

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

11th November 2024

Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services – Mr C. Griffiths

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Members Personal Development Review (PDR) Process

Purpose of the Report

1. To remind Members of the current policy in relation to the Annual Development Review (PDR) process.

Background

2. Section 7 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires local authorities to ensure the provision of reasonable training and development opportunities for its Members.
3. Each Member should have the opportunity to have a review of their training and development needs on an annual basis. However, it should be noted that these provisions do not apply to the executive Leader of an authority which operates a Leader and Cabinet Executive (as adopted in Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council).

4. The original scheme outlined that reviews wherever possible should be undertaken by elected Members for elected Members.
5. In the previous administration a small cohort of Members from across the political groups were trained by officers from the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) on how to undertake a review. Officers will be engaging with the WLGA and political groups to explore a cohort of current members undertaking this training.
6. In previous years, the submitted responses from Members who completed the personal development review exercise were classified as confidential and securely archived. Nevertheless, the information obtained did help to inform the annual training and development programme.
7. Despite initial early enthusiasm in the review scheme interest from Members in undergoing an individual review on an annual basis declined over the next four years with Members feeling that the exercise did not add any value in conducting their individual roles and responsibilities.
8. Members emphasised the importance for ensuring 'political buy in' from the various Group leaders to assist in maintaining the process on an annual basis.

Financial Impact

9. There are no financial impacts associated with this report.

Integrated Impact Assessment

10. As this report relates to governance and member reviews, no integrated impact assessment is required.

Workforce Impacts

11. There are no significant workforce impacts associated with this report.

Legal Powers

12. Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 (S.7) sets out the obligations on local authorities, details of which are referenced in this report.

Risk Management

13. There are no significant risks associated with this report.

Consultation

14. There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item. However, the authority must ensure that the review includes an opportunity for an interview with someone who they regard as 'suitably qualified' individual.

Recommendation

15. It is recommended, that having due regard to the fact that no integrated impact assessment is required that the Democratic Services Committee:
 - Note the Members Personal Development Review Scheme
 - Approves that the Democratic Services Manager will communicate with the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and political groups to explore a cohort of current members to undertake the training to conduct Personal Development Reviews.
 - Approves that the Democratic Services Manager will communicate with all Members via email, reminding them of the scheme and inviting them to complete a Personal Development Review should they so wish.

Reason for Decision

16. Welsh local authorities are required to have regard to any guidance issued by Welsh Ministers and must allow for the further development of the Member Annual Personal Development Review process.

Implementation of Decision

17. That the decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices

18. Appendix 1 - Personal Development Review Scheme

List of Background Papers

19. None

Officer Contacts

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Appendix 1

Member Personal Development Review

1. Definition

Personal development review (PDR) is a way for a member and the Council to mutually assess a member's personal development needs. The review should be set within the context of the role of the member, his/her aspirations for what s/he hopes to achieve, the purpose and aspirations of the Council and the needs of the community.

2. Purpose

PDR schemes enable members to build confidence, develop skills and knowledge and improve their own performance and contribution to the council and the community. They can provide:

- a) Clarity for members about the expectations and accountabilities placed upon them;
- b) Understanding of and support for the individual and collective development needs of members;
- c) Support for members in preparing for new roles (succession planning);
- d) An understanding and ownership of organisational goals; and
- e) Support for improved member performance.

3. Statutory Provisions

The Local Government Measure 2011 introduced a new requirement on councils to make available to all members (except the Leader of Council) the opportunity for a development review on an annual basis.

The statutory guidance on personal development reviews that has been issued by Welsh Government provides that:

3.1 Annual Review

- a) Every local authority member, other than an executive leader, must be offered the opportunity to have their training and development needs reviewed on an annual basis. It is recommended that much of the training and development needs of local authority members are identified by such reviews;
- b) The review must include an opportunity for a pre-planned interview between the member and a suitably qualified person. The interview could include a review of the training and development received by the member over the last year (or appropriate period if the local authority member has only been recently elected);
- c) 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 provided for the member and signed by both member and reviewed. This is a private document which is not expected to be published by the authority or member, although a member is free to publicise in his or her annual report any training and development undertaken if he or she so wishes.

- d) Authorities can apply for Charter status. 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; and
- e) 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 how badly a member has conducted their duties. That is not a statutory requirement and is a matter for the electorate to judge at the ballot box.

