

## **1. Training & Development Policy**

Prudhoe Town Council is committed to the ongoing training and development of all councillors and employees. From this the Council helps them to make the most effective contribution to the Council's Strategic Objectives in providing the highest quality representation and services for the people of the town.

The purpose of this policy is to encourage councillors and staff to undertake appropriate training, allocate training in a fair manner and ensure that all training is evaluated to assess its value.

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

## **2. Identification of Training Needs**

There are various circumstances in which training needs may arise, such as:

- Legislative requirements e.g. first aid, fire safety, manual handling etc.
- Changes in legislation
- Changes in 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 or councillor
- Devolved services / delivery of new services

### *Officers*

An employee who feels they have a training need should in the first instance discuss this with their line manager. Similarly, if it is felt that an employee is in need of training, the line manager will discuss this with the employee.

Training needs should not be left to be identified during the annual appraisal process; they may arise at any point of the year and should be addressed as soon as possible. That said, as per the Council's Performance and Development Policy, individual training needs will be considered at each appraisal meeting.

The training need will be reviewed and assessed against the objectives of the Council, the responsibilities of the role and the development of the employee.

### *Councillors*

New councillors will have an induction meeting with the Clerk and will be provided with an information pack containing the documents as set out below:

#### **INFORMATION PACK FOR NEW COUNCILLORS**

- i. Declaration of Acceptance of Office (to be signed)
- ii. Declaration of Disclosable and Pecuniary Interests (to be completed and returned)
- iii. The Good Councillors Guide
- iv. Briefing for New Councillors
- v. Members List
- vi. Being a Good Employer
- vii. Meetings Timetable

- viii. Code of Conduct
- ix. Standing Orders
- x. Financial Regulations
- xi. Budget
- xii. List of Committees and Outside Bodies
- xiii. All agreed policies
- xiv. Minutes of previous meeting
- xv. Current Agenda and papers

It is recognised that it may be difficult for some councillors to attend training during the daytime because of their work commitments. Councillors will, however, still be encouraged to attend training provided by its partner authorities and NALC, and attend conferences whenever possible. In-house training during an evening will be considered wherever possible, to enable all councillors to attend.

If a councillor feels they have a training need they should discuss this in the first instance with the Clerk. The Clerk will be able to assess the request and ascertain whether this is something all councillors may be interested in/benefit from undertaking.

The Council will undertake an annual training needs analysis with councillors soon after each Annual Meeting of the Council in May. This will encourage councillors to look at any personal development areas or knowledge gaps as a councillor that they wish to address and importantly, consider any training needs they feel they may have with regards to Committees they are members of following the Annual Meeting. This is particularly important with regards to the Human Resources Committee and the Cemetery and War Memorial Committee.

On completing the training needs analyses, the results will be collated and reviewed by the Clerk. The Clerk will then take steps, to arrange any training required.

Below is a list of examples of internal training councillors may wish to seek:

- Code of conduct
- Chairmanship
- Conduct at meetings
- Standing Orders
- Chair / Vice Chair role and responsibilities
- Being a Good Councillor
- Council's Strategic Objectives
- Specific Council projects
- Budget setting and Finance
- Disciplinary and Grievance procedures
- Appeals procedures
- Social media and communication

### **3. Training Methods**

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

*Internally* - If training can be given utilising the in-house expertise and knowledge, this possibility will be explored. This often includes general computer training, training on specific work procedures or Council specific practices and legislation.

*Partnership* - The Council has links with other partners where training can be sourced, such as through the Northumberland Association of Local Councils, the County Durham Cleveland County Training Partnership and Northumberland County 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 through the professional body, i.e. CiLCA.

*External Training Providers* - There are numerous training providers available. When sourcing training from an external provider, the Council will always seek to obtain the best price and where possible, from a nearby location.

Upon identifying a training need, the employee/councillor and their line manager/Town Clerk should consider the most effective way in which the training can be sourced and whether or not others may benefit from the training.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

Each year as part of the annual budget setting process, the Council will include a training budget for employees and councillors. When calculating this, any training needs identified as part of the annual appraisal process and councillors training needs analyses will be taken in to consideration.

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

Any employee may apply to take qualification training – any sponsorship by the council will depend on corporate and service priorities and each application will be considered on this basis.

The principles of the National Training Strategy for Town and Parish Councils, is recognised as an excellent strategy for both officers and councillors. All employees will be expected to undertake the "Introduction to Local Council Administration" course. In addition, the Clerk will be required to obtain the CiLCA qualification and the Administrative Officer will also be encouraged to pursue the qualification.

The Council will pay the annual subscription to the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and the Northumberland Association of Local Councils (NALC) to enable officers and councillors to take advantage of their training courses and conferences.

When training is approved, the Council will pay and/or assist with expenses incurred covering items like tuition and examination fees. For approved courses the Council will cover the course fee, examination fees, associated membership fees and one payment to re-take a failed examination.

#### *Recouping Costs*

It is standard practice of the Council that where the Council is covering the costs of an employee's training course or qualification (this being a course or qualification, rather than one day course or workshop) a written agreement will be made that if the employee leaves the Council's employ

within 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.

#### *Travel Expenses*

Employees or councillors attending training outside of Prudhoe 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.

### **5. Time Off Work**

The Council will grant paid time off work for one-off training courses lasting one day or less, providing these are approved with the line manager.

Where a training course or workshop falls on an employee's non-working day, time off in lieu (TOIL) may be accrued for hours in attendance at the training.

An employee undertaking a longer training course or qualification will be required to use TOIL to cover these absences. The only exception here is with NVQ qualifications for trainees sponsored by the Council for which paid leave from work will be granted, providing this is approved in advance by the Clerk.

Where an employee requires time off work for an exam or study leave prior to an exam, the Council will be flexible to ensure this time off can be granted using either TOIL or annual leave, providing adequate notice is given by the employee.

### **6. Evaluation**

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

Report forms will be reviewed and collated annually as part of a report to the Human Resources Committee.

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.

### **7. Recordkeeping**

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.

### **8. Review**

It is recommended that this policy is reviewed in June 2021 by the newly elected Council.