



TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

1. Introduction

1.1 This document forms the Council's Training and Development Policy and sets out:

- The Council's commitment to training
- The identification of training needs
- Financial assistance
- Study leave
- Short courses/workshops
- Evaluation of training

1.2 The objectives of this strategy are to:

- Require staff and council members to undertake appropriate training
- Allocate training in a fair manner
- Ensure that all training is evaluated to assess its value

2. Commitment to Training

2.1 Cleobury Mortimer Town Council is committed to the on-going training and development of all employees and councillors 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 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'.

2.3 Cleobury Mortimer Town Council is committed to encouraging individuals to enhance their knowledge and qualifications through further training. Some training is necessary to ensure compliance with legal and statutory requirements. Employees and councillors bring a vast range of skills and experience to the Council but it is a good investment to train and develop everyone to their full potential. Initial training would involve working closely with a mentor for the first six months of office as well as attending external training courses and reading the various council sector publications that the council subscribes to, including the Shropshire Association of Local Councils (SALC) and the National Association (NALC) bulletins; LCR (Local Council Review) and the Clerk magazine, which can help to familiarise everyone with issues affecting Local Government.

2.4 The Council expects officers to undertake a programme of continuing professional development (CPD) in line with the requirements of their professional bodies (such as the Society of Local Council Clerks). Certain training is identified as essential for all councillors including Fundamentals for Councillors, Finance and Budgeting including VAT, Planning, Being a Good Employer – HR for Town and Parish Councils.

2.5 Providing training yields a number of benefits:

- It improves the quality of the services and facilities that Cleobury Mortimer Town Council provides
- It enables the organisation to achieve its corporate aims and objectives
- It improves the skill base of the employees, producing confident, highly qualified and motivated staff working as part of an effective and efficient team and demonstrates that 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 SLCC/SALC provision available.

2.7 The process of development is as follows:

- Training needs should be identified by considering overall objectives of the organisation as well as individual requirements
- Planning and organising training to meet those specific needs
- Designing and delivering the training (where appropriate)
- Evaluating the effectiveness of training.

3. The Identification of Training Needs

3.1 Employees will be asked to identify their development needs with advice from their Line Manager during their interview, annual appraisal or regular meetings with their Line Manager. Councillors will identify their own needs with reference to The Chair or appropriate colleagues while going through their appraisals with colleagues.

3.2 Other circumstances may present the need for training:

- Legislative requirements ie Health and Safety, First Aid etc
- New or changes to existing legislation eg General Power of Competence
- Changes or improvements required 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 of staff
- Devolved services/delivery of new services

3.3 Employees who wish to be considered for a training course should discuss this in the first instance with their Line Manager either during appraisal or informal discussion. The line manager will consider, together with colleagues and (depending on the training and the cost involved) with Council, to determine whether: the training is relevant to the authority's needs and/or service delivery; the training costs represent value for money; and, if there is sufficient funding available.

4. Financial Considerations

4.1 It is important to note that all sponsored 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 organisation will be identified. In order to best endure cost effectiveness, employees will be required to attend the nearest college/venue offering the required course, unless no alternative is available, it is a nationally offered (rather than regionally), urgency or the interests of operational effectiveness require otherwise. Where necessary the Employment Working Group will consider specific training requests (for example, for reasons of cost or benefit).

4.2 Other considerations include the following:

- The implications of employee release for training course attendance on the operational capacity of the Council
- The most economic and effective means of training (value for money)
- The provision and availability of the training budget and other demands on it.

4.3 For approved courses, employees can expect the Council to fund the following:

- The course and registration fee
- The examination fees (if any)

- Associated membership fees (if any)
- One payment to re-take a failed examination or assignment
- Travel costs, in excess of the cost of their daily commute to and from work
- Accommodation costs (only if absolutely necessary and only by prior agreement)

4.4 Staff attending training courses must inform their Line Manager immediately of any absence, giving reasons.

4.5 Failure to sit an examination (where there is one) may result in the Council withdrawing future course funding and/or requesting the refunding by the employee of costs paid by Council. Each case will be considered on an individual basis.

4.6 Any employee receiving training at the council's expense, which costs £300 or more (or several courses which together cost more than £300) must be aware that should they leave the employment of the Town Council within one year of completion of the qualification, they may be required to repay some or all costs associated with the undertaking of such training. In the case of further education, such as the Certificate in Higher Education or Degree course, employees may be required to repay some or all costs associated with the study if they leave within two years following the completion of the course. Decisions will be made on a case by case basis by the Employment Working Group.

5. Study Leave

5.1 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 or assignment (to be discussed and agreed with the Line Manager in advance)
- Provision of study time must be agreed with the Line Manager prior to the course being undertaken.

6. Short Courses/Workshops/Conferences and Continuing Professional Development

6.1 There is a rolling annual programme of training available through SALC (Shropshire Association of Local Councils) for all officers and council members.

6.2 Staff attending workshops, residential or day conferences can expect the following to be paid by Council:

- The course or conference fee (with accommodation and meals if this forms part of the cost package)
- Travelling expenses in accordance with council policy
- Subsistence in accordance with council policy

7. Evaluation of Training

7.1 Records of all training undertaken by employees will be kept in the personnel files of each member of staff.

7.2 As part of Cleobury Mortimer Town Council's continuing commitment to training and development, 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 on-going efficiency and effectiveness of the authority.

REVIEW

The effectiveness of this Training and Development Policy and associated arrangements will be reviewed every two years. Next review January 2023.