

MEETING	Democratic Services Committee
DATE	4 June 2013
SUBJECT	Members' Training – Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 in the context of members' training
PURPOSE	To submit the requirements of the Measure in order to decide on the way forward.
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1. The Welsh Government's Statutory Guidelines (that accompany the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011) for reviewing personal development notes the following key principles:

- Every member of the authority must be offered the opportunity to have their training and development needs reviewed on an annual basis.
- The review must include an opportunity for a pre-planned interview between the member and a suitably qualified person.
- Local authorities may consider detailing the outcome of the interview in an agreed plan noting the training and development needs for the year ahead.
- The personal development plan is provided for the member and signed by both the member and the reviewer. This is a private document which is not expected to be published by the authority or the member, although the member is free to publish details in his annual report of any training and development opportunities he benefited from if he wishes to do so.
- Local authorities will need to adopt role descriptions for various posts, and the descriptions could be used as a guide as to the skills required by the relevant member.
- The review is an assessment of training and development needs, not a performance review or an assessment of how well or badly a member has fulfilled their duties.
- It is a matter for the local authority to determine who could be considered a suitably qualified person to hold interviews.

(See the full statutory guidelines in **Appendix A**)

2. The Council has previously stated that it is supportive of the principle of continuously developing elected members, and this is consistent with the work already undertaken by the training sub-group which met in February this year.

3. As a basis for the above, the Council has already established core competencies and behaviours for elected members, and they were presented

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as part of the introduction pack at the beginning of this Council term. Additionally, some job descriptions exist. The above need to be reviewed to ensure that they are current.

4. In addition, it is intended for the Cabinet to pilot a procedure for developing the Personal Development Plans in the first instance. It is a possibility that the Cabinet will look at several elements, including development and training, and performance. However, it is envisaged that the 'training and development' elements will be sufficient for all other elected members. It is envisaged that the Cabinet will pilot the methodology and procedure during the September – November 2013 period.
5. At the same time, the Council needs to start preparing to ensure arrangements are in place for the remainder of the members to receive a personal development review should they wish so. We are aware that some members would like this to happen as soon as possible, however, some members have already indicated that they do not wish to part-take in such arrangements.
6. Therefore, it is recommended that the Democratic Services Committee contacts all members (except Cabinet members) to explain the opportunities arising from the Measure with regards to continuous personal development plans, and asking them to note whether
 - They currently foresee that they will wish to benefit from a review of their training and development requirements
 - They currently foresee that they will not wish to benefit from a review of their training and development requirements
 - That they are not currently able to express whether they wish to part-take in such a review or not.This would then allow the Council to start planning in realistic terms with regards to arrangements for such reviews.
7. In addition, it is recommended that a short presentation be given on the benefits of the Personal Development Reviews at the first local forums, which will allow all members a further understanding of the context of the reviews along with a chance to ask any questions.
8. Further, it is envisaged that a few members may wish to participate in a number of additional training courses. We will have to be realistic with regards to resources. You will already be aware that the Democratic Services Committee has previously developed and adopted principles and guidelines to prioritise resources and allowing members to participate in additional seminars in their meeting on 11 December 2012. See Appendix B.

9. It is recommended that the Democratic Services Committee adapt the principles to include externally provided development courses, and adopt the principles and guidelines.

Recommendations:

10. Contact all elected members (except for Cabinet members), along with a short presentation to the local forums, explaining the opportunities arising from the Local Government Measure with regards to Personal Development Plans and asking them to express an interest (or not) in receiving an annual review.
11. Adapt the principles and guidelines already produced for prioritising and allowing elected members to participate in seminars to make them relevant to externally provided training courses, and adopt the guidelines.

The Welsh Government's Statutory Guidance on reviewing Personal Development.

Annual Review

2.12 Every member of the authority must be offered the opportunity to have an annual review of their training and development needs (with the exception of an executive leader – see paragraph 23). It is recommended that much of the training and development needs of local authority members are noted in such reviews.

2.13 The review must include the opportunity for a pre-planned interview between the member and a suitably qualified person (see paragraphs 2.17-2.22). The interview could include a review of the training and development opportunities received by the member over the last year (or appropriate period if the local authority member has only been recently elected).

2.14 Local authorities may wish to consider detailing the outcome of the interview in an agreed plan which sets out training and development needs, if any, identified for the year ahead. It is recommended that this personal development plan is given to the member and signed by the member and the reviewer. This is a private document and the authority or the member are not expected to publish the document, although the member is free to publish details in his annual report regarding any training and development opportunities he benefitted from if he wishes to do so.

