



# **Member Development Strategy**

**June 2023**

## **Introduction**

Training is an integral part of the development of every Councillor and this is delivered through an annual training programme facilitated by the Democratic Services Team.

## **Identification of Training Needs**

A Councillor Training Programme is presented to the Democratic Services Committee at least 3 months prior to an election, which includes details of the induction programme and a schedule for delivery of training for approval by the Committee.

## **On-going Training, Development and Support for Members**

The role of Councillor is constantly evolving due to:

- legislation changes;
- changes to the social and environmental context in which councillors undertake their roles changes;
- new developments in social media;
- structural change in the way the public services are organised and
- the way councils interact with individuals and communities.

Therefore the training and development programme will be regularly and frequently kept under review by the Democratic Services Committee to ensure it reflects legislative changes and the needs of members identified through their annual reviews.

## **Training and support provided**

- An induction programme at the start of each election term;
- Training delivered by internal specialist Officers;
- Training delivered by external providers where required;
- Workshops (both by internal service providers and external organisations);
- Written support materials published by the Welsh Government and WLGA;
- Readily accessible advice and support from Corporate Lead Officers;
- Direct support from Democratic Services staff who deal with specific issues such as meetings, report and agendas;
- Direct support from ICT.

## **Support provided by Political Groups**

Political Groups may put in place arrangements for peer mentoring and support, for example, 'buddying' newly elected councillors with colleagues returning to office. This is an important element of training and support for many members. The Local Government Association also provide support for all Councillors including those that are unaffiliated to a political group,

## **Delivery of training**

There are several methods of delivery for training courses. The majority will be held remotely, however where circumstances required, alternative methods will be considered including:

- Face-to-face training
- Hybrid delivery
- E-learning
- Practical Experience
- One-to-one support

### **The Induction Programme**

The Welsh Government recommends that local authorities provide opportunities for what is essential for a local authority member to perform their role effectively. A list of subjects for an on-going training programme of member development identified by the Welsh Government Guidance is attached in Appendix A. This is not an exhaustive list

### **Annual Review**

Members are asked to complete a self-evaluation of their learning and development form which reflects the WLGA Competency Framework as adopted by Ceredigion County Council

On receipt of the assessment, should a member decide to have an annual review of their training and development needs, an interview with a suitably qualified person will be arranged to advise about the training and development needs of a member.

The outcome of the review will form an agreed plan which sets out the training and development needs of the individual.

In addition to this, the areas identified by Members in response to the self-evaluation forms will also be considered in relation to providing additional training sessions, and refresher training for all Members.

### **Executive Leader of the Local Authority**

Section 7 of the Measure does not apply to the executive leader of the Council, however this does not exclude the Leader from receiving training, development or an annual review should they wish to do so.

## **Appendix A:**

Subjects for an-going training programme of member development identified by the Statutory and Non Statutory Guidance for Principal Councils in Wales – supporting provisions within the Local Government Act 2000, the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

- Induction - An introduction to the work of a local authority and its relationship with key bodies and the role of those bodies. Councils should plan a comprehensive induction programme for new councillors for delivery shortly after ordinary elections and also for new members elected at a by election;
- Training on the role and functions of the executive, the council and its officers;
- An overview of the council's constitution, including the operation of meetings, how to raise questions with the leader and executive, access to information and research support;
- Training for the chairs of committees including effective chairing skills:
- Training on specific roles members may undertake such as governors or representatives on health boards, fire and rescue authorities or national parks including a short brief on the purpose of the role and the member's responsibilities in keeping the council apprised of developments on the body they are representing the council on, the level of decision making that is delegated to them and how they may access assistance to support them in the role;
- Training on the role of the councillor as a local member, the delegation of functions to ward members and councillor calls for action;
- Training on public engagement, the council's strategy to encourage participation in local decision making and the role members can play in engaging communities;
- Specific training for councillors carrying out certain regulatory or quasi-judicial roles (training for councillors sitting on planning or licensing committees, for example);
- Specific training for councillors carrying out roles relating to the operations of the council. Governance and Audit, Democratic Services and Standards Committee members might be seen as in particular need;
- Training on the operation of overview and scrutiny and its relationship with the council executive;
- Training on rights and responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and more broadly the Social Model of Disability;
- Training on ICT, including how to participate in multi-location meetings and how the use of ICT can support the councillor's work;
- Training on the effective use of social media and the opportunities for better engagement between councillors and the communities they serve. Also the risk of councillors being victimised or harassed by opponents or campaigners overstepping the bounds of reasonable debate;

- Training on wellbeing and safety, including ways of keeping safe when undertaking their role;
- Councillor induction should include training on the expected standards under their authority's Code of Conduct, emphasising the issues that arise as a result of application of the Code in the context of social media. It should also include the role of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) in handling the complaints about breaches of the Code. Refresher of that training should also form a part of the ongoing programme of member development;
- Training on councillors' corporate parenting responsibilities;
- Regular briefings and updates on changes in the law, policy and other issues that impact on the role of the elected member such as the economy;
- Training on equality and diversity (EDI), and the council's responsibilities in respect of the wellbeing of future generations (WFG);
- Training on keeping safe when working alone, including when visiting others.