

OLD CATTON PARISH COUNCIL

TRAINING, LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

1. Introduction

1.1. This document forms the Council's Training, Learning and Development Policy. It sets out:

- The Council's commitment to training.
- The identification of training needs.
- Corporate training.
- Financial assistance.
- Study leave.
- Short courses/workshops.
- Evaluation of training.
- Links to other policies.
- Reporting on progress.

1.2. The objectives of this strategy are to:

- Require Members and staff to undertake appropriate training.
- Allocate training in a fair manner.
- Ensure training is evaluated to assess its value.

2. Commitment to Training

2.1. Old Catton Parish Council is committed to the ongoing training and development of all Members and employees to enable them to make the most effective contribution to the Council's aims and objectives in providing the highest quality representation and services for the people of the Parish.

2.2. According to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2007), training can be defined as:

"A planned process to develop the abilities of the individual and to satisfy current and future needs of the organisation". Learning and development describes the formal, ongoing efforts that are made within organisations to improve the performance and self-fulfilment of their employees and in our case Members through a variety of educational methods and programs. In the modern local Government, these efforts have taken on a broad range of applications – from instruction in highly specific job skills to long-term professional development.

2.3. Old Catton Parish Council recognises that its most important resource are its Members and staff and is committed to encourage both Members and staff to enhance their knowledge and qualifications through further training. Some training is necessary to ensure compliance with all legal and statutory requirements.

2.4. The Council expects the Parish Clerk to undertake a programme of continuing professional development (CPD) in line with the requirements of his/her professional body and all staff to undertake training as deemed necessary to fulfil their duties in accordance with their contract of employment and job description.

2.5. Providing training yields several benefits including:

- Improving the quality of the services and facilities that Old Catton Parish Council provides.
- Enabling the organisation to achieve its corporate aims and objectives.
- Improving the skills base of Members and employees.
- Produces confident, highly qualified staff working as part of an effective and efficient team.
- Demonstrates that the employees are valued.

2.6. Training and development will be achieved by including a realistic financial allocation in the annual budget, as well as taking advantage of any relevant partnership or in-house provision available.

2.7. The process of development is as follows:

- Training needs should be identified by considering the overall objectives of the Parish Council as well as individual requirements.
- Planning and organising training to meet those specific needs.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of training.

3. The Identification of Training Needs

3.1. Employees will be asked to identify their training needs with advice from their line manager during their annual appraisal or regular meetings with their line manager. Members will be asked to attend an Induction Training for Councillors Course upon their appointment and will then be asked to identify their further training needs with advice from the Chairman and Parish Clerk. There are a number of additional ways that the training needs of both Members and staff may be recognised:

- Questionnaires.
- During formal interview/review.
- Following confirmation of appointment.
- Formal and informal discussion.

3.2. Members will be asked to identify their development needs with advice from the appropriate body or person, ie Committee. There are a number of additional ways that the training needs of Members may be recognised:

- Questionnaires.
- During review.
- Following election/co-option.
- Formal and informal discussion.

3.3. Other circumstances may also present the need for training:

- Legislative requirements ie First Aid, Fire Safety, Manual Handling.
- New or changes in legislation.
- Changes or improvement to operational systems.
- New or revised qualifications become available.
- Accidents.
- Professional error.
- Introduction of new equipment.
- New working methods and practices.
- Complaints to the Council.

- A request from a Member or employee.
- Devolved services or delivery of new services.

3.4. Members or employees who wish to be considered for a training course should discuss this in the first instance with the Chairman or their line manager during an appraisal or information discussion, where it will be determined whether:

- Training is relevant to the Council's needs and/or service delivery.
- It represents value for money.
- There is sufficient funding available.

4. Corporate Training

4.1. Corporate training is necessary to ensure that Members and employees are aware of their legal responsibilities or corporate standards eg Health & Safety, Risk Management and Equal Opportunities. Members and employees will be required to attend training courses, workshops or seminars where suitable training is identified.

5. Financial Assistance

5.1. It is important to note that all supported training must be appropriate to the needs of the Council, be relevant to the individual's role and is subject to the availability of financial resources.

Each request will be considered on an individual basis and the benefits to the individual and the Council will be identified.

In order to best ensure cost effectiveness, Members and employees will be required to attend the nearest college/venue offering the required face-to-face course, unless an alternative is authorised by full Council in the interest of operational effectiveness or Best Value.

