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**TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

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**SEPTEMBER 10, 2024  
NORTHSTOWE TOWN COUNCIL**

# **NORTHSTOWE TOWN COUNCIL**

## **TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

### **1. Introduction**

This Training and Development Policy is in place in order to enable Northstowe Town Council to operate and maintain a high level of performance, deliver high quality services and to ensure the Council can meet its aims and objectives, whilst complying with statutory obligations and utilising legislative powers.

Northstowe Town Council recognises that amongst its important resources are its staff and Councillors. The Town Council is, therefore, committed to ensuring that its staff and Councillors are trained to appropriate standards, and to provide training and personal development opportunities to encourage enhancement of their knowledge, skills and qualifications so they can carry out their roles, maintain effective working practices and are up to date with new legislation and equipment under their control.

By undertaking training and seeking development opportunities on an ongoing basis, staff and Members acquire confidence in their work and will be up-to-date on developments, skills and legislation. This also helps to gain the confidence of members of the public and promotes a sense of professionalism from the Town Council.

All training and development must be appropriate to the needs and objectives of the Council, be relevant to the individual's role(s), and are subject to the availability of financial resources.

When setting the budget the Town Council makes allowances for training budgets for staff and for Council Members. Staff obtain paid release from work in order to undertake training, where training is considered relevant to the requirements of the positions held.

### **2. Purpose and scope of this policy**

This purpose of this policy is to set out the Council's position on the provision of training and development opportunities for staff and Members.

It applies primarily to all staff, whether full or part time, temporary or fixed term. Separate sections apply to all Members.

This policy provides details regarding;

- The identification of training and development needs and opportunities;
- Financial support;
- Study leave.

### **3. STAFF - Identifying, Meeting and Evaluating Training and Development Needs**

All training and development is to be compatible with the Council's overall strategy, aims and objectives whilst also having regard to the personal development needs of individuals.

Staff are expected to keep up-to-date with developments in the sector and to be pro-active in identifying their own training and development needs.

All staff will keep up a training record, which is shared with the Clerk.

The Clerk will maintain all records of training attended by themselves, other employees and Councillors.

**Staff** - Training and development **needs** will be identified from a variety of sources:

- Vision, Strategy, Aims and Objectives of the Council;
- Services and Activities managed, delivered and/or overseen by the Council;
- Council's annual Action Plan;
- Council's long-term Business Planning.
- Job Descriptions and Person Specifications;
- Recruitment Processes;
- Employment Contracts;
- Induction and probationary period and associated processes;
- Annual Performance Review Processes and associated formal paperwork – includes review of Job Description, duties and responsibilities and development & training needs;
- A personal development plan – as part of Annual Performance Review - which addressed development needs identified. The Annual review is a key opportunity for any training needs to be identified and staff are able to request any training they feel would be beneficial to their role within the Council;
- Performance Data tracking throughout the year (with measurable Objectives and Priorities set against Job Description Accountabilities);
- Regular one-to-one meetings with line manager;
- Team meetings;
- Annual staffing plan;
- Workforce planning/5-year staffing plans;
- Creation of new roles
- Staffing structure/ job content review processes;
- Change processes, e.g. changes in legislation, new services/activities or new/upgraded equipment or IT systems;
- Health and Safety assessments;
- Accidents or mistakes made; complaints made.

**Staff** - The Town Council encourages staff to identify their own learning styles and will seek to provide **opportunities** for a wide variety of learning and training methods, including:

- Shared in-house learning resources (publications, books, journals, etc.);
- In-house training; Internal coaching;
- Work shadowing;
- Online training (e.g. through membership resources, e.g. via CAPALC/NALC, SLCC, Scribe and NABMA);
- Self-directed research and learning;

- Attendance at webinars, conferences, seminars and short courses;
- Attendance at relevant local meetings/clerk forums and Information and Networking briefings provided by bodies such as the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils (CAPALC);
- Peer meetings, in-person or online, for mentoring and support where these exist.

