

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

18 JANUARY 2012

SUBJECT:	ELECTED MEMBERS SURVEY
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	STEVE FOULKES
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Members are asked to note the summary of survey responses attached in Appendix A which details responses to the recent Elected Members Survey carried out on the topic of Corporate Governance. Key Themes that have emerged from the survey are highlighted in the report indicating areas for further consideration by the Member Training Steering Group. Members are also asked to consider the proposed Action Plan regarding the Corporate Governance Member Development Programme.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That Committee agree the proposed Action Plan based upon the findings of the Elected Member Survey results.

3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

3.1 The Corporate Governance Committee agreed on the 7 December that a survey be carried out to better understand Members' corporate governance training and development needs under KLOE 10 – Member Capacity. This training and development was a priority and a commitment was made to provide the training required between January and March 2012. The survey also provided an opportunity for Members to identify their other training needs as well as the skills and knowledge that they could share around the wider Corporate Governance improvement projects.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 AKA was engaged by the former Leader of the Council to undertake an independent review of the Council's response to claims made by Mr Martin Morton. AKA produced a Supplemental Report entitled 'Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council's Corporate Governance Arrangements Refresh and Renew' which includes the workstream "Review and improve Corporate Governance Development and Training across the Council".

- 4.2 The workstream appertaining to Elected Member Capacity – KLOE 10 is being steered and directed by the Member Training Steering Group (MTSG) comprising an Elected Member from each of the three political groups.
- 4.3 The Cabinet approved a Survey for circulation to all Elected Members on the 7 December and MTSG oversaw the delivery of the survey to all Elected Members with a closing date of the 19 December. The survey could be completed on line, by telephone or on paper with anonymity and confidentiality built into the process for each method. Follow up phone calls were carried out by Officers to maximise returns. A total of 47 Elected Members completed the survey equating to 71%. General themes emerging from the survey included:-
- Members felt they had a wealth of experience to offer to the work being done by the Council on the topic of Corporate Governance arising from many years of service as Councillors, varied professional careers and other community roles.
 - Open and honest communication skills were considered to be the most valuable in terms of what would help the work of the Council in this area
 - An excellent and broad knowledge base about all aspects of the Council's work was listed as the most popular requirement to practice in a way that shows good corporate governance.
 - Honesty, patience and listening skills were the most important skills listed to enable Councillors to practice in a way that shows good corporate governance.
 - Finance, general update briefings and IT skills were the most commonly listed development needs.
 - More training was also requested on the topics of Decision Making, Analytical Skills and Audit & Risk Management.
 - The majority of respondents listed workshops and face to face session as their preferred method of learning.
- 4.4 It is proposed that the full and detailed responses from the survey be considered by the MTSG with a view to progressing to the next stage of developing a Corporate Governance Member Development Programme ready to commence in February 2012. The development needs identified in the survey responses will also further inform the Member Development Programme for 2012 – 2013 which will commence in June 2012.
- 4.5 It is also proposed that any pertinent feedback from the “Destination Excellence” Employee Events be taken into consideration by MTSG at the design stage of the Corporate Governance Member Development Programme.
- 4.6 As the Member Capacity – KLOE 10 underpins other elements of the Corporate Governance Improvement Plan it is proposed that the Draft Corporate Governance Member Development Programme be shared with the Member Leads for all relevant KLOEs to ensure a joined up approach and to maximise effectiveness namely KLOE 2 – The review and refresh of the Code of Corporate Governance, KLOE 8 – Equalities, KLOE 6 Committee Services

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 5.1 Failure to improve Corporate Governance Development and Training for Elected Members could mean that the Council may be further criticised and suffer further reputational harm.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 There are no other options to consider at this time. The suggested approach to improving Elected Member capacity is included in the AKA Supplemental Corporate Governance Report.

7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 This report is to inform and consult Members of the results of the Elected Member Survey and the proposed Action Plan to continue the development of a Elected Member Development Programme.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 8.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL, IT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

- 9.1 There are no resource implications arising from this report.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Until the existing legislation is repealed, the Council could be subject to an external corporate governance inspection under Section 10 of the Local Governance Act 1999.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 An EIA is not required at this stage. An impact assessment will be carried out upon any subsequent training and development activities resulting from this report.

