

<b>MEETING</b>	<b>Democratic Services Committee</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>19 March 2013</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>Member Training</b>
<b>PURPOSE</b>	<b>To submit the requirements, schedule and risks to the Committee in order to decide on a direction for the rest of the members.</b>
<b>Authors</b>	<b>Councillor, Chairman of the Member Training Sub-group (of the Democratic Services Committee)</b>
	<b>Geraint George Head of Democratic Services</b>

## 1. Background

A comprehensive programme of training has been conducted for elected members since May 2012. The titles for the current programme (2012 -13) were identified by Departments and Services and by members.

The statistics for attending the training are very good, and have improved on previous years.

## 2. Further developments for elected members in relation to the training programme.

Following concerns raised by the Democratic Services Committee, and through observations from elected members at various meetings made in relation to the training programme, the Democratic Services Committee resolved to establish a training sub-group to delve further into the situation.

The training sub-group decided that it would be useful to hold a facilitated session with a focus group made up of elected members. The sub-group was adamant that there was a need to secure membership from all political parties, as well as a combination of new members and more experienced members. The purpose of the focus group was:

- To provide an opportunity for elected members to have a direct input into its development programme and to have ownership of it.
- To identify the aspirations and development needs of elected members.
- To provide guidance to the Learning and Development team on the contents of a suitable development programme, and on the priorities and suitable methods for providing the training.

The session was held on 18 February 2013. A record of the decisions made at the session is included in **Appendix 1**. Point 3 reports specifically on additional fields on which the members wish to receive training. The Learning and Development Service will now be able to act on the wishes of the focus group and incorporate the observations within the next training programme.

Also, a report is provided on the main general points, as follows:

- The need to be able to offer a personal programme by identifying individual needs (see Appendix 1 below)
- The need to work together in partnership to ensure this.
- It is important to acknowledge and record any developments (not limited to courses)
  - Notify the contact within the Learning and Development Service.
- Individuals have a responsibility for their own development. <<
- When invitations are sent out for development sessions, there is a need to note the difference between a training session and an information sharing session.

### 3. Developments with the Cabinet

A facilitated session was held with Cabinet Members to identify their development needs. A draft programme was submitted for the Cabinet's consideration, and it was prioritised in October 2012. A programme has commenced to provide the identified titles.

### 4. Requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011

Section 7 stipulates that local authorities are required to ensure that reasonable training and development opportunities are provided to their members. Also, it must be ensured that all members are afforded the opportunity to receive an annual review of their training and development needs. However, it should be noted that these provisions are not relevant to the leader of the authority's executive which operates as a leader and cabinet executive.

Should a member decide to receive an annual review of their training and development needs, the authority must ensure that the review includes an opportunity for the member to be interviewed by a person the authority considers to be suitably qualified to provide advice on that member's training and development needs.

Additionally, it is suggested in the guidelines that accompany the measure" *that the agreed training and development opportunities can be included within a published development strategy. Local Authorities can use the Welsh Local Government Association's Charter for Member Support and Development ("the charter") as a guide in developing their strategies".*

The main considerations for being awarded the Charter are as follows:

- Assessments must be held every three years
- There are three levels in all
  - Level 1 (foundation) – more elements are now included in the new requirements as opposed to that which existed previously,

- Level 2 (advanced) is a follow up of level 1. In order to gain level 2 evidence must be submitted that the elements introduced in level 1 are in operation and are working.
- 'Innovation award' – a higher level than both of the above which is awarded for good practice. These awards will be very limited.
- New final criteria in order to be awarded levels 1 and 2 of the charter have now been drawn up.
- The above requirements in relation to the Measure and specific additional requirements have been included in the Charter.
- Gwynedd Council needs to organise its action – it is required for all Councils to aim towards being awarded the Charter, and despite there being a period in 2012/13 for authorities to settle following the elections and the introduction of new requirements, there is still a need to act in 13-14.
- Gwynedd was awarded part 1 in 2009.

## 5. Recommendations

5.1 It is recommended, in accordance with points 1 to 3 above, that the Learning and Development Service should proceed with planning and revising the training programme for members based on the work of the training sub-group, and to consult with the Chairman of the sub-group and submit a draft programme for 2013-14 to the next meeting of the Democratic Services Committee to be held on 4 June 2013.

5.2 It is recommended to ask the Committee

- For initial guidance within the context of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the delivery requirements in order to be awarded the Wales Local Government Association Charter for Member Support and Development Charter.
- To approve the officers to undertake further research on the work associated with the Measure and the Charter, and to ask the relevant officers to discuss the matter with the Chairman of the Committee and to report back to the next meeting of the Committee in June 2013.

## **TRAINING FOCUS GROUP – 18.02.13**

### **PRESENT**

#### **Members:**

Cllr. Peter Read, Cllr. Dafydd Meurig, Cllr. Dilwyn Morgan, Cllr. Lesley Day, Cllr. June Marshall, Cllr. Mair Rowlands, Cllr. Sion Jones, Cllr. Mandy Williams-Davies, Cllr. Elfed Wyn Williams, Cllr. Eric M Jones, Cllr. Annwen Hughes, Cllr. Angela Ann Russell, Cllr. Gareth Thomas.

#### **Officers:**

Carey Cartwright (Learning and Development), Nicola Payne (Learning and Development), Glynda O'Brien (Strategic and Improvement),

### **INTRODUCTION**

Carey Cartwright explained that the Focus Group had been arranged following the decision made by the Democratic Services Committee's training Sub-group.

