

## **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE**

### **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CORPORATE STRATEGY AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES – K.JONES**

**12 February 2015**

#### **SECTION A – MATTERS FOR DECISION**

**WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL**

#### **MEMBER DEVELOPMENT**

##### **Purpose of Report**

- 1) To update the Democratic Services Committee on the progress made in relation to Member Development
- 2) To discuss and propose items to be included in the programme for the new Civic Year 2015/16.

##### **Background**

A report on Strengthening and Modernising Democratic Arrangements in Neath Port Talbot was taken to Modernisation Group on April 25<sup>th</sup> 2014, was the focus of an All-Member Seminar on May 20<sup>th</sup> 2014 and was endorsed by full Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2014.

The report recognised the Council's track record of providing a range of opportunities for Members to improve their knowledge and understanding of issues that affect their roles and responsibilities.

However, it recognised that there is scope for these arrangements to be better co-ordinated; better aligned to forward work programmes and for Members to have greater involvement in setting the programme. In the last meeting of the Democratic Services Committee, Members received an update in relation to Member Development and were keen to receive reports back on the programme and progress therein.

The Wales Audit Office Corporate Assessment of Neath Port Talbot Council in January 2015 recommended that ‘ ....establish a skills training programme which supports Members to discharge their roles and responsibilities effectively.’

## **Progress**

The following changes have been made since the last meeting of the Committee:

Briefing notes have been circulated on forthcoming seminars which aim to provide Members with better information about the seminar objectives to help Members assess how the content will meet their learning and development needs;

Evaluation forms have been distributed for completion following each session so that valuable feedback can be collected and used to improve the programme. Feedback has been received which has influenced the logistics of the Seminar programme such as heating, lighting, timing and venues. Similarly, feedback has been provided to the providers of the training in relation to the detail of the presentation or certain queries being clarified to Members themselves. Varying times and venues have been trialled for some Member Seminars (such as 5pm starts and using the Princess Royal Theatre.)

The Member Development Programme for 15/16 is currently under development. The Democratic Services Committee has previously discussed the importance of Members taking a greater role in determining the programme with input from key stakeholders (such as the Leadership and the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Scrutiny forum.) It would be of assistance if the Committee could provide a steer on the way in which its Members would wish to be involved in the development work going forward.

It is anticipated that the programme would be based on the below:

- The outputs of the second round of Annual Development Reviews for Members in line with the scheme as revised by the Democratic Services Committee in 2013/14;
- Identifying priority needs linked to the development of the Scrutiny and Cabinet Forward Work Programmes;
- Responding to recommendations made by the Wales Audit Office following the Corporate Assessment of the Council.
- Emerging legislation and policy matters
- Addressing identified risks and issues.

The WLGA has lost an element of its funding so will be unable to provide support for Member Development as they have done in previous years. The Council has retained some funding to support Member Development (£40,000). It is important that activity is focussed on targeted areas that will provide most value to Members.

Additionally it is proposed that an annual survey of Members is introduced which would aim to draw out suggestion for improving Member Development opportunities within the Council; for example venues used for learning and development and use of e-resources.

To support the above activities, work has been re allocated within Democratic Services so that there is dedicated capacity to support Member Development on a more robust footing.

### **Recommendations**

- 1) That Members of the Democratic Services Committee consider areas that might be included in the Member Development programme for the 15/16 civic year.
- 2) That the Committee indicates how it might be involved in the creation and design of a suitable Member Survey to progress Member support and development matters
- 3) That Members of the Democratic Services Committee promote the participation in the second round of Annual Development Reviews for Members in line with the scheme as revised by the Democratic Services Committee in 2013/14

### **List of Background Papers**

Democratic Process- Strengthening and Modernising Arrangements in Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council. Council. July 2014.

Council Report-WAO Corporate Assessment of Neath Port Talbot Council, January 2015.

Appendix 1- Draft Member Development Programme Model.

## **Officer Contact**

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APPENDIX 2

**(DRAFT- NO STATUS) Member Development Programme**  
**2014/15**

**Before August Recess**

<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Objective:</b>	<b>Method:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Venue:</b>
Forward Financial Plan	To provide members with an updated Forward Financial Plan position covering the period 2015-16 to 2017-18	All Member Seminar	3pm, 14 <sup>th</sup> July 2014	Council Chamber, Port Talbot Civic Centre.
Forward Financial Plan	To provide members with an updated Forward Financial Plan position covering the period 2015-16 to 2017-18	All Member Seminar	5.30pm, 17 <sup>th</sup> July 2014	Council Chamber, Port Talbot Civic Centre.
Individual Electoral Registration	To enable Members to be briefed on the key information about Individual	All Member Seminar	10am, 18 <sup>th</sup> July 2014	Council Chamber, Port Talbot Civic Centre.