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 None

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 None

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APPENCICES

APPENDIX A : Summary Responses of Elected Member Survey

REFERENCE MATERIAL

AKA Supplemental Report 'Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council's Corporate Governance Arrangements :Refresh and Renew

SUBJECT HISTORY

Council Meeting	Date
Corporate Governance Committee	7 December 2011
Corporate Governance Committee	16 November 2011
Corporate Governance Committee	26 October 2011
Corporate Governance Committee	22 September 2011

Corporate Governance - Elected Members Summary Survey Results 2011

1. Some reports were due for a Scrutiny Committee. There is a briefing before the meeting and the papers are not available. This is the 3rd time this sort of event has happened. What action would you take?

	Most Appropriate	Next Most Appropriate	Least Appropriate
a) Talk to the Chairman in advance of the meeting asking that the report be deferred on the basis that it is not available for the briefing. In addition, agree with the Chairman that he/she will write to the Chief Executive cc the Cabinet Member asking for an explanation for the recent failures and remedial action that will be taken?	15	19	8
b) Talk to the Chairman in advance of the meeting asking that the report be deferred on the basis that it is not available for the briefing. Agree with the Chairman that he will raise the issue with the Chief Officer in the briefing seeking an explanation of the continued failures. If this explanation is unacceptable, agree with the Chairman that he/she will write to the Chief Executive cc the Cabinet Member asking for an explanation for the recent failures and remedial action that will be taken?	24	16	2
c) Write to the Chief Executive cc the Cabinet Portfolio holder asking for an explanation and seeking details of the action he/she proposes?	7	6	29

2. The Key Performance Indicators reported for a particular Department show that in the 3rd quarter they have under performed but, states that they will have recovered the situation by the 4th quarter. It's now the end of February. (half way through the 4th quarter). What action would you take?

	Most Appropriate	Next Most Appropriate	Least Appropriate
a) Accept the report	2	0	35
b) Ask the Chief Officer attending the Committee to explain whether performance as of today's date proves that they will achieve the outturn performance as per the report to the previous committee	14	28	1
c) On receipt of the report agree with the Chairman that he will write to the Chief Officer asking for updated performance information to be submitted in writing to the Committee if necessary on the night to prove that the performance promised in the 3rd quarter will be achieved by the end of the 4th quarter	29	12	2

3. A Chief Officer has submitted an improvement programme. Monthly reports appear to suggest everything is on track but from some feedback at local surgeries, members of the public do not appear to recognise the improvements and are still raising concerns. How would you react?

	Most Appropriate	Next Most Appropriate	Least Appropriate
a) Write to the Chief Officer detailing the concerns of the members of the public and asking for their response	8	10	22
b) Write to the Chief Officer cc the relevant Cabinet detailing the concerns of the members of the public and asking for their response)	13	27	0
c) As for (b) but ask to meet the Portfolio Holder seeking proposals as to external verification of the delivery of the inputs, outputs and outcomes from the improvement programme.	25	4	16

4. You are conducting a surgery when you are approached by a member of the public who happens to be an employee at Wirral Council. They ask if what they tell you can be kept confidential but then continue to relate a story regarding fraudulent behaviour within the team in which they work. How would you respond?

	Most Appropriate	Next Most Appropriate	Least Appropriate
a) Listen but tell the individual that this is outside of your remit and that they should report it to Internal Audit	3	11	26
b) Tell the individual you intend to discuss the allegation with the Monitoring Officer maintaining their confidentiality as far as possible.	35	7	3
c) Take the issue up personally with the Director of Finance	9	22	11