The general aims of the Focus Group meeting was:

- To provide an opportunity for elected members to have a direct input into their development programme (and have ownership of it)
- To identify the aspirations and development needs of Elected Members
- To guide the Learning and Development team on
  - Contents of a suitable development programme
  - Priorities
  - Suitable methods of provision

A cross-section of Members were invited to the Focus Group in order to obtain a balance of political parties, areas and experiences.

The session was held in the form of a workshop facilitated by Carey Cartwright:

- Activities were held in small groups
- Feedback was provided to the entire group
- The points were recorded
- The points were discussed and prioritised by the entire group

### **1. Defining the Purpose of a Learning and Development Programme**

#### **Activity 1:**

**Within the context of your ambition as an Elected Member within the Council, what are the required 'tools' (Skills, Knowledge etc) to achieve this?**

#### **Recorded points:**

- The ability to listen / communication skills
- The ability to gather accurate information
- People Skills
  - Proactive

- Willing to learn
- Patience
- Diplomacy
- Leader and Servant to the Community
- *Uses head not heart to make decisions*
- Chairing skills
- Awareness of the standing orders – Role, conduct etc.
  - Awareness of what is expected of Members - what is acceptable / unacceptable?
- Appropriate knowledge of:
  - Council Structure
    - Procedures and arrangements (“the mechanics”)
    - Understanding the Council hierarchy – to whom different departments are accountable?
    - Statutory Services?
  - Departments
    - Who does what?
      - Being told when key officers leave / are appointed
    - How to contact?
    - Specific arrangements e.g. Planning
  - Statutory Services
    - What must the Council provide
- Being kept informed / in the loop by departments

#### General Points:

- Members to have easy access to up-to-date and accurate information as they need it e.g. a 24 hour electronic information system
- Effective communication (two way) is more than essential
  - Departments to update Members on changes e.g. officers changing
- Individual members have a responsibility to develop their skills and knowledge

#### **Activity 2:**

**What would you like a development programme (training) to achieve?**

- **Individuals**
- **Entire Council**

**How will success look?**

#### Recorded points:

The group acknowledged that ‘development’ includes a wide range of activities and experiences

- The difference between training and information sharing was highlighted.

#### **Success for Individuals:**

- Develop expertise (and the willingness to share it)
- Individuals witnessing and experiencing personal development
  - Develop / refine skills in order to operate more effectively (Ward and Council levels)

- Being able to do something differently (or better) after receiving 'development' elements.
- Being re-elected
- Being able to make better use of time
- Better individual performance

#### **Success for the Council:**

- Members supporting training (by attending / participating)
  - Improved attendance
  - Recognise all types of development (not limited to 'courses' only)
- Members having a better understanding of their role
- Members are more effective in decision making
  - Keeping to the structure within meetings
- Members collaborating better
  - Not interfering beyond their own wards (understanding the protocol)
- Improved performance as a Council

#### **General Success:**

- More effective Councillors = More effective Council
- More effective Ward / Council Work = > **IMPROVED SERVICE FOR THE CUSTOMER**
- Effective management of expectations e.g. public expectations
- Gain public faith and support
- Effective collaboration
- Better use of time, less time to deliver tasks, savings (on both sides)
  - Financial Saving

## **2. What does a development / training programme mean to you?**

### **Activity 3: What development methods are available?**

#### Recorded points:

- 'Traditional' training course
- Short training sessions as part of committee / council meetings
- Learn through technology
  - Distance learning – using computers
  - On-line learning
  - E-learning, interactive modules
  - Use of i-pads and a range of other technologies
- 1 to 1 Sessions
- Shadowing
- Mentoring
- Coaching
- Personal research: Search for information ourselves
  - Reading
  - Need access to data / information
  - Portal on the Council's website – access for councillors only

- Members' Forum – a place to ask questions / receive answers
- Sharing experiences
- Inviting external experts
- Visits to Council departments – in small groups (also useful in order to get to know officers)
- Visits to other establishments

General Points:

- Everyone agreed that a COMBINATION of methods is required.
- Flexibility is needed to TAILOR (dependent upon the individual / the subject)
  - People's needs are different
- There is more to development than traditional 'training'
  - Needs to be acknowledged
- Individuals have some responsibility for their own development

**Activity 4: What development methods would you like to receive?**

- Everyone agreed that a COMBINATION of methods is required.
- Support to using technology
  - Easy and convenient access to learning from any location

### **3. What elements would you like a development / training programme to include?**

**Activity 5: Identify Headings / titles / specific areas to be included on the programme**

In addition to the current available titles, the following were suggested:

- Assertiveness
- Stress Management
- Time Management / Balance between council, work and home
- How to deal with difficult people / anger management
- Body language skills (individuals and groups)
  
- Chairing skills
- Running and Organising committees
- Clarification of role
- Standing Orders – understanding the procedures (in committees)
  
- Information Technology (including i-pads)

General Points:

- Need to be able to offer a **PERSONAL PROGRAMME** by identifying **INDIVIDUAL NEEDS**
- Need to work together in order to ensure this - **PARTNERSHIP**.

- It is important to acknowledge and record ANY DEVELOPMENTS (not limited to courses only)
  - Notify the contact within the Learning and Development Service.
- Individuals have some responsibility for their own development
- When invitations are sent out for development sessions, there is a need to note the difference between training and an information sharing session.