

CONSTITUTION AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 21 January 2025
Report Subject	Member Workshops Briefings and Seminars Update
Report Author	Democratic Services Manager

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It has previously been the practice for this committee to receive a progress report on any Member Development and Engagement events which have taken place.

Following the induction programme delivered during 2022 and the subsequent 'settling in' period, focus needs to move to delivering a training and development programme for Members.

Focus on delivery will be made during the coming months, with the effectiveness of this programme being reported back to the Committee at regular intervals through the year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the Committee notes the training programme provided as Appendix 1.
2	That if Members have any suggestions for future development 'topics', they are invited to contact the Democratic Services Manager to discuss them.
3	That the Committee receives a regular report of attendance at each of the sessions delivered.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	MEMBER WORKSHOPS, BRIEFINGS AND SEMINARS
1.01	Local Authorities are required to provide reasonable training and development opportunities for its members.
1.02	Following the May 2022 elections, a comprehensive induction programme which provided 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. It was designed to be 'high-level' in order that Members could undertake their role as a Councillor as quickly as possible.
1.03	It is important that training sessions continue to develop and build on previous sessions, such as those offered as part of the induction programme. This has not happened so far, but rather, has been offered on an ad-hoc basis.
1.04	County Council Elections will take place in May 2027. It is therefore an opportune time to review the approach to the training programme for elected Members.
1.05	<p>One approach that the Committee may wish to introduce is a cyclical training programme where, following an election:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Year 1 – Induction of Members.</u> Deliver a programme of sessions that introduces new and returning Members to how the Council works and functions, similar to that offered in 2022. The focus would be on laying the foundations for subsequent years' training and development of Members.• <u>Year 2 – Development</u> Deliver sessions tailored to enhancing Members' knowledge and skills to enable them to function effectively in their roles.• <u>Years 3 and 4 – Consolidation</u> Deliver refresher, and more targeted sessions for Members whose roles may have changed and/or where developments necessitate.• <u>Year 5 – Review</u> Continue to provide access to sessions that Members require, but undertake a review of the programmes in order that they are relevant and deliver value, focussing on the Induction of Members.
1.06	Assuming the approach outlined in paragraph 1.05, the current Council is in the Years 3 and 4 – Consolidation stage. The programme will therefore now focus on specific 'themes' and/or topics for Members to receive training on and continue to build up an appropriate offering of training sessions.

	<p>It is intended that, before the August 'recess', some of the key topics covered during the induction programme in 2022 will be revisited, and refresher sessions provided to all Members.</p>
1.07	<p>There are certain Committees that require elected Members to have received appropriate training before they are able to sit on them: Planning; Licensing; and Governance & Audit Committee. Due to recent changes in memberships of some Committees, it is proposed to include refreshers on these topics during May and June.</p>
1.08	<p>Similarly, there have been recent changes in Chairs and Vice-Chairs of a number of Committees, and so there will also be a focus during February and March to provide training on Chairing skills aimed at new and existing Chairs and Vice-Chairs.</p>
1.09	<p>Where possible, workshops, seminars and briefings will be offered on more than one occasion, including evening sessions where appropriate.</p> <p>They will be delivered in the most appropriate manner, whether that be in-person, remote or online. The method of delivery will be determined by the topic and who is delivering the session(s).</p>
1.10	<p>Officers have access to a range of online training courses, where some are specific to their individual roles and others are open to all.</p> <p>Online training courses allow individuals to access sessions at a time that suits their own personal circumstances. It also allows their completion at a pace set by the individual.</p> <p>This method of delivery is not suitable or appropriate for all training sessions but does allow a wider range of subjects to be delivered, particularly those that have specific, prescribed content.</p> <p>It is proposed to share the current suite of online training/development sessions that are targeted at elected Members with the members of this Committee. This will serve as a 'test' in terms of ease of access and relevance ahead of a wider roll-out to all Members.</p>
1.11	<p>It has previously been the practice for this committee to receive a progress report on any Member Development and Engagement events which have taken place.</p> <p>An update report of sessions delivered will be brought to the committee on a regular basis and will be included within the Committee's Forward Work Programme.</p> <p>This will also reflect details of scheduled sessions ahead of the next update report.</p>
1.12	<p>Appendix 1 shows the proposed list of training sessions / workshops that will be made available to Members.</p> <p>It is split into three sections. Section 1 reflects the key topics for inclusion during the induction programme; Section 2 reflects the sessions /</p>

	<p>workshops identified as being ‘mandatory’ and Section 3 those that are ‘discretionary’.</p> <p>Each section has been sorted to show courses / sessions that are available on the Council’s training platform. Members will be provided with access to the site, meaning the courses / sessions can be taken at a convenient time.</p> <p>There will still be the option for specific courses / sessions to be delivered as they currently are: a daytime session with attendance in-person, and an evening session where attendance is remote.</p> <p>The list will be used to provide a reporting tool that will be brought to this committee on a regular basis for review and consideration. This will provide high level information about attendance at the sessions for monitoring purposes.</p> <p>A training ‘brochure’ will be developed for Members, and presented to the June Committee meeting that provides details of the sessions / courses, including the delivery method, length of session, aims and objectives, and how to book attendance.</p>
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>Training sessions will, where possible be provided by the Council’s own officers to minimise costs. Where relevant, this will be supplemented by external bodies as required, such as the WLGA. Members will be provided with access to the Council’s online training toolkit software.</p> <p>There are some courses that can only be delivered by an external provider and these will attract a cost that will be met from existing budgets.</p> <p>Some sessions may be hosted ‘remotely’ to help mitigate costs.</p>

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	<p>This report has been prepared to consult the Members of this Committee on any training items that it feels may be needed in the coming year.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Team will be consulted on topics for inclusion relevant to specific portfolios / services.</p> <p>A ‘Training Needs Analysis’ will then be undertaken during July/August 2025 with elected Members to determine topics for training / awareness / information sessions. These will be reported to this committee when it first meets in the Autumn.</p>

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
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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>
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5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Draft Councillor Development Plan 2025

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None.

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Steven Goodrum, Democratic Service Manager Telephone: 01352 702320 E-mail: steven.goodrum@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WLGA – Welsh Local Government Association.