

WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL



TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

1. Introduction

Wellington Town Council is committed to providing high quality services in all areas of operation. This includes the provision of services to residents, representation and support in matters of parish interest, compliance with statutory requirements, and progression of the Council's strategic objectives.

In order to operate effectively and deliver success Councillors and staff need to have at their disposal relevant skills, knowledge and resources. The Council therefore actively encourages participation in training and development where the need or interest arises.

This policy sets out the ways in which training and development needs will be identified, and addressed through appropriate training and development opportunities.

2. Staffing and Training Committee

2.1 Responsibility for the training and development of Members and staff lies with the Council's Staffing and Training Committee.

2.2 The Committee meets quarterly and comprises 8 members, to include a Chairman and Deputy, elected each year at the Annual Council meeting.

2.3 The Committee has delegated authority to:-

- Deal with training and development matters generally;
- Receive requests for training from Members and staff;
- Receive reports recommending training requirements;
- Authorise training to a maximum of £1,000;

- Agree any special terms for professional qualifications;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of training undertaken.

2.4 Minutes of Committee meetings will be circulated to all Councillors, and a summary report provided at each subsequent full Council meeting.

3. Financial Arrangements

3.1 Wellington Town Council sets aside appropriate funds for training and development for Members and staff as part of its annual budgetary review. The provided sum will take into account the previous year's expenditure plus anticipated training and development needs for the year ahead.

3.2 An enhanced sum will be budgeted where elections or recruitments are due in the coming year, to cover the potential increase in training requirements as a result of new appointments.

3.3 Where training and development requirements exceed the Council's annual budget, priority will be given to training which:-

- Covers legislative requirements;
- Is considered essential rather than desirable (see 4.2 below);
- May help avoid professional error or reputational loss;
- Has more direct relevance to the Council's core activities;
- Is new, as opposed to refresher training.

Training requests which cannot be delivered at the time due to financial restraints may be held over until such time as funding is available.

4. Identifying Training and Development Needs

4.1 The Council acknowledges that training and development needs for Members and staff may vary significantly due to prior experience, specific requirements of the role, or areas of individual interest.

4.2 Generally training may be categorised as:-

Essential – where training must be carried out as part of fulfilling the requirements of office. Training in this category includes:-

- Councillor Code of Conduct;
- Financial Regulations;
- Data Protection;
- Planning legislation;
- Training on specific issues where governing legislation has changed.

Desirable – where training will enhance the knowledge or capability of an individual in the performance of his/her role. Examples of this type of training are:-

- Neighbourhood Planning;
- Equality and Diversity;

- Information Technology;
- Effective communication;
- Chairing meetings;
- First Aid.

4.3 Training and development needs may arise for a number of reasons such as:-

- New recruitment or election;
- Changes in legislation;
- Introduction of new operational systems;
- Implementing a new public service;
- To improve performance;
- A direct result of an accident or complaint.

4.4 Members and staff will be encouraged to identify their own training needs, which in the case of staff should initially be discussed with the line-manager. A training needs assessment will be undertaken during the induction of new starters. Training requirements may also be identified through discussion, skills audits, or questionnaires.

4.5 The staff annual appraisal process will specifically cover training and development needs in relation to performance, and career development. Employees are encouraged to seek to extend their knowledge and capability.

5. Accessing Training

5.1 Wellington Town Council recognises that individuals learn best through a range of training methods, and will seek to provide appropriate choices for training and development where possible. Options may include:-

- Formal study or qualification;
- On-line training tools such as webinars;
- Shadowing others;
- Attending external meetings.

5.2 A range of nationally recognised publications (for example from the National Association of Local Councils or Society of Local Council Clerks) will be made available to new and existing Councillors through professional subscription to the relevant body.

5.3 The Council will maintain a working portfolio of key documents and policies which will be easily accessible to Members and staff in the fulfilment of their role.

5.4 The Staffing and Training Committee will approve the purchase of appropriate training materials or publications where these are relevant to Council activities.

5.5 Difficulties in accessing or progressing training and development opportunities should be made known at an early opportunity so the Staffing and Training Committee can offer support or advice as appropriate.

5.6 All training and development opportunities will be offered to Members and staff with full regard to the Council's Equality Statement.

5.7 Should the Staffing and Training Committee decline a request for training, an appeal may be submitted to full Council, and initial contact will be via the Clerk.

6. Formal qualifications

6.1 It is a requirement that the Clerk, as Proper Officer will be suitably qualified, to a minimum level of Certificate in Local Government Administration. Where a newly-appointed post-holder does not hold the Certificate it will be a requirement of the appointment to achieve the qualification within 18 months of taking up post.

6.2 Members and staff may equally request to undertake an appropriate formal qualification, applications being made to the Training and Development Committee.

6.3 Where formal training or qualifications are to be undertaken by staff, the Staffing and Training Committee will set out in writing **before** the training commitment is made:-

- What training or qualification may be undertaken;
- The timescale for achievement of the qualification;
- The degree of funding it will contribute;
- Any special conditions attaching to the funding;
- What time allowances will be made available for training purposes;
- Any impact on salary once the qualification has been achieved.

7. Recruitment and Induction

7.1 Prior to the recruitment of staff the Council will fully assess the skills and knowledge required in the post, and ensure that these requirements are reflected at all stages of the recruitment process.

7.2 Lack of formal qualification will not be a bar to recruitment where the overall merits of an applicant make him/her the most appropriate candidate, and provided that the individual is willing to undertake specified training once in post (see 6.1).

7.3 New Councillors and Staff will be given induction training within a suitable time-frame, to cover the essential aspects of the role, as well as established 'good practice'.

7.4 Where a staff member is to be confirmed in post, training needs will be re-assessed as part of the six-month review.

8. Expenses and Time-keeping

8.1 The Council will pay all reasonable expenses associated with training and development activities which have been approved by the Staffing and Training Committee.

8.2 Receipts must be provided for all training-related expenses, which must be submitted formally using the designated expenses form.

8.3 Where study time has been agreed this must be recorded to include the date, time spent and the relevant training or development activity.

9. Training Records and Reporting

9.1 Councillors and staff are required to keep a record of all training undertaken, with dates, and certificates as appropriate.

9.2 Where a formal qualification is being undertaken, a quarterly update on progress should be reported to full Council.

10. Evaluation

10.1 Members and staff are encouraged to give feedback wherever possible when attending external training.

10.2 A brief summary of the effectiveness or value of training received should be provided to the Staffing and Training Committee, via the Clerk. This will enable best value when drawing up training plans and programmes.

11. Policy Review

11.1 This policy, once adopted will be reviewed every two years by the Staffing and Training Committee at their July meeting.

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