

Meeting of:	Democratic Services Committee
Date of Meeting:	Monday, 29 June 2026
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	No Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Urgent Decision Procedure Used (If yes, why)	Not Applicable
Item Type	Part I
Report Title:	Draft Member Development Strategy 2027-32
Portfolio Holder:	Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources
Strategic Leadership Team:	Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer)
Lead Officer:	James Langridge-Thomas, Head of Democratic Services

1.0 What is this report about?

1.1 The Council has had such a Strategy in place for a number of years. The last review of the Strategy was undertaken in 2021. The Strategy sets out the approach that the Council takes regarding the development and support of its Elected Members.

1.2 The refreshed Strategy attached at Appendix A has been updated to reflect the principles of Vale 2030 alongside updates to the wider structure, but its ethos remains largely unchanged from 2021 as it is still fit for purpose with the following main themes continuing to be relevant:

- a commitment to support the development needs of all Elected Members to assist them in carrying out the roles which they undertake during their term of office;
- a process for identifying the local and national, collective and individual development needs of all Members;
- the provision of a personal review process which is available to all Members, and which will enable them to review and identify their personal development needs.

1.3 A comprehensive Induction and Development Programme was undertaken following the 2022 Local Government Election which has informed the structure for the 2022 proposed schedule.

1.4 If agreed, this Strategy will inform the development of the Member Induction Programme to commence in May 2027, which will be shared at the next meeting of Democratic Services Committee.

2.0 What are the Recommendations?

	Recommendations – What and How?	Reason for Recommendation – Why?
2.1	T H A T the Committee is requested to consider the topics contained within the table attached at Appendix B and endorse the content, including the learning areas which are considered essential (mandatory) or recommended (non-essential) and that this be included as part of the refresh of the Member Development Strategy.	In acknowledgement of essential and recommended learning subject areas to be included in the Council's Strategy.
2.4	T H A T the Committee is requested to endorse the refreshed Member Development Strategy attached at Appendix A to inform the development of the future Member Induction Programme and refer the same to Cabinet for consideration and approval.	To seek Cabinet's approval of the refreshed Strategy.

3.0 What is the background to this report?

3.1 The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires Local Authorities to secure the provision of reasonable training and development opportunities for its Members. The Measure does not define what constitutes reasonable training and development. However, Welsh Government guidance recommends that Local Authorities provide opportunities for what is essential for a Member to perform their role effectively.

3.2 The work of a Councillor is complex and challenging and the political, legislative and local landscape in which they work is changing constantly. Communities have high expectations of their elected representatives from the day of their election and throughout their period of office. It is essential, therefore, that elected Members are given every assistance in preparing to be able to quickly and successfully navigate the numerous different aspects of local government, underpinned by a cohesive Strategy.

3.3 The Council has had in place for a number of years a Member Development Strategy which has been periodically reviewed and refreshed to ensure it keeps up to date with legislative changes and best practice.

3.4 An Induction and Development Programme is an important development opportunity as it enables Members to quickly become familiar with how the Council works, the rules and procedures under which it operates and the complexities of the elected member role.

3.5 The Member Development Strategy and proposed Member Induction programme will be underpinned by several wider strategic themes including:

3.5.1 The Council's Corporate Plan, Vale 2030

3.5.2 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

3.5.3 21st Century Councillor (University of Birmingham).

3.6 A Candidate and Elected Member Handbook will sit alongside the Induction and Development Programme. The Handbook will help to manage Election Candidate expectations of the Elected Member role and ensure that Elected Members have important information available to them prior to their first day in office. The Handbook is currently in production and will be presented at a future meeting of the Committee.

3.7 Following the 2022 election, a variety of methods of feedback were undertaken were used and evaluated, with the learning informing the development of this programme. A summary of the learnings has been included later in the report.

4.0 What issues are there to be considered?

4.1 The refreshed Strategy is attached at Appendix A and now includes updated information relating to essential (mandatory) and desirable (non-mandatory) that cover learning areas which are aimed at supporting elected Members undertaking their diverse roles. It is important to note that the Committees considered reflect the Council's current arrangements and will be updated if there are any further changes to the Council's Constitution.

4.2 The proposed learning has been identified on the following basis:

4.2.1 Essential (mandatory) – considered to be core to both new and returning Members; attendance to be monitored and encouraged via Group Leaders

4.2.2 Desirable (non-mandatory) - considered to be optional as individuals may already have a working knowledge or not wholly relevant to their role, particularly for returning Members who may already be aware of the area.

4.3 Where a Member has not undertaken mandatory training, this may impact upon their ability to sit on a Committee upon appointment. For examples, Members cannot sit on Planning or Statutory Licensing Committees until their training has been undertaken.

4.4 It is proposed that the table of learning topics attached at Appendix B forms part of the refreshed Strategy. The inclusion of the learning topics within the Strategy, will ensure that the appropriate status is given to these learning areas, legitimise the requirement for Members to participate in learning and development and embed this principle within future learning programmes.

4.5 The Committee is therefore requested to consider the topics contained within the table and endorse the content, including the learning areas which are considered essential (mandatory) or recommended (non-essential). Learning topics have been updated based on the most recent understanding of the new areas of expected knowledge requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 in relation to the Member role.

4.6 In addition to the above inclusions, it is recommended that the WLGA Member Competency Framework and role descriptions for Members also form part of the refreshed Strategy

considering its link with providing support and training for Members. The Framework is currently being reviewed in partnership between the WLGA and Heads of Democratic Services from across Wales and will be shared with Members upon finalisation.

