

28 September 2017

Learning and Development for Elected Members

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Cllr S. Coughlan - Leader

Introduction:

The purpose of this report is to inform the Scrutiny Overview Committee of progress towards developing/implementing a Learning and Development Programme for Elected Members for 2017/18 to enable them to fulfil their roles as effective community leaders.

Report:

Recognising the important role our Elected Members play in establishing and delivering the ambitions of the Council's corporate plan, a working group was established in Spring 2017 to refresh the way in which Member development is managed within the Council, including a review of structure and content. The Group was established and is led by Tony Cox, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, and members include:

Lisa Koc, Learning and Development Manager
Neil Picken, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Craig Goodall, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Sarah Read, Legal Secretary

The Group has met on a number of occasions to reflect on previous approaches (Member development has previously sat both within Human Resources and Democratic Services) and to consider the Programme, any other support needed going forward and how it will be resourced. In terms of methodology, the Group has benchmarked approaches with other Councils, considering any best practice, has reflected on what has worked well and not so well in the past and has run a number of Member focus groups/engagement sessions to conduct an interactive Learning Needs Analysis. Going forward individual Members may wish to contact Legal and Democratic Services or indeed Learning and Development to discuss individual training requirements/personal learning plans.

The draft Programme, attached at appendix 1 to the report, contains an introduction, setting out why learning and development for Members is important, the roles of Democratic Services and the corporate Learning and Development Team, how learning opportunities will be promoted, how to book

and how they will be evaluated.

It is anticipated that the programme will be professionally produced with a learning champion being identified from each Political Group and a launch event at the end of the Summer 2017.

Attendance on/success of the Programme will be monitored by the Standards Committee.

The Structure of the Programme

The Programme comprises three different levels, Induction, Core Skills and additional learning opportunities for Personal Growth.

Induction

There will be a comprehensive induction programme for all Members, whether newly elected or returning Members. In addition to the New Member Training facilitated by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, there will be the opportunity to meet with other Members and senior officers to learn more about corporate and constitutional processes. Each Member will receive an Induction Pack setting out the support and guidance available together with other useful information about the Council. Members will also be allocated a buddy/mentor from within their own group. To complement Member Induction there will be a number of e-learning packages made available so that Members can undertake learning at a time and in a location to suit them.

Core Skills

An annual core programme will be developed each year in consultation with Elected Members. It will include the requirements of any new legislation and emerging corporate themes, ethical and governance requirements and changing standards and the impact of any scrutiny recommendations in terms of changing corporate practices. It will also include emerging themes and developments from partners. Examples include topics such as:

- Your role as a corporate parent
- Protecting Information
- Prevent
- Safeguarding children and adults awareness
- Charing meetings
- Managing the Media/public speaking
- Social Media – do's and don'ts
- Equality and Diversity

It will also include training related to specific roles eg., servicing planning, licensing or employment appeals/interview panels.

Learning for Personal Growth and Development

There are a vast number of additional learning modules that are available to all Members. These modules are aimed at enhancing knowledge and understanding and providing useful information about a wide range of topics and can only serve to help Members learn more about their important role, the Council directorates and develop new skills.

Who will deliver the learning opportunities?

The Programme will largely be delivered by in-house subject experts and via e-learning with potential for follow up action learning sets/away days. For specialist skills training such as public speaking/managing the media it will be necessary to engage external speakers. It may also be possible to sponsor specific Members on external conferences/learning events subject to relevance and budget availability. A protocol/process will be designed so that there is evidence of transparency in decision making and funding will also need to be identified. The Council will, of course, look for opportunities to work collaboratively with its neighbouring authorities, The Combined Authority and via the West Midlands Council.

The Leach Review

Members will recall the review of Overview and Scrutiny undertaken by Professor Leach in 2015. As part of his review Professor Leach recognised the value of training and identified similar issues to those of that the Committee did at its last meeting around the need to support new members. Paragraph 3.16 of the report stated:

The potential role of appropriate training is absolutely crucial to the challenge of improving the effectiveness of scrutiny in Walsall. There are three distinct areas of training need. Once members have been appointed to a scrutiny panel at the start of the municipal year, they would benefit greatly from a training session on the subject matter and current issues within the remit of their panel, which would enable them to make a positive, knowledge based input much more quickly than is currently the case. Secondly, there needs to be training at the same early stage on the distinctive nature of scrutiny, and the particular skills needed to do it well. This would hopefully eliminate the bemusement which some members initially (and understandably) feel about what they are really there to do. Thirdly there is real value in training sessions for chairs and vice-chairs of panels, to enable them to equip themselves with the distinctive skills needed to chair scrutiny meetings effectively. (chairs with long experience of scrutiny may not need this input). Support from all party leaders, in underlining to their members the importance of attending the relevant training sessions, would be advantageous.

