



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**18<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2019**

**DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**MEMBERS TRAINING AND E-LEARNING MODULES**

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

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**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose of the report is to provide Members with an update in respect of Members training following the Personal Development Reviews that were undertaken by the Head of Organisational Development and to provide further details on the development of E-learning modules.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that the Democratic Services Committee:

- (i) Note the way forward in respect of the proposed training requirements for Members.
- (ii) Agree to the undertaking of a Members survey in respect of the development topics of future E-Learning modules and that the Committee receives timely updates as and when appropriate in respect of such development;
- (iii) Considers the future information reporting opportunities available through the Members Portal and to provide comment on areas they would like to see developed further;
- (iv) Agree to receive a demonstration of the Members Portal before it is finalised to ensure it meets the needs of Members

**3. BACKGROUND – PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS**

3.1 The undertaking of Personal Development Reviews (PDRs) now lies with the Human Resources department and all Members are offered a PDR by the Head of Organisational Development. The PDRs are confidential and allow the opportunity for Members to discuss training and support requirements going forward.

3.2 The Head of Organisational Development has taken forward PDRs for those Members who took forward the offer.

- 3.3 Training opportunities have now been established for each of the Members following the review and a meeting has taken place with the Head of Democratic Services and the Head of Organisational Development to discuss how such training can be taken forward, through one to one engagement sessions or open training for all Members to access, dependent on the training needs.
- 3.4 One popular training request identified by Members was the provision of 'Social Media' training. Going forward a training session was arranged for all Members to attend on the 14<sup>th</sup> October in the Council Chamber at 5pm. The training was well attended with 14 in attendance and was an interactive session to assist Members in this area. One to One training sessions in this area has also been provided.
- 3.5 Other general training that has been identified following the PDRs and from discussions during other Committee meetings include Safeguarding training; Mental Health training, Domestic Abuse training, Charing Skills, Licensing and Planning training and as previously discussed by Democratic Services Committee – Lone Working for Members including the potential for neighbour dispute resolution. Refresher Code of Conduct training is always available to Members on a one to one basis as and when requested, although general refresher training will be taken forward during the Municipal year for all Members and will be advised upon from the Monitoring Officer. These training sessions will be open forum training sessions in the Council Chamber, commencing at 5pm as agreed at the Council AGM to hopefully assist Members with their attendance. With the agreement of Committee Chairs, open training to all Members has also been undertaken during Committee meeting settings – where the training specifically relates to a terms of reference of a Committee – i.e. Treasury management training at the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.6 Other general training sessions provided to Members this Municipal Year has included:
- Medium Term Financial Planning - Director of Resources, WLGA (19.06.19)
  - ALN Training & Consultation details – Liz Davies -
  - Charing Skills – WLGA (06.08.19)
  - Dementia Friendly Training – Internal Officers ( 21.10.19)
  - Joint Scrutiny Training – Dave Mckenna ( 25.07.19)
  - Treasury Management – Arlingclose (26.09.19)
  - Scrutiny Training - Dave Mckenna ( 25.10.19)
  - CIL Training – Internal Officers (04.11.19)
- 3.7 Going forward and as discussed below e-learning modules will be developed to assist Members with undertaking their training. Also, information / fact sheets will be provided to Members on certain topics where appropriate to do so, to further support the training needs of Members, rather than Members attendance at training sessions.

#### **4. E-LEARNING MODULES AND THE MEMBERS PORTAL**

- 4.1 Members will recall the decision taken by the Committee to develop a Members Portal (Minute 22 refers). The portal is still currently in development phase and a demonstration of the Portal will be provided to the Committee before it is pushed 'live' to ensure that the portal contains the relevant information and access points required by Members.
- 4.2 Two key features of the Portal in the long term will be the availability of E-learning Modules and also the capability to capture information on a ward by ward basis.

#### **E – Learning.**

- 4.3 A number of E-learning modules are currently available for Members through the RCT source and it is anticipated these will be made accessible going forward through the portal for Members, although work will need to be undertaken to ensure that they are ICT compatible with the new system and still fit for purpose.
- 4.4 The development of additional e-learning modules will be taken forward and led by the Council Business Unit department with the assistance of Human Resources, however such development may take time to ensure accuracy and appropriateness of such training modules for Members.
- 4.5 It is proposed that the Council Business unit develops a list of potential E-learning modules and a survey is undertaken with all Members to see which modules Members would like to see developed in the first instance.
- 4.6 In addition at a recent MSO meeting attended by the Head of Democratic Services, Officers across Wales agreed to take forward a collaborative approach to developing E-Learning modules for all Authorities to access. It was agreed that the most sustainable way of developing content would be for each authority to take responsibility for one module, which should result in 22 high quality accessible modules for members across Wales to share. Each module would be specifically designed for members rather than officers.
- 4.6 An agreed process for taking forward the modules has been agreed with specific leads from each Authority working with a task and finish group. Authorities have agreed that modules should be ready by September 2020.
- 4.7 Rhondda Cynon Taf have agreed to take forward 'Violence against women domestic abuse and sexual violence' and will also assist with the development of the Welsh Language Act and Standards.
- 4.8 Updates in respect of the development of these modules will be brought forward to the Democratic Services Committee as and when appropriate.

## **Information Reporting**

- 4.9 Through the new system, Members will also be able to gather information on a ward by ward basis, which may assist them in their role and duties as a local Councillor.
- 4.10 Although still in its development phase, Officers believe that the system will be able to generate information for Members in respect of:
- Fly tipping stats;
  - Abandoned vehicles stats
  - Crime stats
  - Pot holes reported
  - Planning applications within a ward.
- 4.11 To assist officers with the development of this area of the Portal, Democratic Services Committee are asked to provide any further suggested items that they feel may be of assistance to Members in undertaking their role. It is important to note that as the system is still in development stages, officers cannot guarantee the availability of the information at this stage but Officers from the Council Business Unit will work closely with the development team to try to ensure the Portal is a valid tool and source of information for Members to utilise.
- 4.12 In respect of E-learning and information reporting, there will always be the opportunity for future developments to the system and the Council Business Unit are committed to its development for the benefit of all Members.

## **5 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This report supports the need for all Members to have equal access to support regardless of political allegiance. The report encourages the authority to examine the way that business is conducted to ensure the equality of access and involvement of all people as councillors. The provision of E-learning Modules will ensure all Members have equal access to training provision.

## **6. CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 A meeting with the Head of Democratic Services and the Head of Organisational development was conducted following the Member PDRs to ensure a training needs plan was put in place
- 6.2 Members PDRs were conducted during the start of the year to allow information to be gathered in respect of any training requirements to assist Members in their roles.
- 6.3 Further consultation in respect of future developments of E-learning is proposed within the report, subject to Members agreement.

6.4 Members feedback is sought in respect of the provision of information reporting.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

7.1 Members training is an important aspect to allow Members to feel equipped to undertake their duties and roles required of them. The Council have a Members training budget, which is accessed to provide any external training needed. Where practical in-house training is also provided to Members.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 None

## **9. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.**

9.1 The work of all Councillors is fundamental to the work of the Council and subsequently the delivery of the Corporate Plan, hence ensuring Members are fully supported in undertaking their roles is important to the work of the Council overall.

9.2 Ensuring all Members are supported and have equal access to support and development links to the future generations well being goals of a more equal Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities.

## **10 CONCLUSION**

10.1 In respect of E-learning and information reporting, there will always be the opportunity for future developments to the system and the Council Business Unit are committed to its development for the benefit of all Members.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS - Democratic Services – Support for Members**

Democratic Services – 19<sup>th</sup> March.