3.2 Suitably Qualified

- a) It is for the local authority to determine who could be considered a suitably qualified person to conduct the interview with local authority members to discuss their training and development needs a part of their annual review. This responsibility could be allocated the Democratic Services Committee within the authority. In most cases, this may not be a question of naming individuals, but of describing a post or office holder. It would probably be neither suitable nor desirable for a single person to be made responsible for conducting all interviews;
- b) 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.

- c) 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 responsible for co-operating with 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 Head of Democratic Services;
- d) Some authorities may prefer to hire external consultants or peers to conduct interviews, which is also acceptable. Local authorities are encouraged to appoint a Member Development Champion from amongst its councillors;
- e) 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 Head of Democratic Services to arrange for a different person to conduct their interview if there is a good reason for so doing; and
- f) Finally, authorities must ensure that anyone conducting an interview must themselves have received suitable training in 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 receive the necessary training before conducting reviews.

Executive Leader of the Local Authority

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.

4. Methodology

In developing an approach to Member Development Review, the Democratic Services Committee has considered the provisions of the Local Government Measure 2011, the guidance issued by the Welsh Local Government Association and approaches being adopted by other councils across Wales. The Democratic Services Committee proposes an approach based on the guidance issued by WLGA, supported by the following principles:

- a) The personal development review **is not** a performance appraisal but a means of supporting and developing members;
- b) The scheme is available to all members of the council;
- c) The scheme will be Member-led with professional support to be provided by the Head of Democratic Services, in co-operation with the human resources department;

- d) The development needs identified from the process will inform the creation of the member development programme for the following period;
- e) The development needs of members will be linked to the roles performed by members (the role descriptions to be based on those published by the WLGA, albeit those roles are not considered to be prescriptive and are intended for guidance only. See Appendix 2 for details);
- f) All member development must provide value for money and be affordable;
- g) The personal development review will be based on a self-assessment conducted by the reviewee, using the prescribed template. (See Appendix A);
- h) The personal development review will be undertaken by a “suitably qualified” person. The “suitably qualified” person may be an experienced member (ie a Member who has served in a previous administration) **or** a Member considered suitable for other reasons;
- i) Members wishing to participate in the scheme may identify up to three “suitably qualified” persons to undertake their review ensuring choice for reviewees and equitable distribution of workload for reviewers;
- j) Reviews will, generally, be carried out between the annual meeting of Council and the August recess;
- k) All “suitably qualified” persons will be required to undertake the relevant training to ensure consistent application of the scheme;
- l) The administration of the scheme will be the responsibility of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services;

- m) The development needs identified and recorded from the process will be confidential to the reviewee. The details of individual member development needs will not be for public disclosure, unless the member wishes to provide details, eg in his/her annual report. However, the member development programme overall will be accessible by the public;
- n) Access to individual member development records will be controlled by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services;
- o) The impact of development activity and the scheme as a whole will be evaluated and reviewed on a two yearly basis, or at other intervals, should the Head of Legal and Democratic Services consider this to be appropriate.

5. Implementation

The scheme will be trialled in the first instance with a small group of members to ensure it is fit for purpose. The trial will be evaluated and a final scheme, supported by an implementation plan, presented to Council for adoption prior to the annual meeting of Council 2013.

6. Resources

There are no additional resources available to the Council support the introduction of the annual personal development reviews. Consequently, the introduction of the scheme and the programmes developed to

respond to training and development needs identified from each personal development reviews will need to be met from within existing resources.

7. Evaluation and Review

An evaluation of the trial will be carried out to inform the development of the final scheme. Thereafter, it will be for the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Democratic Services Manager, in consultation with the Democratic Services Committee to ensure the scheme is regularly reviewed on at least a two yearly basis to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

Appendix A

Framework for a Personal Development Review.

Guidance for Reviewers

Before conducting your review (s) you may find it useful to consider the following:

1. Purpose of the Review

The purpose of your meeting will be to provide your reviewee with an opportunity to review their role generally, identify any specific tasks for the year ahead, consider the areas where they feel confident and identify areas where they will be more challenged and may need support and development. Their learning and development needs together with the usefulness or otherwise of previous development will then be fed back to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to create development programmes.

2. Preparation

You may want to familiarise yourself with the role description of the person whose review you are conducting and consider some of the questions that you will ask to help the review meeting explore their role and needs. Your reviewee will contact you to plan a time and place convenient to you both where you can have a confidential undisturbed conversation. The meeting should take no longer than an hour and a half.