He recommended that:

A training programme should be introduced after each local election focusing on the subject matter of the respective panels, scrutiny skills, and (where

appropriate) chairing skills.

Following this recommendation each Overview and Scrutiny Committee begins each municipal year with a presentation on the role and responsibilities of the Committee. The role of scrutiny is covered in the member induction. Further to this it is recognised that there has been some ad hoc training for Members. Moving forward the development of a wholesale member development programme will enable the Council to follow through the Leach recommendation in full. The new Learning and Development Programme seeks to advance the opportunities to gain new skills and improve confidence in newly elected Members. It is anticipated that this will be achieved through a mix of internal and external training opportunities and through working with a peer member or 'buddy'.

Conclusion

The draft programme as circulated, sets out a draft Elected Member Learning and Development offer, approach and programme for 2017/18. It is anticipated that there will, generally speaking, be at least one learning event per quarter having regard to Members' availability. The dates of these learning events will be set up in advance to enable maximum attendance/participation.

Recommendations:

That subject to any comments Members may wish to make, the draft Member Learning and Development programme be noted.

Contact Officer:

Tony Cox
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

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✉ Tony.Cox@walsall.gov.uk

Elected Member Learning and Development Programme 2017/18

‘Making a positive Difference’



Walsall Council

Supporting our Workforce Strategy

Summer, 2017

Learning and Development

'Making a positive difference'

This Programme has been compiled by Democratic Services with support from the corporate Learning and Development Team within Human Resources. It includes development opportunities that aim to support our Elected Members to carry out their roles, making a positive difference to the lives of Walsall citizens.

Our commitment to Elected Member development

'We recognise the important role our Elected Members play in establishing and delivering the ambitions of our corporate plan. We recognise their professionalism and commitment to delivering quality services in increasingly challenging financial circumstances. In order to support the Council's core purpose of serving the people and communities of Walsall by representing and working with them to protect and improve the quality of life for all, particularly the most vulnerable, we need to ensure that our Elected Members like our workforce are effectively supported and appropriately skilled and trained to fulfil their increasingly challenging roles.

This learning and development Programme has been designed with this in mind. We know there is a direct link between an organisation's investment in its people and how well the organisation performs. Our elected members will be the key to leading the Council's overarching priorities and to its overall success'.

Lifelong health, wealth and happiness

Safe, resilient and prospering communities

Sustainable change and improvement to all

Tony Cox, Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Introduction

The development of this Programme has been overseen by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services with support from officers in Democratic Services and the Learning and Development Team within HR. It is aimed at promoting learning and development opportunities for Walsall Council's Elected Members.

Here in Walsall we are committed to:

- Identifying the individual and collective learning needs of our Elected Members and prioritising them accordingly
- Ensuring that any learning programmes reflect Council and national objectives
- Promoting learning and development opportunities through traditional and electronic communication methods
- Disseminating learning and development to Members within each political group in a timely fashion
- Monitoring the implementation of the Annual Learning and Development Plan for Elected Members and reporting take up to Standards Board/individual Groups
- Evaluating learning and development programmes and reviewing the outcomes
- Practising accessibility, promoting equality and valuing diversity

We believe Member development is essential if local government is to thrive and prosper. This programme is designed to build Elected Member capacity and is therefore based upon the principles of:

- Developing Electing Members as effective community leaders
- Adopting a strategic approach to Member development which has the backing of all parties
- Having a Development programme in place that clearly identifies the difference development can make
- Ensuring that learning and development is effective in building capacity
- Addressing wider development matters to promote work-life balance and citizenship

The role of Democratic Services

The Team will work with you to identify your learning needs. They will administer the Programme and be your key point of contact in respect of booking onto face to face learning opportunities and initial resolution of any difficulties you may have with accessing your e-learning account.

