



## **PRUDHOE TOWN COUNCIL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

**ADOPTED at the Ordinary Meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

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## **1 Introduction**

1.1 Prudhoe Town Council is committed to the ongoing training and development of members of staff, councillors and volunteers. The Council recognises that enabling them to be suitably knowledgeable and skilled to carry out their roles, makes an effective contribution to the Council's objectives in providing the highest quality of representation and services for the people of the town.

1.2 The purpose of this policy is to set out Prudhoe Town Council's position on the provision of training and development opportunities for staff, councillors and volunteers.

## **2 Commitment to Training**

2.1 Prudhoe Town Council recognises that its most important resource is its staff, councillors and volunteers and is committed to encouraging them to enhance their knowledge and qualifications through further training. Some training is necessary to ensure compliance with all legal and statutory requirements.

2.2 The Council expects senior staff to undertake a programme of continuing professional development (CPD) in line with the requirements of their requisite professional bodies. The Council requires all new councillors to undergo training and, thereafter, to attend training as appropriate to their responsibilities (and at least one training event per year). All volunteers will receive an induction to familiarise them with the work of Prudhoe Town Council in general, and their specified area of work.

2.3 Providing training yields a number of benefits:

- Improves the quality of the services and facilities that Prudhoe Town Council provides;
- Enables the organisation to achieve its corporate aims and objectives;
- Improves the skills base of staff, councillors and volunteers;
- Produces confident, highly qualified staff and volunteers working as part of an effective and efficient team; and
- Demonstrates that staff and volunteers are valued

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

2.5 The process of development is as follows:

- Training needs should be identified by considering the overall objectives of the organisation, as well as individual

- requirements.
- Planning and organising training to meet those specific needs.
- Designing and delivering the training.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of training.

### **3 The Identification of Training Needs**

3.1 Whilst staff will be asked to identify their training and development needs, with advice from their line manager, during their annual appraisal, this is not the only method for identifying training needs. Staff who feel they have a training need (at any point in the year) should in the first instance discuss this with their line manager.

3.2 Councillors will have an induction meeting with the Clerk following their election and will be provided with an Induction Pack, containing all policies and documents relevant to their position. If a councillor has a training need, they should discuss this with the Clerk in the first instance. The Clerk will be able to assess the request and ascertain whether it is something all councillors may be interested in undertaking.

3.3 The Human Resources Committee will undertake an annual training needs analysis for councillors as soon as practical after the Annual Meeting of the Council in May to ascertain whether there are any additional training needs councillors may have.

3.4 All volunteers will receive an induction with the Clerk. Training will be offered where it helps to fulfill the role, and any training needs volunteers feel they may have should be discussed with the Clerk in the first instance.

3.5 In addition to the above, training and development needs will be identified from a variety of sources, including:

- Induction and probationary periods
- Legislative requirements i.e. First Aid, Fire Safety, Manual Handling
- Changes in legislation
- Changes in office software and systems
- New or revised qualifications become available
- Accidents
- Professional error
- Introduction of new equipment
- Complaints to the Council
- A request from a member of staff, councillor or volunteer
- Delivery of new services
- Workforce planning

## **4 Training Methods**

4.1 There are different ways in which training and development can be achieved. Staff, councillors and volunteers will be encouraged to identify their own learning styles and the Council will seek to provide a wide variety of learning and training methods including:

- Attendance at conferences, seminars and short courses
- Online training
- Internal coaching
- Shared in-house learning resources (books, journals, DVDs etc.)
- In house training
- Work shadowing
- Time for self-directed research and learning
- External training providers
- Professional Qualifications
- Through partnerships (for example, Northumberland County Council)

## **5 Financial Assistance**

5.1 An allocation will be made in the annual budget each year to fund training and development, for staff, councillors and volunteers. The amount will be reviewed annually, taking into account any training needs identified throughout the year.

5.2 It is important to note that all training funded by the Council 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.

5.3 Requests for training can be made to the Clerk. Each request will be considered on an individual basis and the benefits to the individual and the organisation will be identified.

5.4 The Council subscribes to the National Association of Local Councils, Northumberland Association of Local Councils, and the Society of Local Council Clerks, in order to receive regular up-dates on matters relevant to the sector, and to take advantage of their training courses and conferences. The Clerk and Deputy Clerk may also subscribe to the Society of Local Council Clerks as individual members. Any requests to subscribe to additional memberships/bodies will be considered by the Council on request, and are subject to the availability of financial resources.

5.5 For approved courses staff, councillors and volunteers can expect the following to be sponsored:

- course fee

- examination fees
- associated membership fees
- one payment to re-take a failed examination
- travel expenses
- literature required to assist training

5.6 Councillors, staff and volunteers attending assisted courses are expected to inform the Clerk immediately of any absences for any reason.

5.7 It is standard practice of the Council that where the Council is covering the costs of an individual'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 individual leaves the Council's within a set period of time during or having completed the course, the individual will be expected to reimburse the Council as per the agreement. This does not apply to employees in apprenticeship positions.

## **6 Study Leave**

6.1 Where individuals require study leave to undertake mandatory training for one-off training courses (lasting a day or less), they will be able to take all the leave within normal working hours.

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

6.3 Where individuals require study leave to undertake study which is not mandatory but part of the individual's formal continuous professional development, the Council will contribute up to 50% of study leave time, to a maximum of three days per annum.

6.4 Time off for study leave must be approved in advance. To make a request the individual is asked to write to the Clerk (or Chairman of the Council or Chair of the Human Resources Committee), setting out the details of the course of study, how it relates to their work, and the time being requested.

6.5 No study leave will be granted where individuals undertake study which is not required for their role, or not directly related to their role. However, the Clerk (or Chair of the Council and the Chair of the Human Resources Committee) will consider requests for flexible working to allow the study to take place, as long as the needs of the council can be met.

## **7 Evaluation of Training and Recordkeeping**

7.1 As part of Prudhoe Town Council's continuing commitment to training and development, staff, councillors and volunteers are asked to provide feedback on the value and effectiveness of any training they undertake. With the exception of internal/on the job training, upon completing a training session/course/workshop, the individual should complete a Training Record 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.

7.2 All training and related forms undertaken by staff, councillors and volunteers will be held securely by the Clerk. These records will be kept in accordance with the Council's Document Retention policy, after which they will be disposed of as confidential waste.

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

## **8 Review of Policy**

8.1 It is recommended that in the first instance, this policy is reviewed yearly to ensure its implementation, and then bi-yearly once appropriate.

**Date of next review: May 2027**

**STAFF/COUNCILLOR/VOLUNTEER TRAINING RECORD**

**Name:**

**Job Title/Position:**

**Covering the period from:**

**To:**

<b>Qualification/Course Attended and Provider</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>What did you do?</b>	<b>What did you learn from this?</b>	<b>How have/will you use this? How will your council change or improve?</b>	<b>Date of any refresher course needed/CPD points</b>