

Report of the Head of Democratic Services

Standards Committee – 4 September 2015

Measures to Address Attendance at Councillor Training

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| Purpose: | To set out the outcomes of the Democratic Services Committee meeting with members of the Standards Committee held on 16 June 2015. The recommendations being: 1) To set measures to address attendance at Councillor training; 2) To Compile a list of Mandatory Training courses. |
| Consultation: | Access to Services, Finance, Legal. |
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| FOR INFORMATION | |

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Democratic Services Committee held on 16 June 2015 included members of the Standards Committee. It was used as a forum to discuss what sanctions if any could be utilised by the Authority to increase Councillor attendance at Councillor training events. Additionally, the Committee discussed the issue of making certain training compulsory.
- 1.2 It should be noted that there is no legal requirement for Councillors to attend training despite the Welsh Government clearly moving in that direction. Training therefore cannot in reality have a mandatory effect.
- 1.3 Likewise, member development and training is within the remit of the Democratic Services Committee. The only role that the Standards Committee has in training relates to the Code of Conduct, but again there is no power of compulsion.

2. Measures to Address Attendance at Councillor Training

- 2.1 Whilst there is no legal requirement to mandate Councillors to attend training, there are things that the Council can do to promote attendance. Some Authorities utilise a name and shame approach whilst others utilise the assistance of the Political Group System.

- 2.2 At its meeting on the 16th June 2015, the Democratic Services Committee agreed that the most effective measure to encourage Councillor attendance at Councillor training would be for the Head of Democratic Services to send a monthly email to the Political Group Leaders outlining the attendance of their Political Group Councillors. The Political Group Leaders would then be encouraged attendance within the Group.
- 2.3 Additionally, it is imperative that training is offered at times that are convenient for Councillors, as such training will now be provided once during the daytime and once during the evening. Greater use of e-learning will also be used.
- 2.4 Councillor Training is based on the responses provided by Councillors from the Councillor Training Needs Analysis (TNA). It is anticipated that by providing Councillors with the training that they request rather than assuming what they want will also help in boosting the attendance figures.
- 2.5 Whilst there has been an organised Councillor training calendar in place for a number of years; there needs to be greater emphasis from the Political Groups to encourage their Political Group Councillors to attend. Additionally, Councillors must be encouraged to complete their Training Needs Analysis questionnaires in order to address their specific needs.

3. Mandatory Training

- 3.1 There are a number of mandatory training events currently in place within the Authority; however there is no definitive list. The Committee agreed to compile a list and recommend it to Council for adoption as the definitive list of mandatory training for Councillors. Though it must be pointed out that even if Council agrees that training is mandatory, it could only be “enforced” by political group discipline.
- 3.2 However, historically, mandatory training has been linked to an actual Committee. This is helpful as there is an easy sanction which can be imposed i.e. if you don’t attend the mandatory training then you are not permitted to sit on a specific Committee. This approach works for areas such as Appointments, Licensing and Planning. Additionally, there is a requirement to ensure that Councillors are trained in the Code of Conduct.
- 3.3 Specific examples of linked training are shown below:

| Committee | Training Required |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Appointments Committee | Recruitment and Selection |
| Licensing | Licensing |
| Planning | Planning |

- 3.4 Over the past few years, there has been an emergence in the requirement to ensure that Councillors are trained in areas such as Corporate Parenting, Data Protection, Good Decision Making, Bias, Pre-determination and Rules of Natural Justice and Safeguarding. Training has been provided in these areas but it is not possible to enforce training in these areas.
- 3.5 The Democratic Services Committee will be recommending to Council that the following training be deemed mandatory for Councillors:
- i) Corporate Parenting;
 - ii) Data Protection;
 - iii) Good Decision Making, Bias, Pre-determination and Rules of Natural Justice;
 - iv) Interests, Gifts & Hospitality including Public Services Ombudsman for Wales guidance ;
 - v) Introduction to Code of Conduct & Standards;
 - vi) Licensing (For General Licensing and Statutory Licensing members);
 - vii) Planning (For Planning Committee members);
 - viii) Rules of Debate;
 - ix) Safeguarding Adults;
 - x) Safeguarding and Protection of Children;
 - xi) Scrutiny questioning skills (For Scrutiny Programme Committee / Scrutiny Panel members);
 - xii) Recruitment and Selection (For Appointments Committee members and Councillors involved in appointments at Council).

4. Equality and Engagement Implications

- 4.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening process took place prior to the consultation period. The outcome indicated that it was low priority and a full report was not required.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications with this report.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 Any legal implications are set out in the report.

Background Papers: None.

Appendices: None.