Members will be encouraged to share their knowledge and expertise with fellow Members where appropriate by:

- Supporting newly elected Members (mentoring)
- Sharing knowledge from attendance at external conferences and seminars
- Engaging in peer mentoring

Officer support

- Provide support through Democratic Services for all member learning and development, ensuring all Members are aware of learning and development opportunities in good time
- Provide 1-2-1 support to newly elected members as part of their planned induction programme
- Devise and deliver a programme of induction training for new and returning Members
- Devise a learning and development programme for individual members based on needs identified at a personal review meeting with a Peer Member or a Senior Officer. To access this service individual members should contact Democratic Services for an initial discussion.
- Provide administrative support for all learning and development events including communication with Members and the provision of evaluation and feedback on providers

Your key contacts are:

Tony Cox, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, telephone 654822

Sarah Read, Legal Secretary, telephone 654824

Neil Picken, Senior Democratic Services Officer, telephone 654369

Craig Goodall, Senior Democratic Services Officer, telephone 654765

The role of the corporate Learning and Development Team

The team is led by Lisa Koc, Learning and Development Manager. Lisa and the team are committed to providing high quality learning and development solutions that are pragmatic and innovative and offer value for money. Our aim is to provide a responsive service that reflects the needs of the organisation as articulated in the Corporate Workforce Plan, the various Directorate workforce plans; supporting staff and our Elected Members to achieve our goals in challenging times. Lisa also manages the Workforce Development Team

supporting Adult Social Care; this means our customers are able to draw upon a wider skills and knowledge base than was previously the case. As a result new topics will be introduced into the corporate employee and Elected Members programmes which may benefit a wider audience, examples include: mental health awareness, healthy hearts and minds, managing personal resilience, dementia and deaf awareness plus much more. To contact Lisa or the wider Learning and Development Team, telephone 650350 or email:

learningandorganisationaldevelopment@walsall.gov.uk

What you will find in this brochure

The learning opportunities in this Programme have been developed or commissioned to meet the changing needs of the organisation and increasingly demanding roles of our elected members. They will be continually reviewed and evaluated to assess their relevance and value for money, and unless stated under 'target audience' are open to all elected members.

Some of the events are designed as development workshops aimed at equipping Members with the necessary knowledge and skills to fulfil their roles, while others might take the form of briefings, 1-2-1s or facilitated sessions whereby Members can share their knowledge and experience. Alongside this is the opportunity to access our catalogue of e-learning topics for personal growth. Our e-learning platform may be accessed outside of normal office hours thereby offering maximum flexibility to you the learner. For Members who would benefit from some 1-2-1 support in order to access our e-learning platform we can offer the opportunity to use a computer within HR on the 3rd floor where someone will be on hand to provide support.

Elected Member Induction

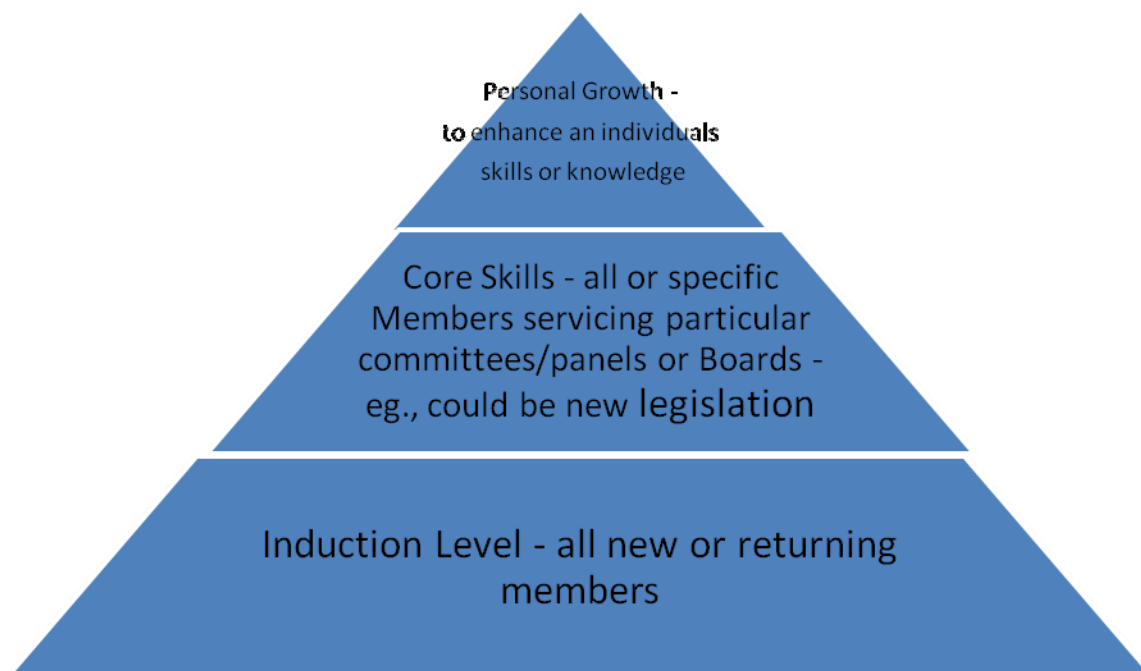
There is a comprehensive induction programme for all members whether newly elected or returning Members. In addition to the New Member Training facilitated by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, there will also be the opportunity to meet with other Members and key senior officers and learn more about corporate and constitutional processes. Each Member will be provided with an Induction Pack setting out the support and guidance available together with other useful information about the Council. Members will also be allocated a buddy/mentor from within their own Group. To complement Member Induction, the e-learning package – 'Your role as Councillor' should also be completed. The Induction Process will also identify any gaps in skills or knowledge which need to be developed and this will form the basis of a development plan to accompany the recommended and mandatory learning set out in this brochure.

