



CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2015/18

FOREWORD FROM GROUP LEADERS

Local Authorities have an obligation to ensure that they support effective elected Members' working to provide and improve corporate governance, local democracy and local services.

Caerphilly County Borough Council recognises that Councillors have a pivotal role in taking forward the improvement agenda and that its success will depend on elected Members having the capacity to provide best possible services to its residents.

The Council is committed to providing the vital democratic arrangements and support services to ensure that Members are able to effectively fulfil the requirements of their office and develop a culture where learning and development are "the norm".

Effective Member Development is essential to ensure that Councillors update their knowledge and learn new skills, because all Members have a common need for continuing development to meet the ever increasing and changing challenges of their individual and political roles as well as contributing to national, local and community demands. The authority wishes to help Members recognise and develop skills and knowledge to help them fulfil their Councillor role and assist them in preparing for more senior positions.

As leaders of the political groups represented on the Council and with the full support of our elected colleagues, the Chief Executive and Corporate Management Team, we are committed to ensuring that the Council provides the best development opportunities for Members to enable them to fulfil the expectations of the electorate. We believe that this strategy will assist Members in providing strong leadership for both the Council and improving services for our communities.

Councillor Keith Reynolds
Leader of Council and the Labour Group

Councillor Colin Mann
Leader of the Plaid Cymru Group

Councillor Dave Rees
Leader of the Independent Group

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

1. Introduction

1.1 Where ever possible, Caerphilly County Borough Council aims to provide continuously improving services which inevitably means the need for Councillors to learn and embrace new roles and responsibilities.

1.2 The Council is operating in a constantly changing environment, having to respond to reducing budgets while taking on new responsibilities. This requires elected Members and a workforce that is flexible and responsive to change. Recent Welsh Government announcements have presented the Council with an extremely challenging and demanding programme which includes:-

- The possibility of local government re-organisation.
- Responding to significant budget cuts year on year.
- Collaborating with other local authorities and agencies to improve service delivery.
- New and challenging roles for elected Members.
- The expected new duty to scrutinise other public service providers.

1.3 In embracing these challenges, the Council must continue to develop its Members so that they:

- Are responsive to change and able to prioritise.
- Maximise the use of all available resources.
- Can challenge the Council and other organisations fairly and identify best practise.
- Are focussed on maximising the outcomes provided by public services within the challenging climate of diminishing financial resources.
- Are influential and effective community leaders.

2. Purpose

2.1 To enable Councillors to operate efficiently and effectively in fulfilling their various roles it has been the Council's policy to identify the learning and development needs of all Councillors.

2.2 For a number of years Caerphilly County Borough Council has adopted a proactive approach towards Member Development and support in the form of internally and externally facilitated presentations, seminars and workshops as well as through specific training courses. The Council has supported Members' development through the allocation of a specific budget and applied its policy on an equal basis to all 73 Members as well as supporting co-opted members of the standards and scrutiny committees. This system was formalised in 2007 when the Council was awarded the WLGA's Charter for Member Support and Development.

2.3 The Council recognises the need to provide opportunities and support for members and their learning and development needs. Charter status underlines the continuing importance of training and development for Members and ensures future provision will be based on need, provided by suitably qualified personnel where the quality of training is monitored for quality and provided to members on an equal basis,

3. Member Development Strategy – Aims and Objectives

3.1 Member Development refers to any development activities or training programmes specifically designed to improve the knowledge, skills and abilities of elected Members in their varied roles.

3.2 This strategy aims to equip Members with the skills and knowledge they need in their current (as set out in their role descriptions) and future roles. To ensure that this strategy meets the needs of members and the Council, activities will be properly planned, resourced, monitored and evaluated.

3.3 The strategy's main objectives are:

- To achieve a clear and shared understanding of the various Member roles;
- To improve the performance of senior post holders aided by annual Personal Support and Development Interviews;
- To provide an integrated induction and on going role skills and knowledge programme of development opportunities for all Members;
- To provide support tailored to the needs of Members based on individual training needs analysis;
- To monitor the impact of the strategy and use feedback to improve over time and celebrate success.

3.4 The Council will provide elected Members with flexible and responsive training and development that is based on individual and organisational needs. This will maximise the effectiveness of Members in their various roles to ensure that Caerphilly County Borough Council will be regarded as a leader in the provision of support to elected Members and deserving of Charter status.