4.7 Following the 2022 Local Government Election, a comprehensive Member Induction and Development Programme was undertaken over the first six months following the election but with final completion by the end of the calendar year as follows:

- From the day of the Election, the Programme was broken down into three phases:

Phase 1 - The first two weeks following the Election prior to the Annual General Meeting [May].

Phase 2 - When meeting cycles began over a two month period prior to the August Recess [June and July].

Phase 3 - The remaining four months of the calendar year [September - December].

- 26 Training Topics were delivered over 45 sessions. Of those, 14 (31%) were day-time sessions (between 09.00 and 16.00) and 31 (69%) were evening sessions (16.00 - 21.00).

Most topics had at least two sessions scheduled; one daytime and one evening to help with Member availability unless it was a session facilitated by an external presenter or not deemed necessary because of low Member numbers; - 12 of 26 Training Topics were labelled as essential (mandatory), equating to 46% of the Programme. To maximise attendance and being sympathetic to Members' personal commitments, mop-up sessions were arranged on a 1:1 or small group basis for mandatory topics. During the induction process, feedback was sought from participants via a Microsoft Forms survey.

4.8 Previous feedback gathered from the induction process has identified the following:

4.8.1 Key findings from the Microsoft Forms submissions by Members, aggregated from individual sessions feedback identifies that:

4.8.1.1 The information provided during sessions was relevant and informative but the length of sessions were too long. 1.5 hours should be the maximum including ample time for Members to discuss points raised during the session with the facilitators either during or after the formal session content being delivered. Careful consideration should be given to the time and date for when sessions are held.

4.8.1.2 Members appreciated sessions that were scenario based and/or gave practical examples to help encourage engagement in the session. A Seminar/presentation style was not always the best approach especially with more dry subject matters. Sessions that used visual presentations and actively encouraged honest conversations were the most engaging. Care should also be given to the acronyms used during sessions and materials provided after the session.

4.8.1.3 Refresher training should be provided automatically, especially when there are changes to legislation that impact decision making.

4.8.1.4 It would be helpful to tailor the question within the post-session survey to ask if anything could be improved specifically for that particular training session.

4.8.1.5 An Officer flowchart provided to Members in the very early days following the election that demonstrates who officers are, the operational hierarchy and an idea of individual duties.

- 4.8.1.6 Practical suggestions for the future:
- Elected Members to visit the Contact One Vale (C1V) Centre,
 - Practice 'Mock' Committee Meetings (especially for those held remotely) prior to the first formal meeting,
 - Ongoing ICT training on Microsoft365 software and programmes including user basics and advice on how to best contact Officers using the technology available.

- 4.8.1.7 Topics that Members could of benefited from having a bit more time spent on and/or a stand-alone training session being arranged:
- Planning Committee Site Visit Practicalities,
 - Public Participation in Committee Meetings,
 - Section 106 Monies,
 - How to Undertake Casework,
 - The Wellbeing and Future Generations (Wales) Act and its role in the Council's Decision Making, - Poverty Awareness,
 - Ways to increase local procurement of goods and services; and
 - When and How to complete an Equality Impact Assessment.

4.8.2 In 2024, Councillors nationally were asked to complete the WLGA Member Induction Survey, with Vale of Glamorgan Results included in Appendix C. Despite the low number of recipients, the views provided were aligned to feedback from other Councillors across Wales in that;

- 4.8.2.1 There was a split between Councillors surrounding the level of induction when considering if too much or too little.
- 4.8.2.2 Preferred methods of induction included face to face sessions or online workshops. Councillors collectively identified e-learning was their least preferred learning method.
- 4.8.2.3 89% (8/9) found sessions delivered by Officers to be useful.
- 4.8.2.4 When asked to identify topics they feel should be prioritised during induction; areas included Code of Conduct, Planning, Managing Social Media, Scrutiny, Rules of Debate and Equalities.

4.9 The Council will also be facilitating 'Becoming a Councillor' Open Day Events for the public in Autumn 2026 that will be advertised in local newspapers and via the Council's social media channels, as part of the Induction element of the programme. Three 1.5hr sessions will be offered over the course of one week at different times of the day to provide any interested parties with the opportunity to question Officers on the Elected Member role.

5.0 How has evidence been used to inform the report, including the views of others?

5.1 As detailed within the report, there has been a range of evidence used to inform this report including learning from previous induction programmes in 2017 and 2022, Welsh Local Government Association and Local Government Association good practice guidance, Member and Officer feedback alongside learning from other Local Authorities in Wales.

6.0 What are the next steps if the recommendations are approved?

6.1 If agreed, this will form the basis of the Council's approach to Member Development and Induction for May 2027 onwards which will be delivered by Democratic Services.

7.0 How does this report support Vale 2030 and Reshaping?

7.1 Member Development and Induction ensures that Councillors are equipped to support in their various roles in delivering all aspects of Vale 2030. The approach has been designed and adjusted based upon previous learning, demonstrating how the Council strives to "Be the Best Council We Can Be".

8.0 How does this demonstrate the Five Ways of Working?

8.1 The proposed approaches taking a long-term view of the support required for Members and seeks to prevent future challenges in undertaking their role through involving them in the design of proposed future approaches. The strategy and proposed induction programme have been developed in collaboration with a range of internal and external stakeholders.

Resources

9.0 Finance

9.1 The 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. Any expenditure incurred on external facilitators will be met from within the existing budget

10.0 Workforce

10.1 There are no direct impacts to the workforce as a result of this report.

11.0 Legal and Equalities

11.1 **Does an Equalities Impact Assessment need to be completed? If not, why?** An Equalities Impact Assessment has been not completed because this is an internal policy decision which does not have a direct impact upon residents within the Vale of Glamorgan.