Core Annual Learning and Development Programme

An annual core programme will be developed in consultation with Elected Members. It will include the requirements of new legislation and emerging corporate themes, ethical and governance requirements and changing standards and the impact of any scrutiny recommendations in terms of changing corporate practices. It will also include emerging themes and developments from partners. Examples may include: your role as a corporate parent, disclosable pecuniary interests, chairing meetings, protecting information training, Prevent training, safeguarding children and adults awareness and training related to specific roles you may have with regards to servicing planning, licensing or employment appeals/interview panels. Some topics have been designated as mandatory learning.

Learning for Personal Growth and Development

There are a vast amount of additional learning modules that are available to all Members. These modules are aimed at enhancing knowledge and providing useful information about a wide range of topics to help Members learn more about their role, the Council directorates, the borough of Walsall and developing core skills. In the light of the tragic events which saw the murder of MP Jo Cox we have also included within the programme 'Personal Safety and Lone Working' alongside other health and safety related topics.



External Opportunities

Democratic Services often receive notification of events being held regionally or by other Councils that may be of interest to Members here at Walsall. These will be circulated to:

- All Members if appropriate
- Members who have identified the topic as an area for development
- Members who would directly benefit from attending due to their specific role

Those wishing to take advantage of these events should notify Democratic Services who will in turn evaluate the request in line with business need and available budget. Decisions will be shared in an open and transparent way.

Promoting the Dissemination of Learning

Promoting the dissemination of learning is something we strongly encourage. Attendance at external events is a valuable way of acquiring information about a wide range of issues including new and innovative practice, new legislation and other regional and national developments.

Members who attend external events should make any course material available to others by placing a copy in the Members/Group Rooms. Members may also be required to pass on this learning in other ways such as producing a short written report or briefing to their peers.

How to book onto a face to face course

Democratic Services Officers will advise you of the dates of the face to face learning opportunities which will be scheduled at key points during the Municipal Year and not less than quarterly. You are asked to contact them in order to indicate your interest in attending. They will then send you the necessary joining instructions e.g the date, the venue, timings, any pre-course reading etc. In advance of the training you may also wish to consider the following questions:

- What do I want to be able to do or do better?
- How will I recognise success?
- How will I review and measure my improvement?
- What methods will I use to achieve my learning objectives?
- How will I practice and apply what I learn?

Learning and Development for all

Democratic services and the corporate learning and development team are committed to the active promotion and support of equality of opportunity in the way their respective services are managed and delivered. We aim to ensure that:

- The marketing and booking process for development activities ensures fair access to all
- All learners have equal access to the development activities offered
- Where Members have identified a support need in relation to their attendance at a learning event i.e., large print hand outs, interpreters – then all such reasonable adjustments will be provided
- Individuals wishing to undertake any accredited programmes are selected on the basis of business need, merit and ability

Cancellation policy

In order to run a cost effective service and maximise the opportunities for all to attend the training they have identified, we ask that you provide us with as much notice as possible of any cancellations.

On the rare occasion when we might have to cancel a course, delegates will be notified at the earliest opportunity. Wherever possible delegates will be offered replacement course dates at their convenience.

Evaluation

To be of real benefit, effective learning and development has to try to match the needs of Members, the objectives of the Council and its partners in achieving a shared vision for Walsall.