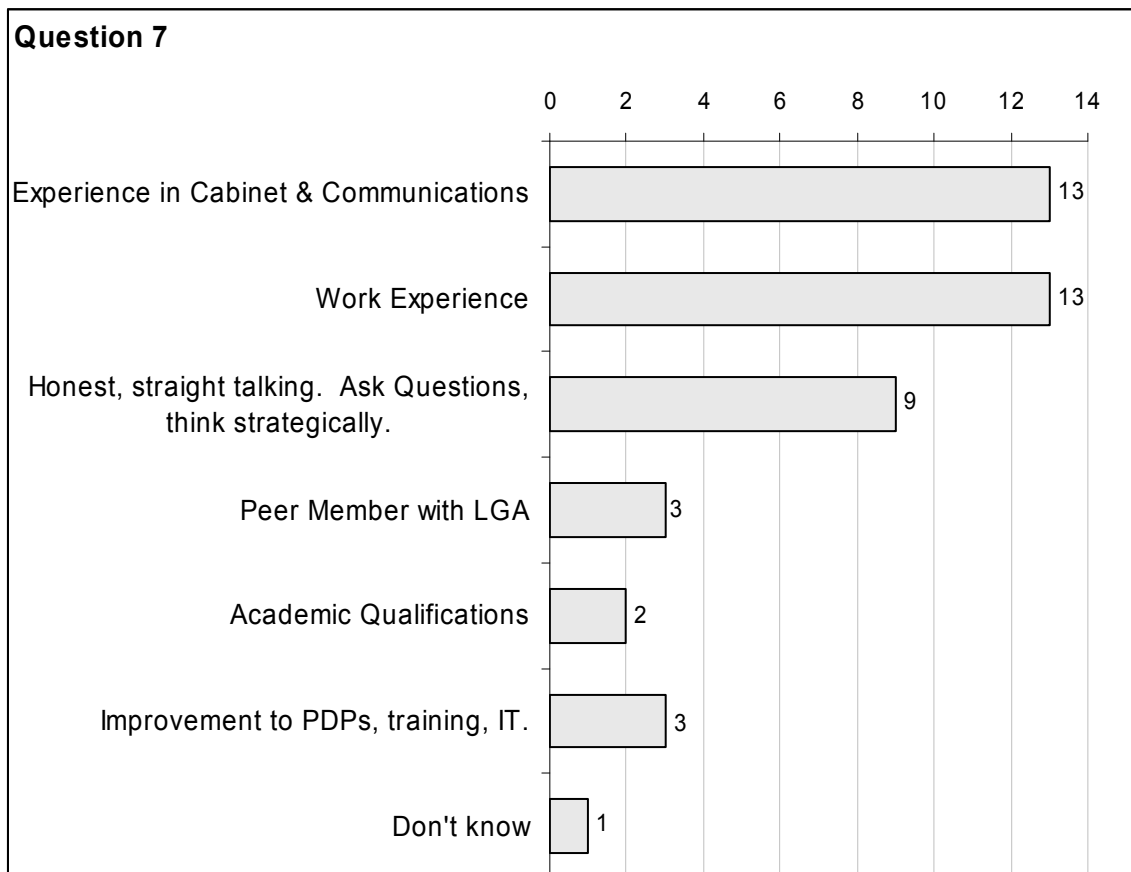
5. In a Committee meeting a fellow Elected Member becomes frustrated by the Officer's answers to their questions. The Elected Member begins to shout and make unreasonable requests for further information. How would you deal with this situation?

	Most Appropriate	Next Most Appropriate	Least Appropriate
a) Leave the situation to the Chair as it is their role to manage this kind of thing	23	21	1
b) Propose to the Chair a 5 min cooling off period explaining the Officer's role	24	18	1
c) Nothing – the situation is indeed very frustrating and venting a little emotion is acceptable	0	2	38

