

CONSTITUTION AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday, 28 September 2023
Report Subject	Briefings for Members
Report Author	Gareth Owens Chief Officer (Governance)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the induction programme last year and the subsequent 'settling in' period, focus has now moved to developing and implementing a training and development schedule for Members.

The development programme has started to deliver sessions, and this will pick up pace during the latter months of 2023.

It is important that Members input into what sessions are offered to ensure they are relevant and deliver skills that help Members undertake their role as a County Councillor.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	For the Committee to review the proposed Councillor Development Plan and suggest any additional topics for consideration.
2	For the Committee to offer suggestions for specific topics for consideration at the 4 'spare' County Council meetings.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE BRIEFING FOR MEMBERS
1.01	Local authorities are required to provide reasonable training and development opportunities for its members.

	<p>Following the May 2022 election, a comprehensive induction programme was delivered to all Members provide new and returning Members with an overview of how the Council operates, including the rules and regulations, the role of elected Members and the role of Officers.</p> <p>The programme was designed to be 'high-level' in order that Members could undertake their role as a Councillor as quickly as possible. It is appropriate to offer refresher sessions for some of these.</p>												
1.02	<p>As well as revisiting some of the topics covered during the induction, a 'curriculum' of items will be considered as part of Member development proposals.</p> <p>Guidance published by Welsh Government includes some suggestions (below), and these may provide a useful starting point for consideration.</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top; width: 50%;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. </td> <td style="vertical-align: top; width: 50%;"> <p>We have already delivered this.</p> <p>It will need to be reviewed ahead of the next elections.</p> <p>No plan to revisit as part of the current programme.</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role and functions of the executive, the council and its officers. </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>This was delivered as part of the induction last year.</p> <p>A refresher session could be offered.</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>Included in the proposed schedule of sessions at Appendix 1.</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for the chairs of committees including effective chairing skills. </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>Included in the proposed schedule of sessions at Appendix 1.</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on specific roles members may undertake such as governors or representatives on health boards, fire and rescue authorities or national parks. </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>Included in the proposed schedule of sessions at Appendix 1.</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on the role of the councillor as a local member, the delegation of functions to ward </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>The WLGA are currently exploring delivery of this topic.</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<p>We have already delivered this.</p> <p>It will need to be reviewed ahead of the next elections.</p> <p>No plan to revisit as part of the current programme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role and functions of the executive, the council and its officers. 	<p>This was delivered as part of the induction last year.</p> <p>A refresher session could be offered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<p>Included in the proposed schedule of sessions at Appendix 1.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for the chairs of committees including effective chairing skills. 	<p>Included in the proposed schedule of sessions at Appendix 1.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on specific roles members may undertake such as governors or representatives on health boards, fire and rescue authorities or national parks. 	<p>Included in the proposed schedule of sessions at Appendix 1.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on the role of the councillor as a local member, the delegation of functions to ward 	<p>The WLGA are currently exploring delivery of this topic.</p>
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<p>members and councillor calls for action.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on public engagement, the council's strategy to encourage participation in local decision making and the role members can play in engaging communities. 	<p>Use one of the reserved dates in Para 1.03</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific training for councillors carrying out certain regulatory or quasi-judicial roles (training for councillors sitting on planning or licensing committees, for example). 	<p>Included in the proposed schedule of sessions at Appendix 1.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<p>Included in the proposed schedule of sessions at Appendix 1.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on the operation of overview and scrutiny and its relationship with the council executive. 	<p>The WLGA are currently exploring delivery of this topic.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on rights and responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and more broadly the Social Model of Disability. 	<p>Included in the proposed schedule of sessions at Appendix 1.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on ICT, including how to participate in multi-location meetings and how the use of ICT can support the councillor's work. 	<p>Included in the proposed schedule of sessions at Appendix 1.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on the effective use of social media and the opportunities for better engagement between councillors and the communities they serve. 	<p>Included in the proposed schedule of sessions at Appendix 1.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on wellbeing and safety, including ways of keeping safe when undertaking their role. 	<p>Included in the proposed schedule of sessions at Appendix 1.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on councillors’ corporate parenting responsibilities. Included in the proposed schedule of sessions at Appendix 1. • Training on equality and diversity (EDI), and the council’s responsibilities in respect of the wellbeing of future generations (WFG). Included in the proposed schedule of sessions at Appendix 1. • Training on keeping safe when working alone, including when visiting others. Included in the proposed schedule of sessions at Appendix 1. <p>In addition to sessions identified above, and those listed in Appendix 1, a number of other ‘topics’ will be offered including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality & Diversity • IT security (Cyber Ninja) • Social Value • ICT skills (Office applications) • Working with the media 										
1.03	<p>There are 4 dates (listed below) that are currently reserved for Full Council where, if not used for council to meet, it has been agreed that they will be utilised to deliver targeted developmental sessions for Members.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="320 1144 1305 1686"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="320 1144 730 1223">Date</th> <th data-bbox="730 1144 1305 1223">Possible session</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 1223 730 1332">Thursday 23rd November 2023 at 10am</td> <td data-bbox="730 1223 1305 1332">TBC</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 1332 730 1451">Friday 1st March 2024 at 10am</td> <td data-bbox="730 1332 1305 1451">Open to ideas / Determine nearer the time</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 1451 730 1570">Tuesday 16th April 2024 at 2pm</td> <td data-bbox="730 1451 1305 1570">Open to ideas / Determine nearer the time</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 1570 730 1686">Tuesday 7th May 2024 at 2pm</td> <td data-bbox="730 1570 1305 1686">Open to ideas / Determine nearer the time</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>We will consider which of the topics that are identified through this report and appendix as being appropriate for delivery on one of these dates but would welcome any specific suggestions from the Committee.</p>	Date	Possible session	Thursday 23 rd November 2023 at 10am	TBC	Friday 1 st March 2024 at 10am	Open to ideas / Determine nearer the time	Tuesday 16 th April 2024 at 2pm	Open to ideas / Determine nearer the time	Tuesday 7 th May 2024 at 2pm	Open to ideas / Determine nearer the time
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1.04	<p>It is essential that councils do not have a static view of what constitutes reasonable training and development needs; it should be one which is regularly and frequently kept under review to ensure it reflects legislative changes and the needs of members identified through their annual reviews.</p>										

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>Training sessions will, where possible be provided by the Council's own officers to minimise costs.</p> <p>Where relevant, this will be supplemented by external bodies as required, such as the WLGA.</p> <p>Some specialist topics may require external providers to deliver sessions which will incur costs for the Authority.</p>

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	<p>The training and development schedule is a 'living document' that can be added to as required.</p> <p>This report has therefore been prepared to consult the Members of this Committee on any training items that it feels may be needed.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Team have been consulted.</p>

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	<p>The Member Development Programme will be designed to mitigate risk by providing councillors with the knowledge and skills to carry out their roles effectively.</p> <p>Any potential risks will be included in the scoping for the training sessions.</p>

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Draft Councillor Development Plan 2023

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>None</p> <p>Contact Officer: Steven Goodrum, Democratic Service Manager Telephone: 01352 702320 E-mail: Steven.Goodrum@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	WLGA – Welsh Local Government Association.

