

| | |
|--|--|
| Meeting of: | Democratic Services Committee |
| Date of Meeting: | Monday, 16 November 2020 |
| Relevant Scrutiny Committee: | All Scrutiny Committees |
| Report Title: | Member Personal Development and Review Interviews |
| Purpose of Report: | To provide a summary of the Member Development Interviews conducted by the Head of Democratic Services |
| Report Owner: | Head of Democratic Services |
| Responsible Officer: | Jeff Rees, Head of Democratic Services |
| Elected Member and Officer Consultation: | This is an internal matter and no consultation has, therefore, been necessary |
| Policy Framework: | This is a matter for Executive decision |
| Executive Summary: | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide a summary of the Member Development Interviews conducted by the Head of Democratic Services between November 2019 and February 2020 and to inform the Council's ongoing Member Development Programme. | |

Recommendations

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the "themes" and, where practicable, all individual training needs identified, be provided for within the Council's Member Development Programme up to the Council elections in May 2022.

Reason for Recommendations

1. To inform the Committee of the outcome of the Member Development Interview process and inform the Council's ongoing Member Development Programme.

1. Background

- 1.1 As provided for within the Local Government (Wales) Measure, all Members have been afforded the opportunity of a Personal Development Interview (to be conducted by the Head of Democratic Services). Initially, the interviews were arranged for all Members in receipt of a Senior Salary. The programme was then "rolled out", offering all Members the opportunity of an interview.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1 17 of the 47 Members on the Council (including all Members in receipt of a Senior Salary) took up the opportunity of having a Personal Development Interview. By their very nature, the discussions at interviews varied amongst Members. The opportunity was taken to discuss:
 - Members' current roles and responsibilities;
 - Any specific tasks Members envisaged carrying out during the year ahead;
 - Identifying areas of existing and / or new knowledge which Members felt might help in their undertaking of their various roles;
 - Any "barriers" to undertaking their role effectively;
 - Training / development feedback and future requirements.
- 2.2 The above elements, in turn, then enabled an assessment to be made of identified training / development needs. The intention is that, unless impracticable, the specific individual and / or collective, needs would be provided for and met within the Council's ongoing Member Development Programme through to the Council elections in May 2022 and linked to the Member Local Competency Framework and delivered in part via further Member Expo events which Members will be encouraged to attend.
- 2.3 As Head of Democratic Services, I found the exercise to be both interesting and informative and a very useful tool to inform the Council's ongoing Member Development Programme. In summary, the interviews resulted in:

- Requests for individual "refresher" training including topics such as ICT, Rules of Debate and Safeguarding;
 - A general awareness amongst Members of the importance of maintaining awareness of legislative, and other, changes (particularly within Quasi-Judicial areas such as Planning and Licensing, but also in respect in any emerging significant legislation likely to impact on the Council such as collaborative joint committees;
 - Requests for training and development in areas including
 - Chairing and Questioning,
 - Public Speaking,
 - Media Skills;
 - Social Media Skills (advanced)
 - Financial Management of Budgets.
 - A willingness on the part of Members to participate in different forms of training and development (including e-learning).
- 2.4** By the time of the meeting Members should have received their individual login credentials to iDev which will allow them to access e-learning modules e.g. Mandatory Equalities Refresher.
- 2.5** Significantly, Members clearly recognised the ever-changing nature of local government and the pace of change. In this context, there is a clear acknowledgement amongst Members of the importance of maintaining awareness of the Council's Corporate Priorities and emerging initiatives. This would include, for instance, continuing the Member Expo events to keep Members abreast, informed and participate in matters shaping these priorities / initiatives.

Well-being of Members

- 2.6** The pandemic is a challenge for everybody's wellbeing and all Members have been under considerable and ongoing pressure. It is vital that Members seek additional support if they need it or if their mental health is under strain. Simply talking to someone will help. Heads of Democratic Services will be able to arrange access to sources of help and information. The following sites might also be useful:

The WLGA workbook on stress management and personal resilience is available [here](#).

NHS guidance on stress and anxiety [here](#).

The LGA "Maintaining your own Resilience as a Councillor" [Webinar](#) (and [slides](#)) – 14th September.

Also from the LGA the Stress Management & Resilience [E-Learning Module](#).

Academi Wales has some resilience and Covid related resources [here](#).

- 2.7 If Members are experiencing intimidation and/or harassment, speak to support staff. The following guidance on the WLGA website may also be useful:

Personal Safety and online Abuse Guidance [here](#).

Handling Intimidation guidance [here](#).

and “Don’t Feed the Trolls” from the Centre for Countering Digital Hate [here](#).

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act sets out a duty for the Council to ensure the Sustainable Development Principle underpins all of the work undertaken by the Authority. Requiring us to demonstrate how decisions are formulated, taken and scrutinised via five ways of working, the Act underpins the Council's Corporate Plan. The approach to developing the Programme is collaborative and involving and the contents of the Act will be used to inform the development of specific sessions within the Member Development Programme over the coming years.
- 3.2 Office 365 Member rollout should have been completed by the meeting date of Committee, with training sessions being held over the week commencing 9th November, 2020.

4. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 4.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report. Future Member Development provision will continue to comprise a mixture of delivery which, whilst largely delivered internally, will also include external facilitators where considered appropriate and beneficial.

Employment

- 4.2 The main implication will be in terms of officer time.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 4.3 The Council is required to comply with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 in terms of its support for Members.
- 4.4 All Members of the Council were afforded the opportunity of an individual Personal Development Interview with the Head of Democratic Services.

5. Background Papers

Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and associated guidance documents.