



WEST HANNINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL



Training and Development Policy

Re-adopted September 2024

Next Review Due: September 2025

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.

Categorising training and personal development

The three categories are as follows:

Mandatory

Mandatory training is legally required for the post-holder, or a qualification deemed to be so fundamental to the role, that the council makes it a mandatory requirement. Any mandatory training or qualifications are to be stated on the job description. They should also be stated in the contract for new starters, along with whom is responsible for the costs of the training/qualifications. For mandatory

¹ The National Training Strategy 1996

² Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996 as amended

³ The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014

qualifications, it is unlikely that an applicant would be recruited without having previously attained the qualification. Where a qualification becomes mandatory for the role, the council will provide reasonable assistance for the employee to attain the qualification.

Some mandatory training may be specific to a particular job role whilst other training may be a generic requirement. Examples of mandatory training include:

- Health and Safety (Personal Safety, Manual handling, Display Screen equipment)
- Food hygiene
- Data Protection

Desirable

Desirable training is not legally required for the post, but it is directly relevant to the individual's job. Any desirable training or qualifications are to be stated on the job description.

For desirable qualifications or training, an individual may be recruited without having previously attained the qualification or undergone the training but may be expected to attain the qualification within a defined period of time. The need for training may also be identified through one-to-one meetings or annual appraisals. A desirable qualification is likely to enhance the skills and reputation of the council. Examples may include:

- Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA)
- Cemetery Legal Compliance
- Microsoft Excel

Optional

An optional qualification or optional training may not be directly linked to the individual's current job. Optional training or development is generally more beneficial to the individual's career than it is for the council.

Personal development aimed at developing the skills or knowledge of an individual in order to provide a successor for an existing job is deemed to be optional. However, depending on the circumstances, training for succession may be 'desirable'.

- Community Governance
- Town Planning Technical Support

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 West Hanningfield, 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.

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: 13th March 2023
Review Due: February 2024

Lucy White – Clerk