#### **4. MEMBERS - identifying, Meeting and Evaluating Training and Development Needs**

All training and development is to be compatible with the Council's overall strategy, aims and objectives.

Skills Assessments, where deemed relevant, are maintained by the Clerk and reviewed on an annual basis.

An overview of training achieved is maintained by Members themselves and is shared with the Clerk on an annual basis.

**Members** - Training and development **needs** will be identified from a variety of sources:

- Vision, Strategy, Aims and Objectives of the Council;
- Services and Activities managed or overseen by the Council;
- Council's annual Action Plan;
- Council's long-term Business Planning.

**Members** - The Town Council encourages Members to identify their own learning styles and will seek to provide **opportunities** for a wide variety of learning and training methods, including:

- General training in Parish Council procedures and matters.
- Specialist training in accordance to need and role in Council and Committees.
- Information provided through e-newsletters and other methods, provided through membership subscriptions including CAPALC/NALC and SLCC.

Training requirements for Councillors will usually be identified by themselves. Opportunities to attend courses will also be brought to the attention of the Full Council by the Clerk.

All new Councillors are provided with a 'New Councillors Pack' when joining the Town Council. This contains, amongst others, a copy of the 'Good Councillors Guide', the Council's Standing Orders and Code of Conduct for the Council.

All new Councillors are expected to attend 'New Councillor' training within six months of taking up their position.

All Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Council and of all active Committees are expected to attend Chairing training within six months of taking up their position.

Councillors who wish to refresh their skills/knowledge can request to attend authorised courses.

If the whole Council requires training on a particular subject, the Clerk will source the most appropriately qualified person(s) to attend who will then cascade the training down to the rest of the Council.

Specialist training to benefit all Councillors may also be provided on an ad-hoc basis.

An overview of training is maintained by Members themselves and is shared with the Clerk on an annual basis.

## **5. STAFF – Considering training requests**

A number of factors will be taken into account when assessing a request from an individual. This policy provides one element of the decision-making process. Other factors will include availability of finance and the individual's employment record.

In order to ensure that the Council is able to consistently evaluate requests, training and development opportunities have been organised into three categories according to the degree of importance each intervention has for different roles.

### **5.1. Categorising training and personal development**

The three categories are as follows:

#### **1. Mandatory**

Mandatory training is legally required for the post-holder, or a qualification deemed to be so fundamental to the role, that the council makes it a mandatory requirement. Any mandatory training or qualifications are to be stated on the job description. For mandatory qualifications, it is unlikely that an applicant would be recruited without having previously attained the qualification. Where a qualification becomes mandatory for the role, the council will provide reasonable assistance for the employee to attain the qualification (see the section on Guidance for Support below).

Some mandatory training may be specific to a particular job role whilst other training may be a generic requirement. Examples of mandatory training could include:

#### *Generic training:*

- Health and Safety (Personal Safety, Manual handling, Display Screen equipment)
- Food hygiene
- Data Protection
- Safeguarding/DBS

## 2. Desirable

Desirable training is not legally required for the post, but it is directly relevant to the individual's job. Any desirable training or qualifications are to be stated on the job description.

For desirable qualifications or training, an individual may be recruited without having previously attained the qualification or undergone the training but may be expected to attain the qualification within a defined period of time. The need for training may also be identified through one-to-one meetings or annual appraisals. A desirable qualification is likely to enhance the skills and reputation of the council. Examples may include:

*Job specific:*

- Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA)
- Cemetery Legal Compliance
- Microsoft Excel

## 3. Optional

An optional qualification or optional training may not be directly linked to the individual's current job. Optional training or development is generally more beneficial to the individual's career than it is for the council.

Personal development aimed at developing the skills or knowledge of an individual in order to provide a successor for an existing job is deemed to be optional. However, depending on the circumstances, training for succession may be 'desirable'.

*Job specific:*

- Community Governance
- Town Planning Technical Support - Level 3 Diploma.