3.5 On 22nd April 2014 full Council approved the introduction of 3 specific levels of member training; Mandatory, Recommended and Requested.

- a. Mandatory Training involves training associated with Members' statutory responsibilities, Audit Committee and 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 is training targeted at specific roles, and will include; chairing skills for committee chairs, scrutiny training for scrutiny committee members, cabinet member training on their roles and responsibilities, performance review training for those in receipt of a senior salary, members of committees will receive specific training on the changes to legislation and committee skills.
- 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.

4. **Implementing the Charter Requirements**

- 4.1 It is fundamental to its success that Members take a leading role in its development, will oversee its implementation, willingly participate with the requirements of the Charter and play a full role in evaluating and monitoring its progress and effectiveness.
- 4.2 The Wales Charter for Member Support and Development sets out a rigorous and structured approach for member development. Set out below are the Charter's main requirements and the Council's approach to their implementation:
- 4.3 **Members committing support to the strategy and a learning culture by participating in Charter requirements** – At a meeting of full Council in February 2006 Members unanimously agreed that the Council should aim for Charter status. Members re-affirmed their commitment to the provisions of the Charter at full Council in October 2010 and (date to be inserted). Members will be fully involved in the development and monitoring of this strategy going forward.
- 4.4 **Undertaking a training and development needs analysis with each Member to identify individual and collective development requirements.** These will be undertaken through personal development questionnaires and an invitation to attend a subsequent interview if this is preferred. This exercise will be undertaken with Members, every 2 years to ensure that the authority remains up-to-date with Member requirements and can be responsive to new organisational changes as they emerge.
- 4.5 **Creating Personal Development Plans for all Members within six months of the Charter submission.** This will be completed following each biennial training needs analysis survey.
- 4.6 **Responding to the development needs of Members** identified in their Personal Development Plans on the basis that activities may need to be prioritised according to demand and within available resources.

- 4.7 **Devising and publishing a biennial Member Development Programme** that is based on Members training needs analysis and sets out development opportunities available to Members. The programme will be approved by the Democratic Services Committee.
- 4.8 **Personal Support and Development Interviews (PSDIs)** will be undertaken on a Member to Member basis. These will begin with Cabinet Members having PSDIs and followed by all Members in receipt of a Special Responsibility Allowance. There is an agreed cascading structure for undertaking the PSDIs. The outcome of the PSDIs will inform Members' Personal Development Plans and, subsequently, the training programmes provided by the Council.
- 4.9 **Members are Supported with Role Descriptions** – These have been drafted and agreed for the following roles; Leader; Deputy Leaders; Cabinet Members; Chairs and Vice Chairs of Scrutiny, Planning, Licensing, Rights of Way, Democratic Services and Audit Committees and all other Members to include their local ward role.

5. **Strategy Delivery**

- 5.1 The Member "Champion" for this strategy is Councillor Christine Forehead, Cabinet Member for Human Resources and Governance. The Democratic Services Committee will oversee the implementation of this strategy and agree and review training and development activities for elected Members by:
- Ensuring that Member Development becomes part of the overall mainstream organisational activity.
 - Providing advice on Members Support Services, particularly Member Development.
 - Coordinating the Member Development Programme.
 - Monitoring progress against the Strategy's objectives and the implementation of members training, support and development more widely.
- 5.2 All Member training and development activities provided as a result of this Strategy will:
- Be secured from effective and appropriate training providers or facilitators from within or outside the authority.
 - Respond to the needs of Members for method and style of delivery.
 - Be provided taking into account the principles of the Council's Equality of Opportunity Policy and be arranged at convenient times and locations.

6. Evaluation of the Strategy

6.1 Progress within the strategy will be monitored and evaluated by the Democratic Services Committee.

6.2 The development of Members as a result of the activities will be assessed by themselves with support of senior members if participating in the Personal Support and Development Interviews.

7. Resources

7.1 A amount is included in the Member Services budget for Members Training and Development activities. The Head of Democratic Services has statutory responsibility for Member Development and is supported in this on a practical day-to-day basis by the Democratic Services Manager and Democratic Services Officer. Other officers will be expected to support this Strategy by providing in-house development activities.