

The Vale of Glamorgan Council

Democratic Services Committee 25th July 2018

Report of the Managing Director

Member Development Programme

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide the Democratic Services Committee with an overview of the proposed Member Development Programme and seek authority to further develop the programme via a working group of Members.

Recommendations

1. That Democratic Services Committee notes the content of this report as an update on the development opportunities provided by the Council to support all Elected Members.
2. That Democratic Services Committee consider this report and the earlier report regarding Member Support and Development Evaluation together in order to provide context and to note the blended approach to Elected Member development which is being proposed.
3. That Democratic Services Committee approve the framework for the Member Development Programme as described in this report.
4. That Democratic Services Committee seek nominations from each of the political Group Leaders for a representative to join a working group to further refine the detail of the Programme in readiness for delivery of the first session in the winter 2018.
5. That Democratic Services Committee receive a further report in due course following the delivery of the first Member Development session.

Reasons for the Recommendations

1. To provide an update on progress being made in relation to Member development.
2. To provide context to the proposals set out in this report.
3. To enable the Member Development programme to be developed as described in this report.
4. To enable a working group of elected Members to be convened in order that Members feed into the design process of the Member Development Programme.

5. To enable the Democratic Services Committee to consider the outcomes from the first session and evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the Programme.

Background

2. To support the new cohort of Elected Members following the May 2017 local government elections, a Member Induction Programme was delivered. A report was presented to Democratic Services Committee in April 2018 following the delivery of the Induction Programme and is referenced in the background papers to this report.
3. The Council is reviewing its approach for the support, training and development opportunities provided to Elected Members. As described in the report on Member Support and Development Evaluation following the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) focus group work, there are a number of actions which apply to the general development of Elected Member skills and competencies. These are the basis for the proposals set out in this report.
4. A recent draft report of the Wales Audit Office (Overview and Scrutiny – Fit for the Future? July 2018) contains a likely proposal for improvement that “The Council should further consider the skills and training that scrutiny members may need to better prepare them for current and future challenges and develop and deliver an appropriate training programme”. If this report is published ahead of the meeting of this Committee, the report will be provided to Members. Whilst this proposal for improvement is focused on developing the skills required by those Members involved in Scrutiny Committees, some of the general themes that will emerge will be relevant to all Councillors. As such, this report sets out how general skills and competencies applicable to all Elected Members will be supported.
5. The Council has successfully developed a Management Competency Framework and associated Management Development Programme in recent years. Attended by all Council managers and team leaders, the Programme has afforded the opportunity for the management group to develop skills and expertise in a range of areas in a format delivered internally. The feedback from managers has been extremely positive. This report sets out how a similar approach could be adopted to support the development of Elected Members.

Relevant Issues and Options

6. It is proposed that a Member Development Programme should be designed and delivered to provide all Elected Members with the opportunity to develop a range of skills and experiences relevant to their role. To maximise the impact of the Programme, a Member Competency Framework (along the same lines as the Management Competency Framework) will be established to inform the content of each session and to maximise the impact of the Programme itself.
7. The WLGA has a Member Competency Framework which is based around five generic competencies applicable to all Elected Members (there are other role-specific competencies, for example, for Scrutiny Members). The competencies are as follows:
 - Fundamentals: A range of generic skills required by all members
 - Local Leadership: A range of skills required by all councillors in their role as community leaders
 - Casework on behalf of the public
 - Partnership and representation

- Working in the Political environment

8. The Member Development Programme would be run on a six-monthly basis (prior to the summer recess, and again prior to Christmas) and focus on one area of the competency framework, with the content being tailored to ensure the latest issues are covered at each session.
9. The WLGA focus group of Elected Members provided useful information about the format, content and delivery of development opportunities for Councillors. The focus group felt that a ‘market place’ approach was useful to cover several topics, however, sufficient time would need to be given to ensure this did not feel rushed. Members also indicated the usefulness of networking sessions, smaller group discussions and that skills and role based sessions were more useful than policy sessions. Members also indicated that it would be useful to have materials beforehand to enable questions to be asked at the sessions. This feedback has been taken considered as part of the proposals for the format for the Member Development Programme.
10. It is proposed that the six-monthly event would be called the “Member Development Expo”. Run twice each cycle (one day-time session, one early-evening session), the initial idea for the Expo’s format is:

State of the Nation An overview of the major strategic issues from the Managing Director with an opportunity for questions.	25 minutes
‘Up To Speed’ Sessions 3 exhibition stands, staffed by service directors and colleague(s) from service directorates to provide updates on major service specific issues in an exhibition style, with Elected Members able to ask questions.	45 minutes
Coffee	20 minutes
Member Competency Framework Exercise To focus on one element of the competency framework and to focus on a current topic to gain insight from Elected Members.	45 minutes
Feedback and Questions	15 minutes
Informal networking An opportunity for Elected Members to revisit any exhibition stalls and discuss issues in further detail.	

6. Elected Members would work in small groups throughout the sessions which will be designed to be interactive, informal and enable plenty of time for discussion and learning. The competency framework exercise will also provide an important opportunity for the Council to understand the perspective of Elected Members on important and contemporary topics, as well as the opportunity for Members to develop their own skills and knowledge.

7. In order to involve Elected Members in the design and delivery of the Member Competency Framework and the Member Development Expo, it is recommended that Democratic Services Committee seek nominations from each of the political Group Leaders for a representative to join a working group to further refine the detail of the Programme.
8. The working group would be convened in September 2018 to consider whether the WLGA Competency Framework requires any local amendment, whether the draft Expo format described above would maximise the impact of the sessions and to design the group exercise for the first session that would be run in late 2018. Consideration will be given as to whether attendance at the Expos should be mandatory for all Elected Members.
9. Following the delivery of the first Member Development Expo, it is recommended that Democratic Services Committee receive a further report in due course to consider the outcomes from the first session and evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the Programme.

Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)

11. There are no direct resource implications associated with this report. It is proposed that the Competency Framework and Member Development Expos will be developed and delivered internally. External support (for example, from a relevant speaker) may be considered by the working group and the costs of this would be met from within the Democratic Services budget allocated to Member Development.

Sustainability and Climate Change Implications

12. 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 Programme over the coming years.

Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)

13. Member training and development is required by the Local Government Act 2000, Local Government Measure (Wales) 2011.

Crime and Disorder Implications

14. None directly attributable to this report.

Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)

15. The design and delivery of the Member Development Programme will reflect the need to ensure it is as accessible as possible for Members, including consideration of running sessions at varying times to maximise attendance.

Corporate/Service Objectives

16. The development afforded to all Members of the Council is key in ensuring that the effective delivery of corporate objectives.

Policy Framework and Budget

17. The Council's Corporate Plan 2016-2020 contains the values that all colleagues require and will inform the Member Development Programme. This will ensure that everyone understands their role and the importance of taking pride in our work, being open and working together to achieve our ambitions.

Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)

18. In addition to consideration by the Democratic Services Committee, it is proposed that political Group Leaders nominate a representative from each Group to join a working group to develop the specifics of the programme as described in the body of the report.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

19. Corporate Performance and Resources

Background Papers

Democratic Services Committee, 18th April 2018, Member Induction / Member Development 2017-2018

http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Structure/minutes,_agendas_and_reports/reports/democratic_services/2018/18-04-18/Member-Induction-Member-Development.aspx

Contact Officer

Jeff Rees, Operational Manager, Democratic Services

Officers Consulted

Managing Director
Corporate Management Team
Operational Manager, Policy & Performance

Responsible Officer:

Rob Thomas (Managing Director)