NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

5 September 2018

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND CHIEF DIGITAL OFFICER– K.JONES

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Members' Development and Training Programme

Purpose of Report

To update the Committee on the feedback from the recent Members Development Survey, and to agree a training programme for all Members based on the training needs identified.

Background

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.
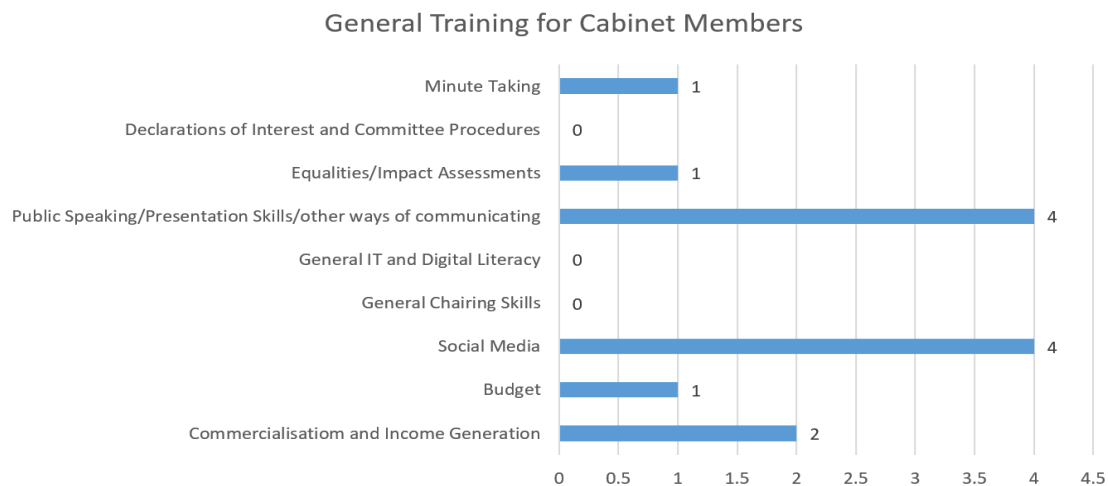
During May and June 2018 all Members were requested to complete a survey with assistance from Democratic Services Officers. The purpose of the survey was to identify the training needs for all Members with the intention of setting a training programme for the civic year 2018/19. A separate survey was carried out for Cabinet Members as their training needs were considered to be slightly different.

Overall 51 respondents completed the questionnaires from 64 resulting In a 80% response rate. Non-responding Members were contacted on numerous occasions and requested to complete the survey, but it was

not possible to capture all responses due to the limited availability of some Members through sickness, leave and work commitments. Further attempts will be made by the Democratic Services Team to follow up any outstanding responses.

Cabinet Members' Survey

During the survey Cabinet Members were asked to select general topics that they would be interested in receiving training on. The results are provided below (a copy of the online survey is contained within Appendix A, and a summary of the responses' contained in Appendix B).

General Training for Cabinet Members

Topic	Value
Minute Taking	1
Declarations of Interest and Committee Procedures	0
Equalities/Impact Assessments	1
Public Speaking/Presentation Skills/other ways of communicating	4
General IT and Digital Literacy	0
General Chairing Skills	0
Social Media	4
Budget	1
Commercialisatiom and Income Generation	2

A number of additional comments were made in relation to the above topics. In relation to the item Public Speaking/Presentation Skills/Other ways of communicating, further specific training elements were listed on dealing with confrontation and social media training. Under Social Media suggestions were made for training on the use of Facebook and Twitter, and how to make the most of the press and media. With regard to Minute Taking a comment was received requesting training on how to make minutes more concise and accurate. An additional comment was received in relation to Equalities/Impact Assessment on understanding the legal requirements and regulations associated with the topic.

Ninety percent of respondents stated that they did not require any further assistance in their roles as Ward Councillors or as Members of Outside Bodies. One respondent stated that they would like training to assist with their role as a representative of an outside body. There was a small number of responses regarding the timing of training sessions; however
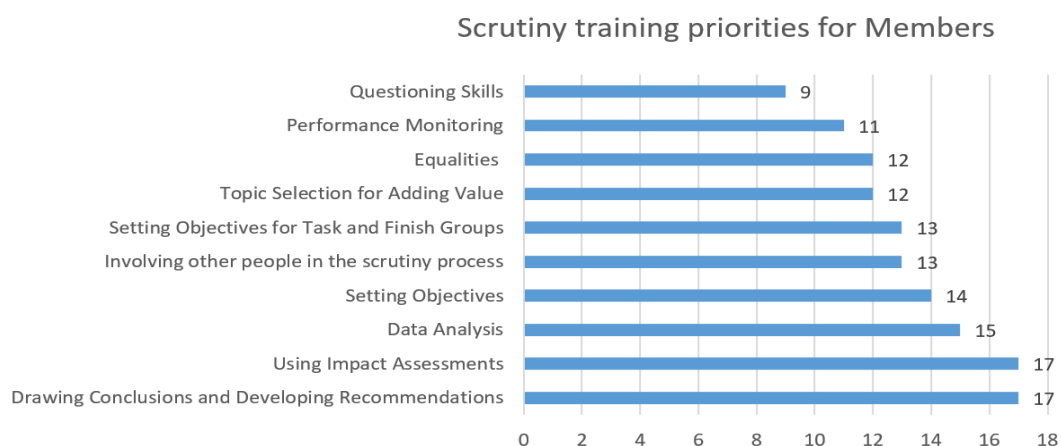
there was a general consensus that it would be when Members' diaries permitted them to attend.