11.2 The proposed policy demonstrates how the Council is meeting its legislative requirements under Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, and various other legislation such as Local Government Act 2000 and Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

Key Contacts

12.1 **Who are the primary officers to contact with any comments and/or queries on the report?**

<p>Lead Officer: James Langridge-Thomas, Operational Manager (and Statutory Head of) Democratic Services jangridge-thomas@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk 01446709457</p>	<p>Democratic Services Officer: James Langridge-Thomas, Operational Manager (and Statutory Head of) Democratic Services jangridge-thomas@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk 01446709457</p>
---	--

Appendix

Appendix A – Member Development Strategy 2027-32

Appendix B – Proposed Essential (Mandatory) and Desirable (Non-Essential)

Appendix C - WLGA Member Induction Survey – Vale of Glamorgan Results

Background Documents

[Vale of Glamorgan Member Development Strategy 2022](#), Democratic Services Committee, Wednesday 7th July 2021

[Member Induction and Development Programme Update and outcome of the Learning Needs Survey](#), Democratic Services Committee, Tuesday 11th April 2023

[Member Development Programme – Phase 4 Progress Update](#), Democratic Services Committee, Monday 2nd March 2026

[Local Government \(Wales\) Measure 2011](#)

[Local Government and Elections \(Wales\) Act 2021](#)

[Statutory and Non-Statutory Guidance for Principal Councils in Wales](#)

[WLGA Councillor Development Competency Framework](#)

[LGA Briefing for New Councillors](#)

[21st Century Councillor Revisited](#), University of Birmingham

**MEMBER DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY
2027-32**

VALE of GLAMORGAN



BRO MORGANNWG

Contents

Foreword	2
Introduction.....	3
21 st Century Councillor	5
Vale 2030	6
Member Development Strategy – Aims and Objectives	8
Implementing the Strategy.....	11
Roles and Responsibilities	12
The Member Development Champion (Chair of the Democratic Services Committee).....	12
All Members.....	13
Political Group Leaders	13
Directors and Heads of Services	14
Head of Democratic Services	14
How Member Development Will be Undertaken.....	15
Core Principles of Member Development.....	15
Key Themes	16
Phase 1: Core Knowledge and Skills.....	16
Phase 2: Council and Committee Issues.....	16
Phase 3: Corporate Development	17
Phase 4: Service Specific Knowledge.....	17
Phase 5: Refresher Training and On-Going Development	17
Wider Member Development.....	17
Digital and ICT	17
Well-being	18
Other Training Opportunities	18
Monitoring and Review.....	19

Foreword

Effective local democracy depends on knowledgeable, skilled and confident elected Members who can represent their communities, make informed decisions and provide leadership within an increasingly complex public sector environment. In Wales, the roles and responsibilities of Councillors continue to evolve in response to legislative change, rising public expectations, financial pressures and the need to work collaboratively with partners and communities.

This Member Development Strategy sets out the Council's commitment to supporting Members in carrying out their roles effectively. It recognises that learning and development is a continuous process that extends beyond induction, enabling Members to develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours required to fulfil their individual responsibilities and contribute positively to the collective governance and leadership of the authority.

The Strategy is aligned with the principles of good governance, equality and inclusion, and the Welsh local government legislative framework. It supports the work of the Democratic Services Committee and reflects the Council's duty to provide adequate support for Members. By investing in Member development, the Council seeks to strengthen democratic accountability, improve decision-making, and ensure that elected Members are well equipped to serve the communities of the Vale both now and in the future.

The Council and with the full support of elected colleagues, the Chief Executive and Strategic Leadership Team, is committed to ensuring that the Council provides the best development opportunities for Members to enable them to fulfil the expectations of the electorate, building upon the recognised good practice of previous Member Development strategies and recent positive changes in how Members are supported to undertake their role.

Rob Thomas, Chief Executive

Dr. Ian Johnson, Chair of Democratic Services Committee

Introduction

Member Training and development is required by the Local Government Act 2000 and Local Government Measure (Wales) 2011, with the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 placing additional duties on Local Government in relation to Member knowledge and development.

The Council has a demonstrable record in improving services, particularly as it responds to several wider factors such as wider economic pressures, increasing use of digital resources and artificial intelligence, and increasing societal expectations. This impacts upon the work of Elected Members significantly, who now must embrace, and adapt to, many different roles and responsibilities.

As outlined within the [21st Century Member – Revisited](#), a number of contextual trials have further developed since the previous Election which have added additional challenge to the role of the Elected Member, who are now required alongside the content outlined within the Strategy, to have a comprehensive understanding of working with complexity, developing and valuing new ways of working and thriving in a new environment.

The [Local Government and Elections \(Wales\) Act 2021](#) places duties on the Council to ensure it is exercising its functions correctly, using resources economically, efficiently and effectively, with governance in place to secure this. Alongside this, [the Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act](#) requires Councils to undertake decisions in line with the Five Ways of Working – Long Term, Prevention, Integration, Collaboration and Involvement.

Operating in a constantly changing environment with reducing budgets whilst also taking on new responsibilities requires Elected Members, Co-opted Members and a workforce that is flexible and responsive to change which will result in new and challenging roles. Various statutory responsibilities are placed on the Council to promote the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the community and to lead, collaborate and co-ordinate the preparation of a few key Strategies in partnership with the Council's public, private, voluntary and community sector partners.

This Strategy has been developed in the context of ongoing changes in Local and National Government, and the wider public sector ecosystem, and with a view to enabling Elected Members and Co-opted Members to meet the challenges and opportunities presented to them, both through legislative changes and drivers in the Council's organisation, the way it delivers services and the way it works with its communities, partners and stakeholders. The Strategy seeks to reaffirm the principles that will govern the Council's approach to Member Development and to set out in broad terms how the aims and objectives of Member Development will be met.

