

Democratic Services Committee

9 June 2023

MEMBERS DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The Member Induction Programme was launched on the 18th of May 2022.

The objectives of the launch were to inform new and returning members of:

- An outline of the main functions of the Council and of the responsibilities of each service.
- An overview of the organisation and its key functions.
- An understanding of the principal strategies and the vision for service delivery for Carmarthenshire.
- Further information on the arrangements for the Induction/Refresher Programme for Councillors.

The Induction Programme contained a total of 40 developmental sessions which were divided into sessions for all members, sessions specifically for Cabinet members and panel members sitting on relevant committees.

Members have had the opportunity to attend most sessions either remotely via Zoom or physically in County Hall, Carmarthen.

Where some sessions have been recorded on Zoom, members have been able to watch the recording via the eLearning Platform following the session.

A breakdown of the attendance to each development session is attached. **(Appendix A)**

Evaluation

To establish if the Induction Programme had been effective in providing members with sufficient knowledge and understanding, three focus groups were held during January & February and a survey was sent out to all members in February to seek feedback on the following:

- What worked well at the 2022 Member Induction?
- What aspects of the 2022 Member Induction could have been better?
- Next steps – Member Development Programme 2023/24

8 Members attend the 3 focus groups which were held online via Zoom.

14 Members completed the evaluation survey.

Some of the responses captured from the focus group and survey are recorded below.

What worked well at the 2022 Member Induction?

- Excellent launch of the Induction Programme in Y Ffwrness, enjoyed meeting other elected members, Chief Executive, Directors, and officers.
- Programme was flexible and interactive, enjoyed catching up on sessions I missed via recorded sessions.
- Option of Hybrid made it easier to attend sessions.
- Support from IT and Democratic Services was excellent.
- Fairly intensive range of different induction subjects were covered, over a fairly long period. Think it has given new councillors a good insight into the diverse and complicated nature of the Local Authority and its many responsibilities.
- The in-person session worked well. The in-person sessions provided an opportunity for Councillors to meet and discuss ward issues with the relevant officers after the sessions.
- I particularly liked the Climate Change, mitigation, and de carbonisation training, very informative.
Code of Conduct with Linda was interesting too. I also enjoyed Corporate Parenting & Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. The Violence Against Women & Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Act was very powerful and informative.
- Very informative sessions. Many of the sessions encouraged participation through activities which was good. Councillor handbook very useful. Option of joining meetings online and in the chamber gives members more opportunities to be able to attend.
- Thank you to the team for all your support and work during the induction programme.

What aspects of the 2022 Member Induction could have been better?

- Shorter sessions, more interactive as new members didn't get chance to ask questions in some seminars. Too many sessions difficult to fit in if member is working.
- Think maybe a follow up with more in depth training for councillors who elected to join various committees. The training being tailored towards the relevant committee and its duties and processes.
- I would have liked a little more time on Mod.gov. More time on Constitutional Matters and Meeting Prep would be nice too.
- Access to recordings and clear guidance on which were deemed essential.
- Shorter sessions, I'm aware from discussions with colleagues that they found the information a lot to learn in such a short space of time although completely understand flexibility and demands on Officers.
- Maybe have a couple in the late afternoon, so more can attend if they are working.

Next Steps - Member Annual Development Plan 2023-24

Comments made by members at the focus group as well as on the survey have been considered and have informed the Annual Development Plan 2023-24. Comments are welcomed regarding any programmes added, deleted, or prioritised. **(Appendix B)**

Next Steps – Member Mentoring in Carmarthenshire

The role of the elected member is a complex and challenging one. All members, from the newly elected to the more senior and experienced, can benefit from support and development in reacting to new or personally challenging situations. Our members are provided with a range of essential support and development activities, but these cannot always cater for some of their individual and immediate needs. Mentoring is another approach that members can use for personal development which can meet these needs as and when required. Traditionally, members have made informal mentoring arrangements amongst themselves, sometimes with the support of officers or political groups. Members have now expressed a wish to formalise these arrangements so that any member requesting a mentor can be matched with someone with the necessary skills and experience.

What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is a confidential one to one relationship where a mentee works with a mentor to explore issues or situations where they need to develop an approach, a second opinion or the benefit of someone else's experience. The mentee sets the agenda and takes responsibility for their learning within the relationship. The mentor helps the mentee to learn through asking questions and sharing their experience without being directive, and enables the mentee,

through discussion, to learn new information, or discover their own solutions to challenging situations. Mentoring should take place in confidential locations within the council offices. Usually a meeting will last from 1-1.5 hours and a typical mentoring relationship would last for about 3 meetings, although different members will have different needs.

The following are just some examples of when members could find mentoring useful:

- as a new member getting to “know the ropes” coping with time management, workload challenges or understanding political and officer relationships.
- as an existing member taking on a new role such as that of leader, chair, portfolio holder or champion.
- when facing a particular political, community or leadership challenge.
- when needing to build new skills such as community engagement or media relations; or
- when considering a change of role or wishing to advance in a political career.

The Authority’s Approach to Mentoring

The Authority will provide support in line with the ‘Guidance for Member Mentor’ produced by the WLGA (as attached):

[Guidance](#)

The Democratic Services Team will support by

- making a list of members who are trained and willing to be mentors available to all members.
- ensuring that members offering their services as mentors do so according to appropriate standards as identified in the Guidance.
- providing confidential venues where mentoring can take place, together with room booking services.
- If members need assistance or require a mentor from beyond the authority, officers will facilitate matches based on, for example, political party, gender, role and experience. If members require a mentor from beyond the authority, they can do this individually via political groups or through the WLGA.

The Learning and Development Team will provide support to members wishing to act as mentors by:

- providing mentors with initial and ongoing support and training as required.
- Ensuring that the Guidance for Member Mentors is available when required via the Learning Management System.