	Electoral Registration (IER): the biggest change to how people register to vote in almost a century.			
Planning (Wales) Bill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•To consider the proposed changes defined within the Planning (Wales) Bill</li> <li>•To consider how these changes will impact upon the structure and operation of the Planning and Development Control Committee within Neath Port Talbot</li> </ul>	All Member Seminar	9am, 22 <sup>nd</sup> July 2014	Council Chamber, Port Talbot Civic Centre.

**RECESS- AUGUST 2014**

**September- December 2014**

<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Objective:</b>	<b>Method:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Venue:</b>
Children's Services- Referrals, Complaints and understanding the process of taking a child into care.	Councillors are sometimes approached by members of the public who have contact with Children & Young People Services in Neath Port Talbot with claims that the Social Worker has taken away their children in unjust circumstances. It is important that Councillors	All Member Briefing	3 <sup>rd</sup> September 2014	Council Chamber

	understand the powers that Social Workers have and do not have in such circumstances and the process that must be gone through before children are removed from parents care.			
Equalities Event		Partner Event Open to Members	18 <sup>th</sup> September 2014	Princess Royal Theatre
Annual Development Review Refresher Training	To provide refresher training to ADR reviewers on the process	ADR Trainers only	24 <sup>th</sup> September 2014	Council Chamber
Forward Financial Plan	To provide members with an updated Forward Financial Plan position covering	All Member Seminar	25 <sup>th</sup> September 2014	Council Chamber

	the period 2015-16 to 2017-18			
Equality Impact Assessment WLGA Training	To provide targeted Equality Impact Assessment Training to Cabinet Members	Cabinet Members	2 <sup>nd</sup> October 2014	Committee Room 3
Committee Procedure	The Seminar was a result of requests by Members for training on Committee Procedure within the Council. The Seminars were basic training on Committee procedures and scrutiny arrangements.	All Member Briefings (x3)	1 <sup>st</sup> , 7 <sup>th</sup> and 10 <sup>th</sup> October 2014	Neath Civic Centre and the Chamber

New Social Work Model	To inform Members about the principles of the engagement process and provide Members with further information.	All Member Briefing	17 <sup>th</sup> October 2014	Council Chamber
Equality Impact Assessments Roles and Responsibilities	To provide targeted training on Equality Impact Assessments and the members' roles and responsibilities.	All Member Briefing	21 <sup>st</sup> October 2014	Council Chamber
Community Funds		All Member Briefing	18 <sup>th</sup> November 2014	Council Chamber
Members IT	To demonstrate the new Mod.Gov system to members and to provide demonstrations	All Member Briefing and equipment demonstration	1 <sup>st</sup> December 2014	Council Chamber & Committee Rooms

	of the kit available to members.			
Draft Housing Allocation Policy	To provide an update to Members on the new Policy.	All Member Briefing	8 <sup>th</sup> December 2014	Council Chamber
ERW (Education through Regional Working)	The seminar was presented by Betsan O'Connor, Managing Director of ERW, the aim of which is to have an informal discussion with Members regarding collaborative working across the region and the Regional Strategy.	All Member Briefing	18 <sup>th</sup> December 2014	Council Chamber

**January- April 2015**

Proposed Response to WG Consultation on the Planning Bill.	The seminar was to enable Members to consider the proposed changes defined within the Planning (Wales) Bill and to consider how these changes will impact upon the structure and operation of the Planning and Development Control Committee within Neath Port Talbot.	All Member Briefing	13 <sup>th</sup> January 2015	Council Chamber
Budget	This seminar was to update Members on the Budget setting	All Member Briefing	16 <sup>th</sup> January 2015	Council Chamber

	<p>arrangements and proposals</p> <p>This seminar was a follow up to the Closing the Budget Gap Seminar of 19 September 2014 and the Cabinet report of 1 October 2014</p>			
Human Trafficking	<p>To raise awareness about the exploitation of human beings and to understand your organisations role and responsibility in tackling human trafficking.</p>	All Member Briefing	<p>22<sup>nd</sup> January 2015</p> <p>(Repeat)5<sup>th</sup> February 2015</p>	Council Chamber

Public Health Wales	To give an overview of health in NPT, progress being made, and the action we still need to see to improve outcomes for local people. The overview will be made as a presentation , with opportunities for members to ask questions and contribute. The second part will focus on how Scrutiny can focus action where it may be needed, and to	All Member Briefing	27 <sup>th</sup> January 2015	Princess Royal Theatre
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	explore possible themes that Scrutiny Committees may wish to pick up.			
Western Bay Scrutiny	TBC	All Member Briefing	23 <sup>rd</sup> February 2015	Princess Royal Theatre
Direct Payments and the Independent Living Fund	TBC	All Member Briefing	19 <sup>th</sup> March 2015	Council Chamber
Universal Credit	TBC	All Member Briefing	March 24 <sup>th</sup> 2015	Council Chamber
Learning & Development needs identified from ADRs	TBC	TBC	TBC	
ICT Training Needs	TBC	TBC	TBC	
Learning & Development needs related to FFP	TBC	TBC	TBC	