DRAFT

21st Century Councillor

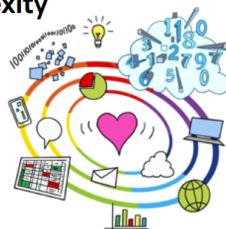
It is against the outlined legislative and societal backdrop that all Members have a pivotal role in the process of helping the Council to improve service delivery, whilst meeting the needs of residents and be supported to develop and become effective Community leaders with the knowledge and skills to represent views effectively.

Whilst the strategy outlines areas of specific skills and knowledge required to undertake this unique Community role, throughout all training opportunities the Council will consider development of “skills as outlined within the [21st Century Councillor](#) (full version in Appendix B); characteristics identified for Councillors to thrive in undertaking their role:

Theme 1 – Working with complexity



Zooming in and zooming out – shifting perspective constantly between the council and the community, the macro and the micro



Keeping the system human – putting residents at the heart of decision making by feeding in what’s happening on the ground



A multi-level diplomat – developing effective partner relationships despite having limited authority and even less money

Theme 2 – Developing and valuing new ways of working



A trusted listener – a contact point for residents in distress



A torchbearer – promoting the council and the place, acting as a role model for others who might want to be councillors



Using social media in safe mode – navigating the fragmented social media environment with care

Theme 3 – Thriving in the new environment



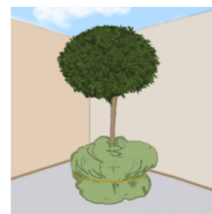
A hybrid connector – building relationships on and offline



A self-developer – committed to expanding their own skills and knowledge



A lightning rod – absorbing hostility and challenge whilst remaining grounded and secure



An evergreen – staying visible and useful all year round whilst finding protection from the harshest winds

Vale 2030

In developing the Council's new Corporate Plan for 2025 – 2030, [Vale 2030](#), the Council identified a vision of “**Strong Communities with a Bright Future**”, underpinned by five Well-being Objectives:



Creating great places to live, work and visit



Respecting and celebrating the environment



Giving everyone a good start in life



Supporting and protecting those who need us



Being the best Council we can be

The Council's values remain unchanged in terms of what the Council expects of its managers and staff in relation to how they do their work and how they will be treated:



These have been embedded across the organisation and have been instrumental in ensuring that the Council has achieved the commitments in the previous Corporate Plan. They have also made a significant difference to the culture of the organisation and how we all work together.

The Council's [Performance Panel Assessment](#) (PPA), undertaken in November 2024, explored several key themes for improvement within the Council, and identified the below areas for which Members will play a key role including:

Planning for Place

Signalling Change

Building on existing, strong partnerships

Governance and using resources effectively

Most notably for the role of Elected Members, the PPA identified several Member specific recommended areas which have been considered as principles to inform this strategy including:

- Exploring ways to better engage members in more proactive and cross chamber collaboration – in both formal and informal ways
- Reviewing the balance between the internal corporate demands placed on members and their role as representatives of their constituents to deliver the Council's vision of place.
- Using the strong local politics as a force for good, whilst ensuring civility in public life is promoted and kept front and centre to encourage respectful and constructive debate including online and in-person meetings.

Elected Members and Co-opted Members will continue to play a vital role in the delivery of the Council's vision and meeting the recommendations of the PPA. Alongside this, the Council also has an ambitious Reshaping portfolio of programmes related to financial savings, cost avoidance and prevention, and service development. It is essential that all Members possess the correct skills and knowledge. Residents and communities expect them to be able to work for them across a range of subjects, using skills and expertise that match the increasingly complex nature of those topics.

As and when legislative requirements change the way the Council is required to work including, its Elected Members, these changes will be considered when planning future Member Development programmes to ensure that Elected Members/ Co-opted Member are enabled to undertake their various roles.

Good quality Member Development arrangements enhance Members' ability to do this by developing:



Member Development Strategy – Aims and Objectives

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires Local Authorities to secure the provision of reasonable training and development opportunities for its Members. The Measure does not define what constitutes reasonable training and development. However, Welsh Government guidance recommends that Local Authorities provide opportunities for what is essential for a Member to perform their role effectively. 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. 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. The Strategy's main objectives are:

- To support newly elected and returning Members with a comprehensive induction process during their first six months in office
- To achieve a clear and shared understanding of the various Member roles, including the purpose, skills and responsibilities of the role.
- To support Members in keeping their learning under review on an annual basis as part of Personal Development Reviews
- To develop a culture of continuous learning and development through the term of office providing role, skills, and knowledge development opportunities for all Members on an ongoing basis.

- To support Members who have identified training needs through analysis with support
- To develop a culture of ongoing evaluation throughout the delivery of the programme, including monitoring the impact of the Strategy, alongside a clear feedback loop with Elected Members.

The Council will provide Elected Members and Co-opted Members with flexible and responsive training and development pathways that are based on individual and organisational needs using a variety of mediums and technologies. This should in turn maximise the effectiveness of all Members in their various roles to ensure that the Vale of Glamorgan Council could be regarded as a leader in the provision of support to elected Members.

As agreed at Democratic Services Committee in July 2025, it is recommended that Personal Development Reviews (PDRs) are undertaken as below:

"Suitably Qualified" persons	Will conduct PDRs on the following Members:
Head of Democratic Services	Leader(s) of Opposition groups in receipt of senior salaries Any un-grouped members
Leader of the Council (in consultation with the Head of Democratic Services)	Executive Members
Group Leaders (in consultation with the Head of Democratic Services)	Chairs of other Committees All other Members

One of the main areas of challenge is how often someone should attend training particular as the workload of Members has increased in recent years. This is for the individual to determine in line with their own learning and development needs, but as far as reasonably practicable, the Council will endeavour to ensure training materials and recordings of sessions are available on a self-service basis to allow for a Member to view at their discretion in line with their own learning needs.

