mix of Officers and Specialist Trainers at an estimated cost of £5,000 per council term. The Mandatory Personnel Training will be provided by Officers. Officer led training will be provided as part of their existing duties.
- 6.2 The Recommended/Requested Training will be delivered by either Officers or Specialist Trainers. Officers can absorb the time required to develop and deliver the training as part of their existing duties and specialist trainers are estimated to cost £6,000 per Council term.
- 6.3 There are no costs associated with the e-learning modules piloted by the All Wales Academy.
- 6.4 The additional costs associated with training including the Requested/Senior Councillor training will be met from the Council's existing Members' budget provision.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The administration of the programme means additional tasks for Democratic Services staff but these will be met through existing budgets.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 There are no consultation responses not contained in the report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That Members note the update on the Members Support and Development Programme arrangements and approve the Elected Member Development Programme 2015/17.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To further strengthen the Council's corporate governance framework by providing additional support for Members.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Attendance Breakdown Annual Refresher Training Sessions 2014

Appendix 2 – Timetable of the 2015 Improving Governance Member Training and Support Programme

Appendix 3 – Mandatory Training Feedback Analysis

Appendix 4 – Requested Training Programme

Appendix 5 – Senior Councillor Development Programme