



MERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Training Policy

Adopted September 2021

Review Due September 2023

Signed _____

Purpose and scope

The purpose of this policy is to set out the council's position on the provision of training and development opportunities for staff, members and volunteers. It applies to all whether full or part time, temporary or fixed term. Merton Parish Council is committed to ensure that it continues to fulfil its duties and responsibilities to the residents of the Parish in a professional manner. To that end, the council's intention is that the councillors, clerk and any volunteers for the council are suitably equipped with the knowledge and skills to carry out their roles and maintain effective working practices. The council will procure or provide such training and development opportunities as it deems necessary for the delivery of its work.

Identifying, meeting and evaluating training and development needs

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

- Induction and probationary periods
- One-to-ones
- Appraisal
- Team and council meetings

In addition, the council will encourage staff to identify their own learning styles and will seek to provide a wide variety of learning and training methods, including:

- Attendance at conferences, seminars and short courses
- Online and conventional training
- In house training
- Work shadowing
- Time for self-directed research and learning

Consideration

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.

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 include:

- Role of the Clerk/ iLCA
- Health and Safety (Personal Safety, Manual handling, Display Screen equipment)
- Food hygiene
- Data Protection

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:

- 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'.

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

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.

Each year a budget for training is set for the clerk and councillors. If training is mandatory or desirable and is within the individual training budget, then courses are approved in consultation with the chair. All other training must be approved by the council.

Any financial support, including the offer of a loan, will always be conditional upon the employee's agreement to either a full or partial repayment of the financial support provided. The council reserves the right to reclaim financial support where the employee;

- Leaves the council during the duration of the course, or up-to 1 year following completion of the course.
- Fails to complete the training
- Fails to attend training without good reason

Study leave

Where individuals require study leave to undertake mandatory training, they will be able to take all the leave on a paid for basis, provided the course has been approved as above.

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 consider the contribution on an individual basis. To make a request the individual is asked to write to the Clerk (or Chairman of the Council), setting out the details of the course of study, how it relates to their work, and the time being requested. 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 Chairman of the Council) will consider requests for flexible working to allow the study to take place, as long as the needs of the council can be met.

Identification of Individual Training Needs:

Councillors – Often councillors will identify training needs themselves. The Clerk and the Chairman should also advise on the training available to councillors. Councillors should understand that training is an ongoing

process and should be undertaken on a regular basis, so that councillors can better understand the law, finances and general running of a good practice Parish council.

Clerk/RFO - Once appointed the training needs for the Clerk will depend on previous qualifications and experience/training courses already attended. Training must continue even for experienced qualified Clerks to keep them up to date.

Volunteers and other members – These will often have specific roles and duties. The clerk and council should evaluate the roles and ensure training is offered to minimise the risk to the individual and help maximise their ability to undertake the work involved.

Resources for Training:

Annually the council will discuss and allocate a set budget for training and development for all staff. The council will allocate a set budget for the subscriptions of Norfolk ALC for the council and consider a contribution to a subscription for SLCC for the Clerk, along with any other bodies the council feel will aid in the development of the council as a whole.

Evaluation of Training:

The council as a whole, will evaluate the relevance and content of training courses. Guidance from the Clerk may be necessary. Training will be reviewed with any change to legislation and or new software/systems that staff may need training for. Records of training should be kept by the Clerk. This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.