2.15 In achieving the standard required for the Charter, local authorities will need to adopt role descriptions for the posts of leader, deputy leader, executive member, scrutiny member, chair of scrutiny and chairs of statutory and area committees. The descriptions could be used as a guide as to the skills required by the relevant member.

2.16 The review is an assessment of training and development needs. A local authority may wish to consider making it clear to members that the review is not a performance review or an assessment of how well or badly a member has conducted their duties. This is not a statutory requirement and is a matter for the electorate to judge at the ballot box.

Suitably Qualified

2.17 It is a matter for the local authority to determine who could be considered a suitably qualified person to hold interviews with local authority members to discuss their training and development needs as part of their annual review. This responsibility could be allocated to the DSC within the authority. In most cases, this may not be a question of naming individuals, but of describing a post or office

holder, (but see paragraph 2.22 below). It would probably be neither suitable nor desirable for a single person to be made responsible for conducting all interviews.

2.18 Some local authorities already carry out various practices in relation to the review of the training and development needs of its members. Practices include group leaders conducting interviews with their members or interviews being conducted by the leader and the executive members. Both these practices are perfectly acceptable methods of complying with the requirements of the Measure.

2.19 Authorities may prefer, however, to divest the duty with their human resources officers. If this is the preferred option, local authorities may consider making the Head of Democratic Services (HDS) responsible for supervising human resources officers for this part of their work. If the Head of Paid Service was selected as a suitably qualified person to conduct an interview it would not be expected that they would work under the supervision of the HDS.

2.20 Some authorities may prefer to hire external consultants or peers to conduct interviews, which is also acceptable.

2.21 It is recommended that there should be no surprises in the system and that individual members know who they can expect to conduct their interview. Local authorities may wish to consider including an option in their arrangements for members to make a request to the HDS to arrange for a different person to conduct their interview if there is good reason for so doing.

2.22 Finally, authorities must ensure that anyone conducting an interview must themselves have received suitable training on how to do this and are advised to liaise with the WLGA to ensure the provision of this. Therefore, even if the authority has chosen to allocate the duty of conducting reviews to a post, rather than an individual, that post holder should have received the necessary training before conducting reviews.

Executive Leader of the Local Authority

2.23 Section 7 of the Measure does not apply to the executive leader (or elected mayor) of an authority. However, there may, of course, be occasions where the leader wishes to receive training or development and there is no suggestion that, by excluding them from the provisions of the Measure, they should not be able to receive training, nor, indeed, an annual review or an interview with a suitably qualified person.

CRITERIA FOR ATTENDING 'ADDITIONAL SEMINARS' AND PROCEDURE TO FOLLOW – Adopted by Democratic Services Committee on 11 December 2012

- Elected Members should hold a job or responsibility in the field on behalf of the Council, and should be able to demonstrate that attending the “additional course” will enable them to undertake their work better.

The job or responsibility could include:-

- Scrutiny Chair or Vice-chair,
- Cabinet Member
- Champion
- Member of the Pensions Committee
- Chair or Vice-chair of any other committee.
- Represent Gwynedd Council as a member on an outside body
- Individual elected member who is part of a Scrutiny Review, where attending the course would lead to substantial gains for the Scrutiny Review.

(Please note, any visits by a number of members as part of a Scrutiny Review would be considered as part of the review and not ‘additional course’)

- The ‘additional course’ should not be available within the Elected members training programme or that it could be arranged in another way internally for a number of elected members to reduce costs.
- Cost of the course should be considered, and does it provide value for money.
- Travel should be avoided where possible, by participating in the additional course through different mediums eg video conferencing or webinar.
- Aim for a maximum of 2 ‘additional courses’ per member annually
- The relevance of the course to the member’s individual training programme should be considered.

2.1 It is recommended that a formal procedure should be developed for submitted requests and authorise. It is recommended:

- That all elected members give written notice (letter or email) explaining how they reach the criteria
- Members should ensure that they have a seconder for the request, eg the Chair or vice-Chair of a specific committee who is able to support the request as part of their role
- Present the request at least two weeks in advance to the Head of Democratic Services, who will consult with the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee, prior to deciding to allow the request or not
- The above to assess the request against the criteria and let the elected member know the result. Arrangements for reporting back and summarise / sharing the additional information should be made (arrangements will vary per field/ request).