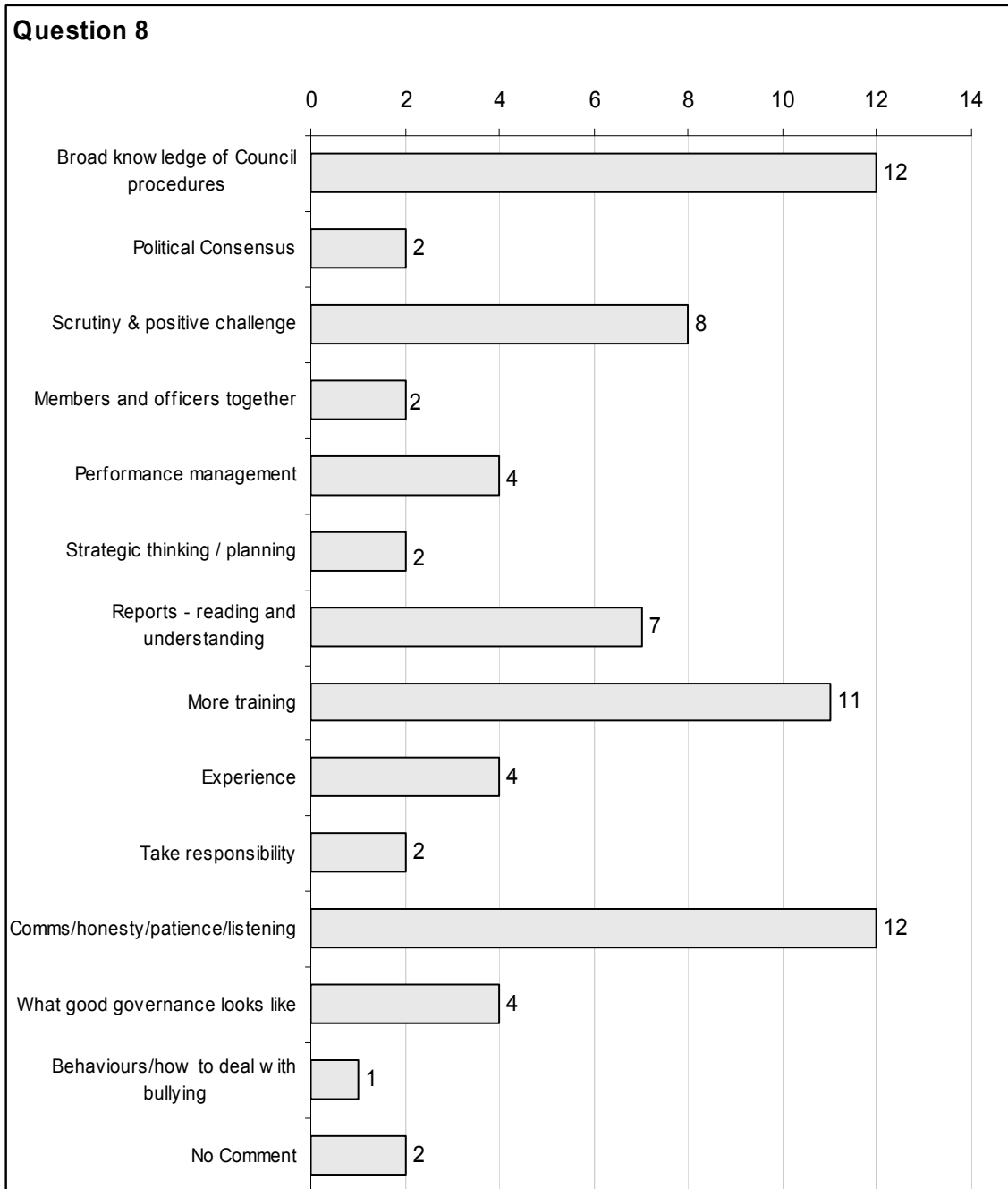
6. At a Committee meeting an unexpected report is handed out by an Officer. What would you do?

	Most Appropriate	Next Most Appropriate	Least Appropriate
a) Look to the Chair to approve the report as urgent and accept the report on the Officer's recommendation that it is a "good news story"	0	9	29
b) Request an adjournment to understand the detailed and controversial information the report	34	10	0
c) Recommend that the Chair refuses to accept the report and articulate this strongly because you feel due process has not been followed	11	19	8