## 6. Resourcing Training and Development

A reasonable allocation will be made in the budget each year to enable training and development, for staff and for Members.

The Council will continue to support the Clerk and Deputy-Clerk as members of the Society of Local Council Clerks.

The Council will continue membership and/or subscriptions to other organisations that also provide relevant publications, key advice services and training opportunities for staff and Members.

The Council will finance professional qualifications, where these are required. At least the Town Clerk – and other key members of staff, where considered necessary – will be required to obtain CiLCA qualification, or - if not already having this qualification - are required to start training towards this professional qualification within the first 12 months of

their appointment.

Requests for purchases of relevant resources such as publications will be considered by the Council on an ongoing basis.

## **7. Staff - Guidance for support**

Support for qualifications, training and personal development can include financial assistance towards the cost of tuition, examinations and resource materials in addition to half / day release and time off for study leave and taking the examination. Any financial and non-financial support to training and development is entirely at the discretion of the council.

The council reserves the right to reclaim financial support where the employee;

- Leaves the council during the duration of the course; or
- Fails to complete the training; or
- Fails to attend training without good reason.

## **8. Staff - Study leave**

Where individual staff members require study leave to undertake mandatory training, they will be able to take all the leave within normal working hours.

Where individuals require study leave to undertake training which is not mandatory but part of the individual's desire for career development, the Council will contribute up to 3 days study leave per annum for courses which are related to the individual's role.

Time off for study leave must be approved in advance. To make a request the individual is asked to write to the Clerk, setting out the details of the course of study, how it relates to their work, and the time being requested. Study leave requests to undertake training that is not considered 'Mandatory' or 'Desirable' will also need to be presented to and considered by the Personnel Committee.

No study leave will be granted where individuals undertake study which is not deemed required for their role, or not related to their role. However, the Clerk and Personnel 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.

— policy ends here —

This policy will be monitored and reviewed annually in line with the Objectives of the Council.

This document is to be reviewed annually by the Personnel Committee and/or Full Council (e.g. at its Annual Meeting of the Town Council).

### Document History

Status	Date	Version
Draft by Town Clerk. <i>NB: Clerk has combined NALC Policy Template with example texts from a wide number of other Town and Parish Council examples of similar policies.</i>	5 <sup>th</sup> September 2024	V1.0
Draft to Personnel Committee for consideration	10 <sup>th</sup> September 2024.	
Date approved by Full Council	TBC	
Review Date (Full Council)	TBC	



## **NOTES** (from NALC Template):

### 1. Green Book terms

If the council adopts Green Book <sup>1</sup>terms and conditions of employment (as Northstowe Town Council does), staff attending or undertaking required training are entitled to payment of normal earnings; all prescribed fees and other relevant expenses arising. Employees are also entitled to paid leave for the purpose of sitting for required examinations. When attending training courses outside contracted daily hours, part-time employees should be paid on the same basis as fulltime employees.

### 2. “Being a good employer – a guide for parish and town councillors<sup>2</sup>”.

The “Being a good employer guide” provides comprehensive advice and guidance around training and development, including what a policy might contain; identifying training needs, as well as information and guidance on appraisal.

### **Important notice**

This is an example of an employment policy designed for a small council adhering to statutory minimum requirements and does not constitute legal advice. As with all policies it should be consistent with your terms and conditions of employment.

This document was commissioned by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) in 2019 for the purpose of its member councils and county associations. Every effort has been made to ensure that the contents of this document are correct at time of publication. NALC cannot accept responsibility for errors, omissions and changes to information subsequent to publication.

This document has been written by the HR Services Partnership – a company that provides HR advice and guidance to town and parish councils. Please contact them on 01403 240 205 for information about their services.

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<sup>1</sup> Available via [Local government terms and conditions \(Green book\) | Local Government Association](#).

<sup>2</sup> Latest version (2023) available from NALC, via [NALC publishes an updated edition of The Good Councillor's guide to employment - News](#)