



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL
MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2017 – 2020

NOVEMBER 2017

INTRODUCTION

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council is made up of 33 elected members across 11 electoral divisions and adopts the Leader and Cabinet model of governance.

Executive members of Cabinet play a key role in policy and decision making, whilst the non-executive members comprise the Council's five Scrutiny Committees that provide a valuable means of challenge and performance monitoring.

The intention of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 was to strengthen the role of councillors in carrying out their duties and functions and required local authorities to secure the provision of reasonable training and development opportunities for its members.

This Member Development Strategy sets out how the authority will perform the function and give each Member opportunities that will allow them to meet their personal objectives and help to achieve the Council's Corporate Vision and Wellbeing Objectives.

CORPORATE VISION AND WELLBEING OBJECTIVES

Corporate Vision

The Corporate Vision for Merthyr Tydfil is to strengthen its position as the regional centre for the Heads of Valleys and be a place to be proud of where:

- People learn and develop skills to fulfil their ambitions
- People live, work and have a safe, healthy and fulfilled life
- People visit, enjoy and return

Wellbeing Objectives

The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires a more 'active' level of community involvement in order to achieve outcomes. This means that we need to involve our communities in the planning and designing of services and involve communities in the decisions that affect them.

To support Councillors with the skills they need to play a significant leadership role as community ambassadors, the Member Development Strategy will evaluate the relevance of training against the Wellbeing Objectives set out in the Statement of Wellbeing and included in the authority's plan "Focus on the Future: Wellbeing in our Community":

Best Start to Life

- Children get the best start to life
- Children and young people are equipped with the skills they need to be successful learners and confident individuals

Working Life

- Making skills work for Merthyr Tydfil, Developing the workforce of the future
- Developing the environment and infrastructure for business to flourish

Environmental Wellbeing

- Communities protect, enhance and promote our natural environment and countryside
- Communities protect, develop and promote our heritage and cultural assets

Living Well

- Developing safer communities
- People have good physical and mental health
- People live independently

KEY PRINCIPLES

This strategy applies to all elected members and to independent members of regulatory committees who will be included in role specific development opportunities and the authority's Wellbeing Objectives. It sets out the Council's commitment to providing appropriate development opportunities for all Councillors and describes the approach that will be followed in order to ensure that it is achieved.

The aim of the strategy is to ensure that there is a consistent and structured approach to member development that is supported by a training matrix and action plan, to define how members are supported in:

- Undertaking their existing roles efficiently and effectively
- Preparing for future roles on an individual basis
- Developing their knowledge relating to specific duties and responsibilities
- Keeping up to date with new legislation and changing policies

We will also bear in mind the Welsh Government guidance that recommends local authorities provide opportunities in what are considered essential areas for a member to perform their role effectively:

- Induction
- Role and function of the executive, the Council and its officers
- Overview and Scrutiny
- Information Technology
- Code of Conduct
- Role of a Councillor as a local Member
- Public Engagement
- Equality and Diversity

DELIVERING THE PROGRAMME

We aim to follow a structured four stage approach to managing member development:

- Identify learning and development needs
- Planning programmes to meet needs
- Maximising access to those opportunities
- Evaluating the impact and outcomes of all member learning

This will be achieved through:

Training Needs Analysis

Each elected member will be asked to complete a Training Needs Analysis. It will help identify the individual's key strengths and development needs so that they can be assisted to compile a meaningful action plan for their learning and development.

Training Matrix

The outcomes from the Training Needs Analysis will be used to develop a training matrix that will categorise the training requested and enable the Democratic Services Team to source meaningful and accessible courses.

It will also allow the training to be measured on an individual basis, developing Personal Action Plans for each of the members.

Personal Development Review

The Personal Action Plans created as part of the training matrix will be used to evaluate an individual's development. Senior elected members from political parties/groups will determine whether to perform these themselves or they can be completed with the support of the Democratic Services Team.

These reviews will be held either:

- Annually;
- When a Member takes on additional or changes their responsibilities;
- At the request of the Member; or
- At the request of the senior member of that persons political party/group

EVALUATION

Training Events

After each course or training event, Members will be asked to complete an evaluation form. An assessment of these forms will be undertaken by the Democratic Services Team and an evaluation of the training programme will be shared with the Democratic Services Committee.

Personal Development Reviews

The outcome of the personal development reviews held with individual members will inform their Personal Action Plans which will continually revise and update the Members' training requirements.