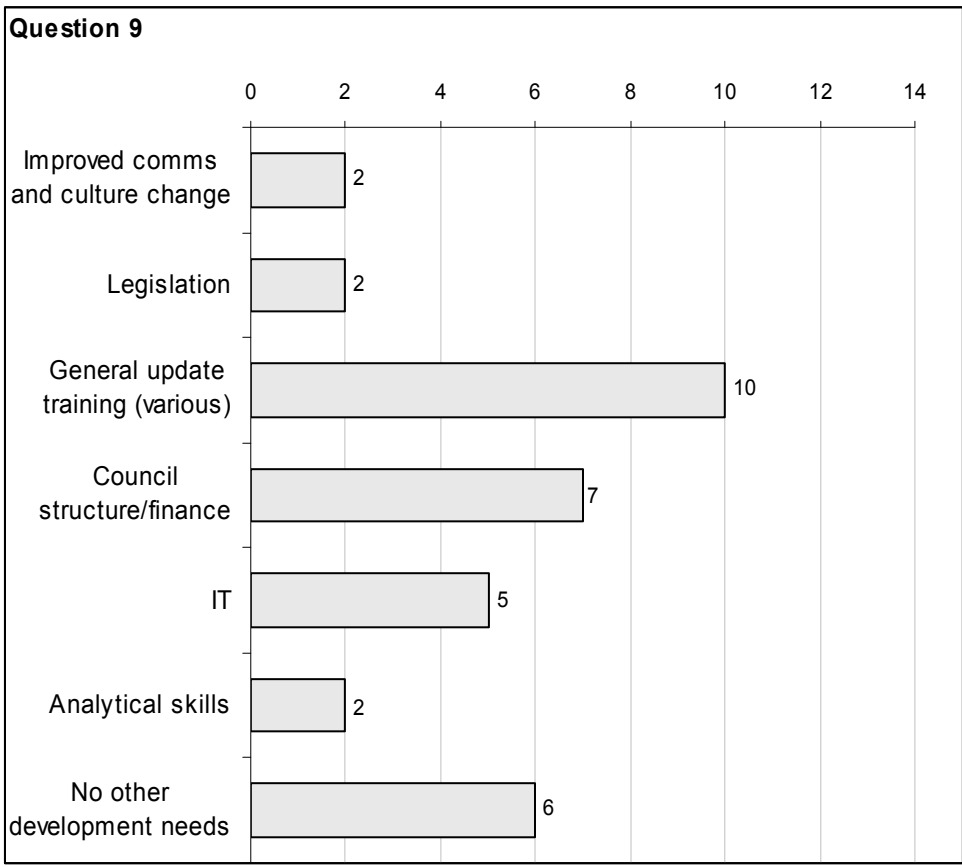
7. What skills or knowledge could you bring to the work being done by the Council on the topic of Corporate Governance?



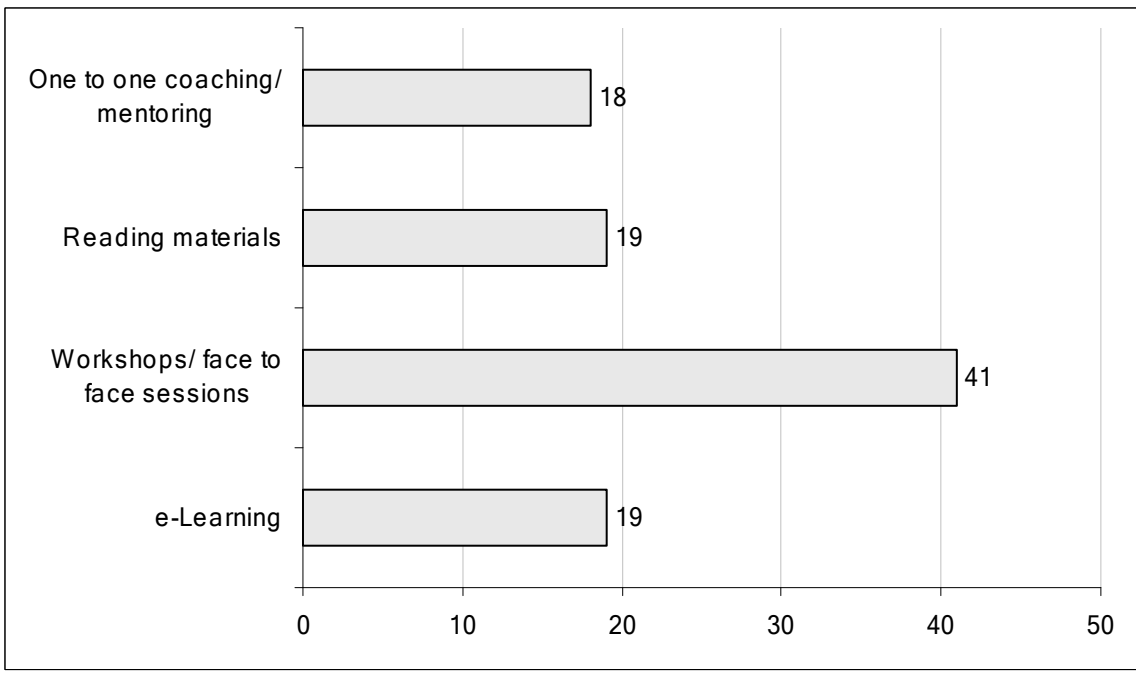
8. What are the key skills and areas of knowledge you think you need as a Councillor to practice in a way that shows good corporate governance?



9. Are there any other training or development needs that you have at present?



10. How do you like to learn?



11. Do you have any further observations or comments?

