

Report To: Council

Date of Meeting: 10 April 2018

Lead Member: Councillor Mark Young, Lead Member for Corporate Standards

Report Author: Steve Price, Democratic Services Manager

Title: Member Training and Development

1. What is the report about?

This report provides an update on member training issues.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

To facilitate a discussion on member training and development and the identification of 'mandatory' training.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That Council debates member training and development and outlines its approach in respect of mandatory and discretionary training and potential sanctions for non-attendance at 'mandatory' training.

4. Report details

4.1 Feedback from members after the 2008 elections indicated that the initial training programme for the new Council was inadequate; whilst members in 2012 felt that there was too much training being offered at the start of that Council. As a result the training provided since the 2017 elections has been aimed to be somewhere in between the two previous programmes in terms of intensity and scope.

4.2 Over the first days and weeks of this current Council term training and introductions were provided on the Code of Conduct; ICT (including the use of iPads for Council business); the Council's services and corporate governance; and on role or skills specific areas such as chairing Scrutiny committees or for matters within the Planning, Licensing, Cabinet and Corporate Governance Committee remits. These have been followed by some repeated sessions and also new areas to cover the range of roles and responsibilities held by elected members with further training sessions being developed.

4.3 In 2014 the previous Council decided:

- that the following 'generic' mandatory training would be attended by all members:
 - Code of Conduct

- Safeguarding / Corporate Parenting / Child Protection
 - Finance
 - Equalities
 - Induction (structure of Council, Constitution and Data Protection).
- In addition Council decided that some role specific mandatory training, over and above the generic mandatory training shown above, must be attended by members undertaking the relevant roles (though other members could attend too if they wished to do so).
 - Chairing skills (for Chairs and Vice-Chairs of all Committees)
 - Scrutiny (Chairing) *for the Scrutiny Committee chairs*
 - Group Leaders
 - Cabinet (to include public speaking and talking to the media)
 - Planning Committee
 - Licensing Committee

- 4.4 All members are required under the Council's Code of Conduct to attend Code of Conduct training and all members have done so. Owing to the importance of decisions made at the Planning Committee being taken by members with appropriate knowledge of planning legislation and policies, the previous Council's requirement for all planning Committee members to complete 2 planning training sessions each year has been carried forward. The sanction for non-compliance is that a member who has not undertaken the necessary training would not vote on planning matters. Planning Committee members have again responded well to these requirements.
- 4.5 This new Council is now asked to confirm its own 'mandatory' training requirements for all members and for those in certain roles. The Previous Council did not set any sanctions (other than that for the Planning Committee) if a member failed to undertake mandatory training, and Council is requested to clarify its current position on this.
- 4.6 Any training identified as being 'mandatory' may need to be repeated or offered at appropriate times to enable members to fulfil their obligations, and this commitment of resources is a material consideration when considering how many areas should be mandated. However, E-learning for members is being developed and will be available soon for a variety of modules including safeguarding and domestic violence and will offer more convenient access to certain courses.
- 4.7 Personal development reviews have been offered to all members and those reviews will be arranged over the coming months for members who have accepted or who now wish to accept them. It is important to note that personal development reviews are not performance appraisals; they are one way to identify and support a councillor's training and development needs.

5. **How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

This report does not directly contribute to the Corporate Priorities though appropriately trained and supported elected members will contribute to the Council's performance at strategic, policy development and decision-taking levels.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

The majority of the training plan is provided by the Council's officers. This does not require extra funding but does require officer time. For some training areas external facilitation is required which would need to be contained within the member training budget.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

This report does not require an Assessment.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

The Democratic Services Committee considered an overview of the issues raised in this report on member training on the 23rd March 2018. Whilst aware that Council would be asked to determine issues of mandatory training and any sanctions, the Committee was supportive of the training plan and asked for personalised training records to be made available to each member as well as providing access to information about future training topics.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

The Member's budget is currently underspending in 17/18 due to delays in appointment of Cabinet and Committee Chairs following the Council elections. It is the intention to request these funds to be carried forward into 2018/19 in order to fund cost pressures within the service area including training requirements and the determinations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report . A full review of the budget will take place during 2018/19 to set a sustainable annual budget going forward.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

Training and development is intended to equip members with the skills and knowledge required for the different roles. Without this in place there is a greater risk in some areas of successful challenges to decisions or referrals to the Public Services Ombudsman, and to poorer performance generally.

11. Power to make the Decision

Local Government (Wales) measure 2011.