3. Undertaking the Review

Please remember that the conversation you have with your reviewee needs to be kept confidential.

Your role is to help the reviewee consider his/her role/contribution, strengths/weaknesses and training needs. You should act as an objective sounding board in this exploration.

Your role is not to give your own feedback on the performance of your colleague.

Use the template as the basis for your discussions.

It is the responsibility of the reviewee to undertake any actions resulting from the conversation, keep any documentation and discuss any emerging development needs with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

Any additional support required from the Council may also be identified and fed into the organisation as appropriate.

Guidance for Reviewees

Before undertaking your review you may find it useful to consider the following guidance.

1. Purpose of the Review

The purpose of your meeting will be to provide you with an opportunity to review your role generally, consider any specific tasks for the year ahead, consider the areas where you feel confident and identify areas that you might find challenging and may need support and development. You will have an opportunity to identify learning and development needs which you will then be able to feed back to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to organise development programmes.

2. Preparation

Before your meeting you will need to complete the template. This will, help you to think about your role, specific tasks for this year and any support that you might need. You'll also find it useful to review your role description and person specification.

Make contact with your reviewer and plan a time and place convenient to you both where you can have a confidential undisturbed conversation. The meeting should take no longer than an hour and a half.

3. Undertaking the Review

Please remember that the conversation you have with your reviewer needs to be kept confidential to yourselves.

Use the template as a basis for your discussions.

Your reviewer will help you consider your role/contribution, strengths/weaknesses and training needs. They will act as an objective sounding board in this conversation.

Their role is not to give their own feedback on your performance.

Please note that it is your responsibility to undertake any actions resulting from the conversation, keep any documentation and discuss any emerging development needs with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

Any additional support required from the Council may also be identified and fed into the organisation as appropriate.

TEMPLATE FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS

Please complete this pro forma and bring it to the meeting, this form is confidential to you and the person who is conducting your review except for the final sheet which will be used by member support officers for your personal development plan and to prioritise activities for the Authority's training programme.

1. What are my current roles and responsibilities? (e.g. the council executive/cabinet portfolio, overview and scrutiny member, chair, member of a statutory committee such as planning, licensing etc. In the community, ward member/community leader)

2. What Learning and Development have I undertaken this year?

3. What additional learning and development would be useful, use the table below.

Areas that I would like to develop are:	Preferred method of development (e.g. visits to other authorities, peer networking, practical workshops, e learning etc.)
Skills (e.g. meeting management, questioning techniques, media interviews,	

Knowledge (e.g. the code of conduct, equalities, the planning process, local policy etc.)	
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My learning and development needs for this year (please discuss this section of your pro forma with your member support officer, it will be used to create development plans and training programmes)

Area for Development	How	Priority
<p><i>example</i></p> <p><i>How to Chair scrutiny meetings effectively</i></p>	<p><i>I'd like to observe meetings in other authorities</i></p> <p><i>A workshop on chairing skills would be handy</i></p> <p><i>I'd like to receive some written guidance for scrutiny chairs</i></p>	1
<p><i>example</i></p> <p><i>Understanding of the planning system to answer constituents enquiries</i></p>	<p><i>A workshop on all the planning basics would be useful</i></p> <p><i>A meeting with planning officers on specific issues raised by people in my community about planning permission</i></p>	3
<p><i>example</i></p> <p><i>Local Government Finance, how do I contribute to the budget setting process?</i></p>	<p><i>I'd like to have discussions with finance officers and some mentoring from Cabinet member for Finance and Resources as this is an area I'd like to move into.</i></p>	2
<p><i>example</i></p> <p><i>Training in the use of social media</i></p>	<p><i>A meeting with someone who can explain how to use Twitter safely to publicise what I do and encourage the public to contact me.</i></p>	4

My evaluation of the training I have already received

<p>Training undertaken</p>	<p>What difference has this made to the way I work as a member</p>
<p><i>example Council induction programme on the work of the council and who's who.</i></p>	<p><i>Has given me a good refresher of how the council operates which has enabled me to explain this to people attending my surgeries and know who the appropriate officers are to speak to. It also highlighted areas where I need further training.</i></p>
<p><i>example media skills training</i></p>	<p><i>Helped me represent the council more effectively at a radio interview last week</i></p>
<p><i>example attended the Leadership Academy</i></p>	<p><i>Helped me understand my own leadership style and how it differs from other I am now working more effectively with other Cabinet members I also had help on a personal leadership challenge.</i></p>