Six respondents stated that they would be interested in an annual review of their training and development needs. One respondent stated that it would provide them with the opportunity to receive a general review of strengths and weaknesses, while another respondent stated that they would like to understand the role of corporate governance. One Member stated that they would need to know what the review looked like first before committing themselves.

Two respondents made general comments regarding the Member Development Programme. One respondent stated that they would hope that any future training would be useful and relevant as this had not always been the case previously. One respondent stated that they would welcome training on how to use Twitter more effectively, particularly as they could not always summarise their comments in 280 characters.

Non-Executive Members Survey

Ninety percent of respondents stated that they were Members of a scrutiny committee, and were therefore asked additional questions in order to identify training priorities for all scrutiny committees. The results are included below (a copy of the online survey is contained within Appendix C, and a summary of the responses' contained in Appendix D).
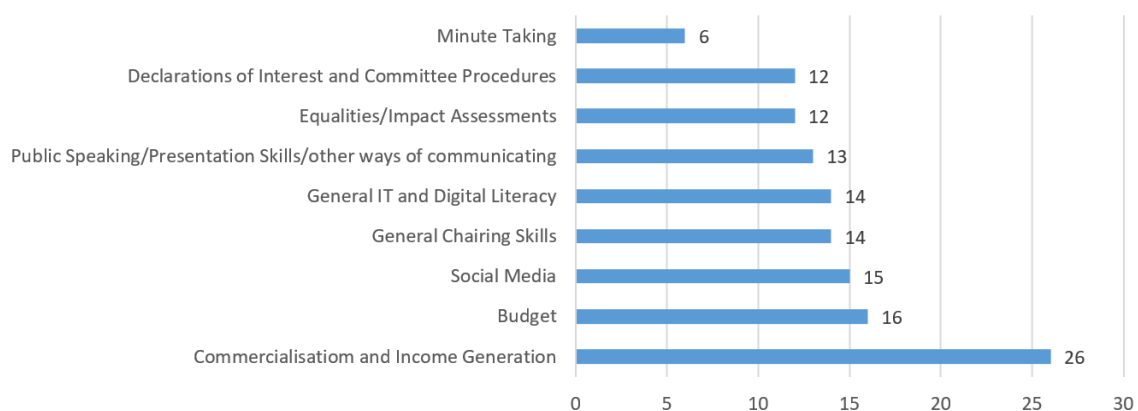
Scrutiny training priorities for Members

Category	Value
Questioning Skills	9
Performance Monitoring	11
Equalities	12
Topic Selection for Adding Value	12
Setting Objectives for Task and Finish Groups	13
Involving other people in the scrutiny process	13
Setting Objectives	14
Data Analysis	15
Using Impact Assessments	17
Drawing Conclusions and Developing Recommendations	17

Further comments were received from respodents in addtion to the above. One respondent stated that the priority objective for the coming year should be to ensure that scrutiny committees had the skills and confidence to analyse and develop policy with a view to

making a genuine difference to Council performance. One respondent commented that Members of scrutiny committees were performing well under the pre-decision scrutiny arrangement. One respondent suggested for a Members Seminar to be arranged on homelessness in order to raise awareness on the topic.

All Non-Executive Members were asked to identify general training priorities from a list of options. The results are provided below (a copy of the online survey is contained within Appendix C, and a summary of the responses' contained in Appendix D).

General training priorities identified by Non-Executive Members

Training priority	Count
Minute Taking	6
Declarations of Interest and Committee Procedures	12
Equalities/Impact Assessments	12
Public Speaking/Presentation Skills/other ways of communicating	13
General IT and Digital Literacy	14
General Chairing Skills	14
Social Media	15
Budget	16
Commercialisatiom and Income Generation	26

In relation to the item Public Speaking/Presentation Skills/Other ways of communicating, further specific training elements were listed. Three respondents stated that they would require training to enable them to put their points across more effectively and concisely, and to improve confidence in this area. With regard to Minute Taking one respondent stated that they required training on how to set out and format minutes. One Member commented that they required training in general on minute taking. Additional comments were received in relation to Equalities/Impact Assessment. Three respondents stated that they required training which provided a general overview on this area. One respondent commented that they required further knowledge in general on the topic in order to carry out their duties as a Chair. One respondent requested a Members Seminar on both elements.

