



GOOD EASTER PARISH COUNCIL

Training and Development Policy

Background to Training in the Local Council Sector

Training has been at the heart of local councils for over twenty years.¹ Its evolution has coincided with a general willingness of higher tier authorities to accept that parish councils are at grass root level and as a result can understand and react to the needs of their communities efficiently and effectively. Local Councils have also become far more accountable to their communities in recent years, particularly in relation to their finances.² Transparency and accountability paramount; we must all know what we are doing and why we are doing it.³

Overall aim of this Policy

The Council is committed to the provision of training and development for its Clerk, Members and volunteers to:

- Raise the council's profile
- Fulfil the roles played by its members
- Work well as a team
- Maximise the potential of the Council in its role of serving the community

Personal development of the Clerk, Members and volunteers will help formulate, guide, and facilitate the aims above.

Financial Implications

Each year, as part of the annual budget setting process, the Council will include a training budget for the Clerk, Members and volunteers. When calculating this, any training needs identified in the annual appraisal process and Members training needs analysis will be taken into consideration.

All sponsored training must be appropriate to the needs of the Council and is subject to the availability of financial resources.

For approved courses, the Council will cover the course fee, examination fees, associated membership fees and one payment to re-take a failed examination.

Employees or Members attending training outside of Good Easter, may submit an expense claim to cover travel costs to and from the venue. Where practical and possible, if there is more than one attendee from the Council, car-pooling or shared travel arrangements should be made.

¹ The National Training Strategy 1996

² Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996 as amended

³ The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014

Recouping Costs

It is standard practice that where the Council is covering the costs of an employee's training course or qualification, (this being a course or qualification rather than a one day course or workshop), a written agreement will be made that if the employee leaves the Council's employ during a set period of time during or having completed the course, the employee will be expected to reimburse the Council as per the agreement. This does not apply to employees in apprenticeship positions.

Personal Development Plans

The Clerk will have a personal development plan as part of his / her annual appraisal which will identify skills and knowledge needs. The Clerk is encouraged to take responsibility for his / her own personal development in terms of identifying appropriate external training and courses. The Clerk will be responsible for facilitating the training needs of Members both new and experienced – identifying relevant courses or by coaching or mentoring.

Training Methods

There are different ways in which training and development can be achieved:

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| Internally - | If training can be given utilising the in-house expertise and knowledge, this possibility will be explored. This often includes general IT training, training of specific work procedures or Council specific practices and legislation. |
| Partnership - | The Council is often offered to attend training sessions being organised by Chelmsford City Council. |
| Day Workshops/Seminars - | When Council Officers receive information on workshops and seminars, this is shared with employees and Councillors, where relevant. |
| Conferences - | Details of conferences are shared with employees and Councillors, again where relevant. Occasionally the Council has nominated representatives that are invited to attend. |
| Professional Qualifications - | Training towards a professional qualification will often be sourced from an external provider and completed at a local training establishment. |
| External Providers - | There are numerous trainers available. When sourcing training from an external provider, the Council will also seek to obtain the best price and where possible, from a nearby location. This may involve working with other local Councils to pool together to organise relevant training. |

Evaluation

It is vital that any training undertaken is evaluated for effectiveness. Except for internal/on the job training, upon completing a training session/course/workshop, the employee or Councillor should complete a Training Evaluation Form and return this to the Clerk.

The completion of these forms will also help assess whether or not the training is suitable for another individual at a future date and helps ensure any key points taken from the training are learned and/or acted on.

Record Keeping

Each employee and Councillor has a Training Log which is held securely by the Clerk. This log should be updated with any training undertaken. Copies of any attendance or qualification certificates should also be given to the Clerk to be held with these records. These records will be kept in accordance with the Council's Document Retention policy, after which they will be disposed of as confidential waste.

Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed annually by the Parish Clerk and any recommendations for changes will be advised to members.

Adopted: 30th May 2024

Lucy White – Clerk