5.2. Other considerations include:

- Implication of employee released to attend training courses on the operation capacity of the Council.
- The most economic and effective means of training.
- Provision and ability of the training budget.

5.3. For approved courses Members and employees can expect the Council to fund the following:

- The course fees.
- Examination fees.
- Associated membership fees.
- One payment to re-take a failed examination.
- Travel costs (with prior agreement).
- Accommodation costs (if necessary and only by prior agreement).

5.4. Members and employees attending training courses must inform the Parish Clerk immediately of any absence, giving reasons.

5.5. Failure to sit an examination may result in the Council withdrawing future course funding and/or requesting the refunding of financial assistance. Each case will be considered on an individual basis.

5.6. Old Catton Parish Council operates a Return of Service Agreement. Any employee undertaking post-entry qualifications funded by the Council must be aware that should they leave the Council's employment within five years of completion of the qualification they will be required to repay all costs associated with the undertaking of such training. Each case will be considered on an individual basis by the Parish Council.

6. Study Leave

6.1. Employees who are given approval to undertake external qualifications are granted the following;

- Study time to attend day release courses.
- Time to sit examinations.
- Study time of one day per examination (to be discussed and agreed by line manager in advance).
- Provision of study time must be agreed with the line manager prior to the course being undertaken.

7. Short Courses/Workshops/Residential Weekends

7.1. Where attendance is required at a short course, paid leave will be granted for the duration of travel and attendance.

7.2. Where attendance is required on a Saturday or Sunday, up to a "normal" working day's toil may be taken in lieu.

7.3. Members and staff attending approved short courses/workshops/residential weekends can expect the following to be paid:

- The course fees.
- Travelling expenses in accordance with Council policy.

8. Evaluation of training

8.1. Records of all training undertaken by Members and employees will be maintained.

8.2. As part of Old Catton Parish Council's continuing commitment to training and development, Members and employees are encouraged to share information received and circulate training presentation papers for in-house training use.

8.3. Members and employees are asked to provide feedback on the value and effectiveness of the training they undertake highlighting in particular the key implications of new legislation, guidance and/or best practice for the ongoing efficiency and effectiveness of the Council.

9. Linking with other Council Policies

9.1. Relationship with other Council Policies:

- Equality of opportunity in all aspects of Member and employee development.
- A training policy and training record for both Members and staff is a requirement for the accreditation of the national Local Council Aware Scheme.
- Risk Management Policy – a commitment to Training and Development greatly assists in achieving good governance and an effective system of Risk Management.
- Health & Safety Policy – ongoing training and development is key to ensuring a positive approach to Health & Safety is embedded throughout the Council.
- Undertaking training is a clear indication of Continuing Professional Development.

10. Reporting on Progress

10.1. As appropriate, the Clerk will report annually to full Council detailing attendance at training over the year, as well as the inclusion of the Member and staff evaluation of courses attended.

11. Conclusion

11.1. The adoption of a Training, Learning and Development Policy should achieve many benefits for the Council. It will assist in demonstrating that the Council is committed to continuing professional development and enhancing the skills of both Elected Members and employees.

11.2. The adoption of a Training, Learning and Development Policy has a practical implication for Old Catton Parish Council's budget and ensures that the Council is aware of the implication of its commitments and allocates adequate and appropriate funding in a long-term and sustainable platform that supports these aspirations and commitments.

12. Commitment to Members and Employees

12.1. Old Catton Parish Council has a fully integrated training, learning and development Policy in this document and the commitment to funding in its regular budget. Your Council supports the concept of investing in life-long Learning and Development for Members and employees and will commit an appropriate percentage (%) of its annual budget on a regular sustainable basis. The Council will avail itself to the resources available via NPTS, NALC, SLCC and other bodies as appropriate to ensure high quality learning and development programmes.

12.2. Old Catton Parish Council makes the following commitment to its Members: that every new Member of the Council whether elected or co-opted will be trained to an adequate standard as set out by the Council and reflecting prevailing accepted standards within a year of taking office. In addition, skills audits will be acted upon to ensure specialist Members receive additional training along with the bulk of the Council to take account of legislative changes and new initiatives.

12.3. Old Catton Parish Council makes the following commitment to its employees that they will be trained to an adequate standard as set out in prevailing legislation, Local Authority standards and reflecting the aspirations of the Council as soon as possible upon appointment and on an on-going and rolling programme reinforcing professional development.

This Policy will be reviewed annually, unless required earlier by legislation or additional material.

Adopted: 8th February 2021

Reviewed: 15th January 2024