With regard to Commercialisation and Income Generation item, further specific training elements were listed. One respondent stated that they would like to learn how the Council could sustain itself through income generation, two respondents commented that they would like to receive training to acquire more knowledge in order to produce their own

suggestions for income generation, two respondents stated that they would like to explore more options to generate income and to understand what opportunities that the Council were missing out on, two respondents commented that they would like to receive general training on the topic, and one respondent stated that they would like to understand which aspects were within the Council's power and which were not.

In relation to Declarations of Interest and Committee Procedures further specific training elements were listed. Six respondents stated that they would like to receive a general overview on the topic, one respondent commented that they would like advice on how to explain the procedure to constituents, one respondent requested training on committee procedures, and one respondent stated that they would like clearer user friendly guidance and more flexibility.

With regard to the Budget, further specific training elements were listed. One respondent commented that they would like the opportunity to monitor saving strategies on a regular basis, one respondent stated that they would like to understand how everything impacted on the budgets and interlinked, three respondents mentioned that they would like to understand the detailed budget lines and how the budget process worked within the Council's systems, and one respondent stated that they would like advice on how to communicate information on the budget to the public in an understandable way.

In relation to General Chairing Skills five respondents commented that they would welcome general training on the topic, one respondent stated that they would like training to refresh their knowledge, and one respondent mentioned that they required training on procedures for Chairs.

With regard to Social Media, further specific training elements were listed. Three respondents requested training on the use of social media, and two respondents requested training on how to use social media safely.

In relation to the IT and Digital Literacy item, two respondents requested refresher training on IT skills in general, one respondent stated that their skills were limited to Outlook Express only and welcomed any further training on other IT programs, one respondent specified that they required physical training on how to use a tablet device, and one respondent queried whether there was a software package which could

assist Members wishing to communicate in Welsh and to assist the Authority to comply with the Welsh Language Standards.

Sixty eight percent of respondents stated that they did not require any further assistance in relation to their roles as Ward Councillors or as representatives of outside bodies. However, twenty five percent (10 respondents) stated that they did require further assistance in their roles as Ward Councillors, while thirteen percent (5 Members) required assistance as a representative of an outside body. Additional comments were received with regard to training requirements for both roles. One respondent stated that they required practical training on how to set up local charitable groups and associations, one respondent indicated that they would appreciate training on housing issues, one respondent stated that they would appreciate training to deal with difficult situations within their community such as mental health issues, and to gain an understanding of what matters Ward Councillors should or should not be involved in. One respondent stated that a training session giving an overview of the role would be useful.

The majority of responders indicated a preference for training sessions to be held in the mornings, except on Thursdays where respondents indicated that evening sessions would be as equally convenient as morning sessions. Additional comments were made by responders, but suggestions were varied and it was not possible to identify a common theme.

Seventy percent of those surveyed stated that they would be interested in receiving an annual review of their training and development needs. Additional comments were received regarding annual reviews. Two respondents commented than they would like to receive training on any policy or legislation changes, and one respondent requested training on any IT changes which would affect users.

General comments were made in relation to the Member Development Programme. One respondent commented that they were not in favour of seminars and preferred interactive and in depth sessions with officers, one respondent stated that they preferred to avoid extra special meetings outside of the cycle of meetings as diaries were difficult to manage at short notice due to other commitments, one respondent requested a map stating where officers and teams were based, one respondent commented that they would like the market place event to take place annually, one respondent indicated that they would like

training on the changes to the Data Protection Act and any future changes to legislation and policies, and one respondent queried whether further online training could be provided to Members following all Member Seminars.

Scrutiny Training with Ian Botterill – May 2018

In addition to the survey, each scrutiny committee received general scrutiny training from Ian Botterill during May 2018. During these training sessions a to do list was compiled by each committee with suggestions for improving the scrutiny process. It is intended to incorporate Members' suggestions into the Member Development programme where possible. A list of the suggestions can be found below:

- To arrange visits to other Local Authorities to observe their scrutiny processes on a committee by committee basis
- To arrange more site visits for each committee
- More time to be given to committees to do research prior to meetings
- Collaborative Scrutiny
- To gain a better understanding of the scrutiny structure and process
- Self-Scrutiny after each scrutiny meeting – a short session to discuss how a meeting has gone and if any improvements can be made
- Members to ask more challenging questions instead of making statements
- Committees to engage more with Officers
- Self-evaluation of characteristics of good Scrutiny (to be done every 6 months or so)
- Improve consultations and public involvement
- To better understand the role and work of Cabinet
- To make more recommendations

Financial Impact

The programme developed in response to the survey will need to be accommodated within existing budgets or through learning activities that are at nil cost to the Council.

Equality Impact Assessment

There are none identified at this time. There is a parallel piece of work underway to explore if any Member is failing to access learning and development.

Workforce Impacts

There are no significant workforce impacts associated with this report.

Legal Powers

There are none.

Risk Management

There are no significant risks associated with this report.

Consultation

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

Recommendation

That Members consider the results of the surveys and provide a steer on how the information should be used to inform the Member Development Programme for 2018/19.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that Members receive the training that they have indicated and are entitled to as set out in Section 7 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires local

Implementation of Decision

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

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Member Development Survey Data

Officer Contacts

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