The Democratic Services Committee has determined that those Members will be expected to have such an interview as outlined in the table above and that specific levels of all Member

training are to be considered as Essential (Mandatory), as set out in the Member Learning and Induction Programme Overview (Appendix C) A significant proportion of this programme will be delivered post each local government elections as part of the Council Elected Member/ Co-opted Member induction Programme. This will be supplemented with additional learning sessions, briefings, some of which will flow from the personal development review process.

Member learning and development provided by the Council will adopt and reflect the principles of the Welsh Local Government Associations Elected Member Competency Framework. This is with the objective of attaining consistency in provision of learning and development to Members' and Co-opted Members across Wales. To compliment the Framework the WLGA have developed revised versions of model role descriptions.

Essential Training involves training associated with Members' and Co-opted Members statutory responsibilities e.g. membership requirements of certain Committees such as Planning, Licensing, Audit and Governance Committees etc. and generic themed training to ensure that all Members have the necessary knowledge and skills 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 related Committee functions.

In line with the aspiration of "Being the Best Council We Can Be", we will often need to identify some key areas of training as top priorities for learning in line with strategic priorities or emerging initiatives. Whilst we are not able to position these trainings as essential, it is recommended that Members are proactive in engaging with the training offer to maximise their knowledge and skills.

In addition to the above, the Council has historically taken a proactive view by recommending targeted development at specific roles such as Charing Skills for Committee Chairmen, Scrutiny Training for Scrutiny Committee Members and Committee Questioning Skills. Members and Co-opted Members of committees will also receive specific knowledge building and development briefing sessions on the changes to legislation as and when these arise.

To facilitate knowledge building and development through more innovative ways the Council will continue to deliver Member Expo events centred around key organisational challenges, and provide access to a range of officers from Service areas across the Council.

Requested Training topics can also be incorporated into the ongoing Member Development Programme when identified by individual Members as part of the Councillor training needs analysis survey undertaken periodically.

In addition to more formal learning arrangements, Elected Members will be encouraged to utilise E-Learning opportunities including through the Council’s iDev platform, which offers a range of training courses for individual Members to consider.

Implementing the Strategy

It is fundamental to its success that all Members take a leading role in its delivery and willingly participate with the requirements of the Strategy. The strategy will be delivered using a phased approach as outlined below:

Phase	Dates	Outline
Pre-Election	September 2026 to March 2027	Developing tools and resources to support prospective future Councillors; including Handbooks, drop-in sessions, and updating the Becoming a Councillor web information.
Phase 1 – Core Knowledge and Skills	May 2027	Core training providing an overview of the Council including induction events, ICT set up and how processes such as payroll work alongside more generalised training targeted at all Members.
Phase 2 - Committees	June 2027	Introductory Committee specific training alongside areas required to undertake Committee roles such as Planning, Scrutiny, Licencing and Treasury Management.

Phase	Dates	Outline
Phase 3 – Corporate Development	September to December 2027	Developing knowledge of wider Council areas such as policy development, Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2021, Corporate Parenting and financial management for example.
Phase 4 – Service Specific Knowledge	January to May 2027	Enhancing knowledge area of service areas across the Council at an operational level, undertaken through briefings, expos, iDev and visits.
Phase 5 – Refresher and On-going Development	May 2027 onwards	Undertaking refresher training on core topics alongside training as identified during Member PDR or wider feedback processes.

All Member training and development activities provided because of this Strategy will:

- Be secured from appropriate training providers or facilitators from within or outside the Authority.
- Respond to the needs of Members for method and style of delivery; and
- Be provided taking in to account the principles of the Council's Equality of Opportunity Policy and be arranged at convenient times and locations.

Roles and Responsibilities

All involved within the Council will play a key role in ensuring there Development Strategy is implemented as far as possible.

The Member Development Champion (Chair of the Democratic Services Committee)

and the Democratic Services Committee in consultation with the Head of Democratic Services

will oversee the implementation of this Strategy and agree and review training and development

activities for Elected Members and Co-opted Members by:

- Ensuring that Member Development continues to be part of the overall mainstream organisational activity.
- Providing advice on Members' Support Services, particularly Member Development.
- Co-ordinating the Member Development Programme.
- Promoting Member Development throughout the organisation, including identification of joint Member and officer activities.
- Working collaboratively with Directors and Heads of Service and with other partners in the identification and delivery of activities.
- Monitoring progress against the Strategy's objectives and the implementation of Members' training, support and development more widely; and
- Monitoring the requirement for each Member to be asked to complete an evaluation form after each course or training event.

All Members

- Identify their own development needs and proactively seek out development opportunities to meet them.
- Attend the mandatory induction programme post Local Government Elections and any subsequent By Election and follow-up refresher training and development in core areas, for example Code of Conduct, Finance, Planning, Licensing and Equalities and Diversity.
- Help others to develop through informal mentoring, sharing of learning and so encourage the development of a culture whereby learning and development is regarded as a component of the ongoing success of the Council.
- Develop an understanding of the Council's various roles and responsibilities as outlined within [Section 25 of the Council's Constitution](#).

Political Group Leaders

- Ensure that their Group Members engage fully in the Member Development process especially with all mandatory training elements; recognising shortcomings and proactively seeking out training opportunities.
- Support Group Members with Personal Development Reviews as appropriate.

