

Report To: Council

Date of Meeting: 11 September 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?

On the 10th April 2018 Council considered a report on member training and development and agreed that a further report be submitted in respect of mandatory and discretionary training and possible sanctions.

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; specifically:

- (i) The training courses which all members will have to complete;
- (ii) The training courses which will be mandatory only for members who are undertaking a particular role (e.g. as a member of a committee or in a senior leadership role such as in Cabinet or a chair of a committee etc);
- (iii) The period of time allowed to members to complete each mandatory training course; and
- (iv) The sanctions or other measures which will be applied to members who have not completed the mandatory training applicable to them in the timescales set by the Council.

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 In April members 'commended the excellent standard of the in-house training which had been provided' [during this new Council term].

Mandatory Training 2014

- 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).
- 4.4 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
- 4.5 The Previous Council did not set any sanctions (other than that for the Planning Committee) if a member failed to undertake mandatory training.

Mandatory Training 2018

- 4.6 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.
- 4.7 This new Council is now asked to confirm its own 'mandatory' training requirements for all members and for those in certain roles. In April's Council meeting the areas below were highlighted as being recommended or suggested to be mandatory:
- Code of Conduct (*training is a requirement under the Code of Conduct*)
 - Planning Committee (*adherence as mandatory training has been maintained; training has been mandatory for Planning Committee members only*)
 - Licensing Committee (*for Licensing Committee members only*)
 - Finance
 - Corporate Parenting
 - Safeguarding
 - Data Protection

- 4.8 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. E-learning for members is being developed and will offer modules including safeguarding and domestic violence. In some instances e-learning modules will be a cost-effective and convenient way for members to access training.

Sanctions

- 4.9 Councillors are office holders elected by their constituents and not employees of the Council. This distinction means that the measures available to enforce adherence by officers to mandatory training will not necessarily be available for members.
- 4.10 The Council could however take certain measures including:
- (a) Agree a clear expectation that certain roles will not be available to members who have not undertaken the necessary training. A current example is that members of the Planning Committee who have failed to complete two planning-related training sessions each year will not vote on planning issues.
 - (b) The publication of either all training attendance records on the Council's website or just those relating to mandatory training.
 - (c) Reporting on member compliance with their mandatory training to a public committee. This could be the Council's Standards Committee or its Corporate Governance Committee. These reports would be available on the Council's website and the committee could call members to account for their non-compliance at a public meeting.

Personal Development Reviews

- 4.11 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 and will be a factor in the size and complexity of the training programme that can be delivered. 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?

In addition to full Council's debate in April 2018 outlined in this report, the Democratic Services Committee considered an overview of the issues 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 underspent by £53k in 2017/18 due to delays in appointment of Cabinet and Committee Chairs following the Council elections. Cabinet agreed for 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 has taken place to set a sustainable annual budget for 2018/19 and it is currently estimated that £31k of this underspend is required.

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.