It is essential therefore that all provision is reviewed for relevance and effectiveness with all Members attending any event being required to complete an Evaluation Form post event. Monitoring and evaluation processes and outcomes will:

- Be open and constructive, enabling any necessary enhancements to be made to future delivery
- Be regularly monitored by the Democratic Services and Learning and Development Teams and Standards Board to ensure delivery of objectives and continuous improvement
- Be clearly communicated to Members through the various group Leaders
- Ensure Member achievements are recognised and acknowledged both individually and within political groups

- Encourage Members to be self-aware in recognising their strengths and weaknesses

Recording Learning

Your learning, whether face to face or via e-learning, will be captured on your individual learning profile held on the Councils HR database iTrent. If you attend any training outside of these more formal arrangements then we would also like to add these learning events to your learning profile.

Feedback and Complaints

We aim to provide an excellent service that is responsive to the needs of the organisation and individual learners. All our programmes are demand led and continually monitored for quality, suitability and value for money.

In order to help us deliver the service you want please let us have your feedback, good or bad, as often as possible. We review all course evaluation forms and follow up any issues raised.

If you are dissatisfied in any way please feel free to contact any member of the Democratic Services or Learning and Development Teams directly.

We will treat your concerns seriously, deal with them promptly, and use your feedback to inform and improve our service.

Equally if you have received an excellent service/support/benefitted greatly from one of our learning opportunities we would also like to hear from you.

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Induction

Subject	Face to Face	e-learning	Status
New Councillor Training including roles for debate			Mandatory
Your role as Councillor			Mandatory
Introduction to Local Government			Mandatory
Our Council - induction			Mandatory
Code of Conduct for Councillors			Mandatory

Core Skills

Subject	Face to Face	e-learning	Status
Declarations of Interest			Mandatory
Chairing Meetings			Highly recommended
Protecting Information Level 1			Highly recommended
Protecting Information Level 2			Optional
Prevent			Highly recommended
Planning Committee			Mandatory for some
Licensing Committee			Mandatory for some
Dismissing Officer			Mandatory for some
Interview Skills Training for Appointments Board			Mandatory for some
Safeguarding children and adults awareness			Mandatory
The Council's finances/budget setting/medium term financial planning			Highly recommended
Effective partnerships working			Optional
Briefing to include protocol and use of Council Chamber			Highly recommended
Social Media – do's and don't's			Highly recommended
Unconscious Bias			Highly recommended
Public Speaking/getting the best from the Media			Highly recommended
Effective Case Work			Optional
Strategic Thinking			Optional
The role of the corporate parent			Mandatory
Equality and Diversity Foundation Course			Mandatory

Personal Growth

Subject	Face to Face	e-learning	Status
Meeting skills			Optional
Presentation Skills			Optional
Spelling and Grammar			Optional
Introduction to coaching			Optional
Introduction to finance within Walsall			Optional
Introduction to Walsall Council's Contract Rules			Optional
Mental Health First Aid			Optional
Display Screen Equipment (DSE)			Optional
Fire Safety Awareness (all other buildings)			Optional
Fire Safety Awareness and annual briefing (Civic Centre)			Optional
Fire Safety Awareness and annual briefing (Council House)			Optional
Fire Safety Overview			Optional
Personal Safety and lone working			Highly recommended
Blackberry basics* to be deleted and replaced in relation to new technology			Optional
Computers Don't Bite			Optional
Email for Beginners			Optional
Excel			Optional
Word processing for beginners			Optional

Subject	Face to Face	e-learning	Status
Introduction to e-learning			Optional
Introduction to changes in Office 2010			Optional
Information Technology for beginners			Optional
Outlook Basics			Optional
Assertive communication			Optional
Confidence and Assertiveness			Optional
Effective Time Management			Optional
Facilitation Skills			Optional
Managing your priorities			Optional
Stress awareness			Optional
Resilience through Change			Optional
Learning to Learn			Optional
Self Development			Optional
Carer aware (guided e-learning)			Optional
Equality and Diversity Induction			Optional
Equality and Diversity Legislation			Optional
Code of Conduct for Employees			Optional
Debt Management and Collection			Optional
Falls Prevention			Optional
Health Information Awareness			Optional
Introduction to Agile Working – generic			Optional
Introduction to sustainability and carbon management			Optional
Passport to procurement			Optional

Subject	Face to Face	e-learning	Status
Making Every Contact Count			Optional
Our Partners			Optional
Dementia Awareness			Optional