- Ensure that any Members within their respective group who are in receipt of a Senior Salary undertake an annual review of their development / training requirements.
- Promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Group Members in accordance with the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

Directors and Heads of Services

- Identify key strategic activities that require Member Development.
- Share tools and resources which may support Elected Members in developing their knowledge and skills.
- Provide briefings to Elected Members and Co-opted Members on key areas of service delivery and development and on emerging themes and Council priorities. This is particularly relevant in regard to statutory work programme for the Cabinet Members and separately, Scrutiny Committee work programmes.

Head of Democratic Services

- Oversee that Personal Development and Review interviews are undertaken in respect of all Members who are in receipt of a Senior Salary.
- Afford all non-Senior Salary Members the opportunity of undertaking an annual Personal Development Review interview.
- Identify Member Development requirements and draw up and facilitate / deliver a Member Development Programme accordingly.
- Keep under review the Member Development Strategy and ongoing Member Development Programme through a range of evaluation methods, including periodic reports to the Democratic Services Committee.
- Collaborate with national bodies such as WLGA and LGA alongside partners and training organisations to identify opportunities to enhance Member's skills and knowledge.

How Member Development Will be Undertaken

The activities outlined in the strategy will be delivered through a range of channels including:

- An Induction Programme for new Members and Co-opted Members
- Specific sessions on core areas for all Members following Council elections and subsequently, as appropriate in the light of any major changes (e.g. as the result of significant new legislation)
- Informal Mentoring opportunities are offered for newly Elected Members within each respective political group
- Personal support for Members in developing their individual action plan and identifying priorities for their development; and
- Member Development Programme of knowledge and skills development activities.

Core Principles of Member Development

The following principles will govern the Council's approach to Member Development:

- The process needs to be owned and led by Members.
- Member Development must be considered as a continuous and evolving process informed by ongoing reflections around effectiveness.
- The Strategy will be informed by the offering and undertaking of annual Personal Development Interviews for all Members and the production of associated Training Needs Analyses.
- All newly elected Members and Co-opted Members will be properly inducted into the Council and their roles.
- All Elected Members and Co-opted Members will have the opportunity to benefit from Information Communications Technology (ICT) to assist them in their role and development.
- The provision of training and development will balance the needs of the Council itself, its stated corporate priorities and the individual and group needs of Elected Members and Co-opted Members.
- Learning should be undertaken in a hybrid manner; using a range of digital tools and technologies and available to be viewed following delivery

- The learning programme will consider individual and group needs and all Members' preferred learning styles and where appropriate utilise E-learning modules; and
- Where possible, active consideration will be given to the delivery of training on a collaborative regional basis.

Key Themes

There are four key themes that will continue to run through the Member Development Programme:

Phase 1: Core Knowledge and Skills

Areas covered will include:

- Democracy and Governance, i.e. how Council decision-making works and organisational awareness.
- Code of Conduct and Probity.
- the legal / constitutional framework.
- Welsh Language, Diversity and Equality.
- ICT Skills.
- Member Well-being.
- Information Management and Cyber Security.
- the Role of Councillors, including as a corporate parent.
- Local Government Finance and Financial Responsibilities; and
- Customer relations orientation.

Phase 2: Council and Committee Issues

There will be several issues relevant to Councillors as Members of specific Committees, for example:

- Planning
- Licensing
- Standards Committee
- Governance and Audit Committee Responsibilities.
- Development Skills – Scrutiny
- Development Skills – Executive

- Sitting on Appeals
- Chairing
- Rules of Debate
- Questioning
- Social Media and
- Media Skills.

Phase 3: Corporate Development

This element of the Programme will include issues such as:

- Community Leadership and Partnership Working.
- Community Engagement.
- Strategic Planning.
- Audit and Risk Management.
- Performance Management; and
- Dealing with Complaints.

Phase 4: Service Specific Knowledge

This includes briefings and seminars on the work of individual departments and issues emerging affecting specific service delivery.

Phase 5: Refresher Training and On-Going Development

This includes refresher training on core topics alongside training as identified during Member PDR or wider feedback processes alongside an annual mandatory refresher training on the Code of Conduct.

Wider Member Development

Digital and ICT

All Members will be provided with the appropriate hardware devices and software applications to enable them to carry out the roles effectively and efficiently as Elected Members. The specific specifications of those hardware devices and software applications will be appropriate at the time of purchase. However, laptops will be supplied with Windows operating systems using

Office 365 and mobile phones will be supplied alongside the opportunities for Members to utilise the Council's Bring Your Own Device policy.

All Council buildings broadcast the corporate wi-fi computer network (Lupus) and physical data outlets are located throughout the buildings to enable a wired connection to the computer network if required via their corporately supplied laptops. All Members can access the Council's network from their homes and anywhere where they can connect to the mobile phone network (4G/5G). Members can also access their emails, Teams chat and video calls, and files and documents on their smart phones.

Through collaboration with Democratic Services, Human Resources and Organisational Development and Digital Services, ongoing training is available to all Members to support them in developing skills and knowledge in effectively using their hardware and software through targeted communication activities, e-learning modules through the Council's iDev platform, or face to face drop-in sessions.

ICT provision for Members will be reviewed on a regular basis and particularly before a new intake of Members following an election.

Well-being

A fundamental part of the Member role is ensuring that they are supported to safe and well in undertaking their role. Whilst Member Well-being, including personal safety will be covered as part of the Council's induction programme as has a dedicated MemberNet page, all Members can access a range of tools and resources to support them including Occupational Health, Westfield Health, and a range of online training through the Council's iDev platform.

