

REPORT: DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

MEMBER TRAINING - 12 APRIL 2018

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Overview of the current situation

Following the May 2017 election, induction sessions were held over two days for every Member, followed by a comprehensive training programme (see Appendix 1).

A range of learning and development opportunities are offered, including elements such as workshops, coaching and e-learning, in addition to 'traditional' training.

Since May 2017, Members have taken advantage of 35 different types of learning and development opportunities, with 87 events having been held. In addition to sessions for all Council members, other events have included training for smaller groups and one-to-one sessions, e.g. coaching. This addresses a request to offer more flexibility with dates and locations, in order to give Members options to attend. Fewer people in training sessions also gives everyone the opportunity to contribute and learn more effectively.

Running alongside this is a Leadership development programme, which includes opportunities for leaders and prospective leaders to take advantage of Regional and National programmes (through the WLGA). In addition, bespoke workshops with a specific focus are offered, e.g. a '*5 Behaviours of a Highly Effective Team*' workshop was recently commissioned for the Cabinet.

Successes:

Development Sessions: We have received very positive feedback following sessions such as '*Public Speaking*', '*Speed Reading*', '*Social Media*' and '*Effective Presentations*'.

One-to-one coaching: Nine Members have taken advantage of these sessions, and the feedback suggests that it is extremely useful. One Cabinet Member has asked us to include a quote about his experience of coaching sessions:

"I can't convey how transformational the coaching sessions have been for me as a new Member of the Cabinet. They have been crucial for me to understand how I can work effectively in my new role as a Cabinet Member, which is a complex role within a complex system. I would advise everyone to take advantage of the opportunity to have one-to-one coaching, and we as Councillors are very fortunate that the opportunity's there for us to take advantage of. The Learning and Development Service is here to support us as Members to be able to fulfil our roles effectively so that we can provide the best possible service for the people of Gwynedd – so take advantage of the opportunities that are available."

Mentoring: 12 Members have been trained to act as Mentors. We have informed other Members of this, and invited them to request a Mentor if they wish.

Challenges:

It remains a challenge to convey the importance and relevance of training to every Member, and to arrange sessions that are convenient for everyone. To this end, the response and consequent attendance for some titles has been disappointing:

- **'Deprivation of Liberty (DoLS)' Sessions** arranged as a series of sessions at Members' request. Two sessions had to be cancelled due to low numbers.
- **'Information about People' (Data Protection) Sessions** arranged for those who had not completed the training or who needed a 'refresher'. Both sessions had to be cancelled due to low numbers.

2018/19 Training Programme

The training programme for 2018/19 continues to grow and evolve (see Appendix 2 for the latest version). The titles included in the programme are based on:

- Suggestions from Members (deriving from impact measurements and personal development interviews). The following suggestions were received from Members for additional titles, such as: *'Recycling'* (in order for Members to be able to encourage people in their wards to recycle more), more *'Computer Training'*, *'Code of Conduct'* (and a protocol for officers when dealing with Councillors), *'The Role of a Cabinet Member or Member of Parliament'* (and how a Member can reach Cabinet level), and *'Chairing'* (further training).
- Suggestions from Officers and Departments on their specialist fields

We would be grateful if the Committee could endorse the existing programme, and propose any additional titles that you would like the Learning and Development Service to include in the programme for the second electoral year.

Personal Development Interviews

Confidential one-to-one *Personal Development Interviews* are offered. These are conducted by Officers from the *Democratic Services*, to give Members an opportunity to reflect on their role, consider any fields they wish to develop, and possibly draw up a *Personal Development Programme*. This may include a range of fields in addition to developmental experiences. *A Learning and*

Development Officer would then work with individuals (or groups) to facilitate and arrange relevant development opportunities.

Learning through Technology

As noted above, a range of alternative learning methods are offered in addition to 'traditional' training. This includes developing sessions through technological methods, which can be accessed from anywhere with internet connection at times convenient for the individuals. We are developing several Webinars, and a series of e-learning modules. A message was recently circulated to encourage Members to complete the '*Domestic Violence*' e-learning module, as part of a national campaign (11 Members have done this so far). We would appreciate the Committee's support to encourage Members to visit *Porth Aelodau* and access some of the e-learning modules (including '*Domestic Violence*'), and to nominate volunteers to trial new Webinars as they are developed.

Measure the Effect of the Learning

To assess the effect of the learning, Members were asked to respond to the following question: "*Does the learning and development provision help you as a Member to fulfil your role effectively in order for you to be able to provide a better service for the people of Gwynedd?*" (Score /10). "*What would make it 10/10?*"

Since May 2017, the average score is 9.5/10 (following an excellent score of 9.8/10 for 2016-17).

A range of positive comments and useful suggestions were received.

It should be noted that some Members feel that not all other Members place enough emphasis on Learning and Developing themselves, and that more should endeavour to attend the sessions. The Committee may wish to consider any steps that could be taken to address this.

Recording Learning and Reports

The *Learning and Development* Team has been collaborating with IT for some time to create a *Module for Developing Staff* (MoDS) as part of the wider self-service system. This is a resource where Members (in time) can see their own development programme and personal training record (which is the learning that they have attended).

It will also be an excellent administrative resource, with options to create a wider range of data reports.

We would like to invite the Committee to consider and suggest the training data and the type of data reports they would like to receive from the *Learning and Development Service*, so that we can plan for this.

Reports from Members

Members can learn a lot when attending courses or seminars on behalf of the Council, and if this happens, it is vital that Members share their learning experience with others. Councillor Catrin Wager attended a “Women in Democracy” seminar as a member of this Committee. The Councillor will give a verbal report on her findings.