Other Training Opportunities

Whilst the Council provides a range of induction and development programmes as outlined within this Strategy, Democratic Services will frequently signpost Members to external training opportunities delivered by other organisations which may be of interest to Members such as Welsh Local Government Association, Local Government Association Equality and Human Rights Commission, New Local and Safer Communities Network for example. These will be advertised

via MemberNet to all Members and will be at individuals' discretion as to if and how they engage with these opportunities.

Monitoring and Review

The Member Development Strategy will be monitored on an ongoing basis through a variety of mediums with areas for improvement identified to inform future development. These methods include:

Method	Description
Personal Development Reviews (PDRs)	Members will be asked to consider the impact of training and identify any future training needs.
Post training evaluation	Following any session, a brief evaluation will be requested to assess the quality and impact of training provided.
Annual Members survey	Members will be asked on an annual basis to review the effectiveness of the Member Development opportunities provided throughout the year.
Updates to Democratic Services Committee	An annual update reflecting upon the progress in delivering the Member Development Strategy will be provided to Democratic Services Committee.

Records of attendance will be maintained for all Members. For training facilitated by Democratic Services, this will be recorded on Member's behalf. However, for other sessions, including external training, Members will be required to notify Democratic Services accordingly of any changes to update their training record. This information will be stored centrally and made available to the Monitoring Officer and Group Leaders, with individual records made available upon request.

Appendix B – Member Induction and Training Learning Topics

Training	Required?	Who?
Rules of Debate	Essential	All Members
Access to Information	Essential	All Members
Market Place Induction Sessions	Essential	All Members
Ethics and Standards	Essential	All Members
Information Management and Cyber Security	Essential	All Members
Equalities and Diversity (Socio Economic Duty)	Essential	All Members
Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding/Social Services and Wellbeing Act	Essential	All Members
Finance	Essential	All Members
Member Well-being	Essential	All Members
Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence	Essential	All Members
Licensing	Essential	Licensing Committee Members
Planning	Essential	Planning Committee Members
Introduction to Standards	Essential	Standards Committee Members
Treasury Management	Essential	Governance and Audit Committee Members and Resources Committee Members
Scrutiny Chairing Skills	Essential	Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs
Chairing Skills	Essential	All other Chairs and Vice-Chairs
Governance and Audit Committee	Essential	Governance and Audit Committee Members and

Training	Required?	Who?
		those appointed as Chair or Vice-Chair of other Committees)
Introduction to the Council and local Corporate Governance	Desirable	All Members
Corporate Plan	Desirable	All Members
Member Development Expo event	Desirable	All Members
Introduction to Licensing	Desirable	All Members
Planning for non-Committee Members	Desirable	All Members
Working with the media	Desirable	All Members
Community Leadership and Casework	Desirable	All Members
Introduction to Start Well Scrutiny Committee	Desirable	Start Well Scrutiny Committee Members
Introduction to Live Well Scrutiny Committee	Desirable	Live Well Scrutiny Committee Members
Introduction to Place Scrutiny Committee	Desirable	Place Scrutiny Committee Members
Introduction to Resources Scrutiny Committee	Desirable	Resources Scrutiny Committee Members
Shared Regulatory Services Joint Committee	Desirable	Shared Regulatory Services Joint Committee Members
Introduction to Democratic Services Committee	Desirable	Democratic Services Committee Members
Introduction to Welsh Church Act Estate Trust	Desirable	Welsh Church Act Estate Trust Members

UserNo	Q1. The council in which you are a councillor:	Q2. When did you start as a councillor?	Q3. Generally, do you feel that you have had:	Any Comments:	Q4. What do you feel works best for you? Please rate the following in order of preference by dragging the answer choices in order (1 being most preferable , 4 being least preferable)				Q5. How useful were the following?						
					Q4.1. Face to face in person workshops at the council	Q4.2. Remote attendance Teams/Zoom workshops that you can join from home	Q4.3. E learning programmes which you can access at your convenience	Q4.4. Written workbooks that you can read at your convenience	Q5.1. Open days, marketplaces, council familiarisation or information sessions provided by the council about the role of the council and councillors.	Q5.2. The WLGA Be a Councillor Website - BE A COUNCILLOR. BE THE CHANGE.	Q5.3. The WLGA Councillors Guide website WLGA Councillors Guide Welsh Councillors Guide	Q5.4. Induction sessions provided by council officers (for example on council services and policies including the Code of Conduct)	Q5.5. Induction sessions provided by external providers or the WLGA (for example an introduction to scrutiny, or chairing skills)	Q5.6. E learning modules (at the last elections 17 e learning modules on subjects like equalities and finance were available for councillors)	Q5.7. Regional induction sessions with other councillors from the region provided by the WLGA (last provided in 2017 in 5 venues with speakers including the then Cabinet Secretary Mark Drakeford and then Chief Exec of WLGA Steve Thomas)
22	The Vale of Glamorgan	During or since the 2022 election	Too little induction	The induction From the council was very PowerPoint based information! Lots of it, but little information regarding political nuances, how best to handle casework, social media etc. Would be better coming from party but none was given.	1	2	4	3	Quite useful	Did not read or attend or not available	Did not read or attend or not available	Not very useful	Did not read or attend or not available	Not very useful	Did not read or attend or not available
40	The Vale of Glamorgan	Prior to the 2017 election	About the right amount of induction	-	1	4	3	2	Quite useful	Did not read or attend or not available	Did not read or attend or not available	Quite useful	Did not read or attend or not available	Not very useful	Very useful
45	The Vale of Glamorgan	Prior to the 2017 election	About the right amount of induction	I've seen an increase in the amount being used as part of the induction. Albeit it is spread over a couple of months. I'm of the view that in the early weeks of becoming a councillor it is very much overwhelming especially if there isnt a party/group to guide.	1	2	4	3	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Quite useful
69	The Vale of Glamorgan	During or since the 2022 election	About the right amount of induction	I was given a good amount of training and induction. the training was crammed into a short amount of time which I found quite hard and stressful, whilst trying to start my role as Councillor and engage with residents. I would have found how to navigate the council meeting senior officers and there roles responsibilities helpful at the time as this I found this most challenging. Luckily our Director of Place at the time (Miles) invited myself and my fellow ward Councillor to the ALPs office and we were introduced to Highways, Sports and leisure and Parks, Also coastal erosion monitoring which was a great help. It would have been good if this was part of the training/Induction to cover the entire council, like an event that is being held at the beginning of July(a Members Expo event which will offer us the chance to meet senior officers and ask questions).	2	1	3	4	Very useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Quite useful
78	The Vale of Glamorgan	Prior to the 2017 election	Too little induction	-	1	2	3	4	Very useful	Not very useful	Not very useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Not very useful	Not very useful
97	The Vale of Glamorgan	Prior to the 2017 election	About the right amount of induction	-	2	4	3	1	Quite useful	Quite useful	Did not read or attend or not available	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful
109	The Vale of Glamorgan	During or since the 2022 election	Too little induction	The training on GIS should have been part of the induction. Also the Member expo event.	3	1	2	4	Very useful	Did not read or attend or not available	Did not read or attend or not available	Very useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Did not read or attend or not available
122	The Vale of Glamorgan	Prior to the 2017 election	Too much induction	When I came on the Vale of Glamorgan Council in 1999 there was no induction, I was expected to learn off others and it took me approximately 2 years to learn the system. Thankfully now everything has changed, however, I think new members are bombarded with information which is too much for them to take in. New Councillors, some have never done their training by being on a Town or Community Councillor and are totally lost when they go on a County Council. It would be better if those new Councillors who have no experience be given training on each directorate say a month at a time rather than ram everything down their throat within two or three months which causes more problems as they cannot absorb the information. Spread the initial training over nine months. Then a refresher into their second year.	1	2	3	4	Very useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Not useful at all	Not very useful

Q5.8. The opportunity to be mentored or work with a "buddy" when you first arrived in the council	Q5.9. Any comments:	Q6. What subjects do you think should be prioritised within the councillor inductions?	Q7. What subjects would you like to see prioritised for ongoing councillor development after their induction?	Q8. What did you find most helpful about the induction process?	Q9. What could be improved about the induction process to better prepare future councillors?
Did not read or attend or not available	This would have been v happy, I asked for this but was not given.	As mentioned on last page: social media, casework, political game play. Inductions should be by party to make people feel more open.	As above	In person meetings	See above
Very useful	Needs more work from Auditors, understand statutory and non-statutory, more understanding of the planning portals, how to raise a motion, how to make a complaint about officers and cllrs, more work on PERSONAL and PREJUDICIAL interest, how to sue someone in the public domain .	Code of Conduct. Planning applications Access to information GDPR	Public speaking, Dealing with social media, dos and donts Getting the best out of the council	getting your lap top.	Make induction more interesting, more debate and less death by powerpoint, using interactive sessions
Very useful	-	Cllr role, and how they can contribute to the councils strategy and operational plans. Key is to understand that they represent their residents however they also represent the council. Who to contact for assistance/advice. Equality, anti-racism are key themes in today's political environment Put the code of conduct in action.	An understanding of the scrutiny role and how to most effective.	Being able to return to officers for clarification and support in role. Workbooks when provided. WLGA's are particularly helpful.	many of the sessions are very much a "tell" and "ask" whereas it needs to be interactive. I know many councillors will probably find it challenging but there needs to be a way of checking understanding. It isn't sufficient to say "everyone happy" or ask, "any questions" or to say "come back if you think of something". often new cllrs will not know what to ask. I know time is a challenge, however it is more important to understand a little than to have an hours session and be expected to remember it.
Very useful	I feel each council is slightly different so the opportunity to be trained by our own council is the first best option, but I have really enjoyed the opportunity to meet councillors from other councils during the Community Leadership Programme.	Role of a councillor, Scrutiny, code of conduct,	equalities, Biodiversity,	Overveiw of our Council and the population provided by the Chief Executive	Explanation of wording to straightforward language. How to best use the scrutiny process to improve the council to better serve the residents.
Not useful at all	-	Code of Conduct and Nolan principles. Rules of debate, Equalities. How the council operates and how decisions are being made.	As above and refreshers on directorate plans	-	More staggered so the programme is delivered 'just in time' when members are facing those sorts of issues. Would also like some upskilling on 'What a good Council looks like'
Quite useful	-	Code of Conduct Social Media Abuse	Planning training Housing queries	Meeting other cllrs and officers	More interactive training
Did not read or attend or not available	-	Scrutiny training, Meeting the Officers, Conduct ,best ways to run surgeries	Ways to contact officers.	Not sure	May be you should ask this within 6 months of start.
Very useful	With regards to a ' Buddy ' useful if paired with an experienced Councillor	Code of Conduct - Understanding what each directorate does on the Council - the roles of Cabinet & Scrutiny members. Training on Finance - Training on all aspects of Planning and Planning Committees	Presentation by each Directorate on their roles	Listening to others when I became a Councillor in 1999	As I said earlier, do not bombard new Councillors with too much information, to be a good Councillor working for your community and carrying the responsibility of making decision which will affect your community, you must be prepared to learn about what is expected of you. Too many people put their name forward to go on the Council thinking they can change the world, it is not like that, many go on the Council for the money. Think about your responsibility before standing at the election.