

Necton Parish Council

Training & Development Policy



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1. Introduction

Necton Parish Council recognises that well trained and informed officers and members promotes good work practice and encourages community engagement. As a voluntary organisation, the Council values the time given by members and this policy aims to maximize their rewards from that volunteered time by equipping them to be effective in their role as a councillor or member of staff.

2 Commitment to training

2.1 *“A planned process to develop the abilities of the individual and to satisfy current and future needs of the organisation”*

Quote from the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development (CIPD) 2007

Training and development describes the formal, on-going efforts that are made within organisations to improve performance and self-fulfilment of their employees and in our case members and other volunteers through a variety of educational methods and programmes. In modern local government, these efforts have taken on a broad range of applications, from instruction in highly specific job skills (e.g. finance for local councils) to long-term professional development (e.g. Certificate in Local Council Administration). In recent years, training and development has emerged as a formal business function, an integral element of strategy and a more recognised profession with distinct theories and methodologies. Councils of all sizes have embraced “continual learning” and other aspects of training and development as a means of promoting employee growth and acquiring a highly skilled work force.

2.2 The Council recognises that its most important resource is its Members and employees and is committed to encouraging both to enhance their knowledge and qualifications through further learning. Some training is necessary to ensure compliance with legal and statutory requirements.

2.3 The Council expects its Clerk to undertake a programme of continuing professional development (CPD) in line with the requirements of their professional bodies¹.

2.4 Ensuring access to training yields a number of benefits:

- Improves the quality of services and facilities the Council provides
- Enables the Council to achieve its corporate aims and objectives
- Improves the skill base of employee and member, producing a highly qualified team
- Demonstrates that members and employees are valued

¹ Society of Local Council Clerks

- Increases stability within workforce and aids staff retention.

3 Process of development



4 Training need analysis

From employees:

- Annual appraisal
- Regular meetings with line manager (informal & formal)
- Initial interview & subsequent internal post interviews

From members:

- Annually ahead of budget setting
- At election/co-option
- Formal and informal discussion

Organisational needs:

- Legislative requirements, i.e. First Aid, Fire Safety, Manual Handling
- Changes in legislation
- Changes in systems
- New or revised qualifications become available
- Accidents
- Professional error
- Introduction of new equipment
- New working methods & practices
- Complaints to the Council
- Devolved services / delivery of new services

Employees who wish to be nominated for a training course should discuss this with their line manager (usually within their appraisal); where it will be determined whether the training is relevant to the Council's needs and/or service delivery.

Members are expected to be proactive in identifying their learning needs to the Clerk.

Training needs analysis informs decisions on setting the training and development budget, part of the Council's financial planning processes.

5 Corporate training

Corporate training is necessary to ensure that employees/volunteers are aware of their legal responsibilities or corporate standards, e.g. Health & Safety, Risk Management and Equal Opportunities. Employees will be required to attend training courses, workshops, or online courses where suitable training is identified.

The principle suppliers of such training are the Norfolk Association of Local Councils, Society of Local Council Clerks and Norfolk Parish Training Partnership. Training is also available from HMRC, HSE, ACAS, Community Action Norfolk and other bodies, often free or at low cost.

6 Induction training

All new Members will receive induction training. This will include attending a "New Councillor Course" delivered by NALC (or similar organisation) and a 1-to-1 session with the Clerk to understand the specific work practices of this Council.

New employees and volunteers will also receive induction training, designed to their job role. This will be delivered in-house by the Clerk and involve contributions from other staff/members as appropriate.

7 Financial assistance

All supported 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 Council will be identified.

In order to best ensure cost effectiveness, Members and employees will be required to attend the nearest venue offering the required course, unless an alternative is authorised in the interest of operational effectiveness or best value.

Other considerations include:

- Implication of employee release for course on the operational capacity of the Council.
- Provision and availability of training budget.

For approved courses, members and employees can expect the following to be sponsored:

- The course fee
- Examination fees

- Associated membership fees
- One payment to re-take a failed examination.

Members and employees attending courses are required to inform the Clerk immediately of any absences, giving reasons.

Failure to sit an examination may result in the Council withdrawing future course funding and/or requesting the refund of financial assistance. Each case will be considered on an individual basis.

8 Study leave

Employees who are given approval to undertake external qualifications are granted the following:

- Study time to attend day-release courses
- Time to sit examination
- Study time of one day per examination (to be discussed and agreed in advance)
- Provision of study time must be agreed prior to the course undertaken.

9 Short courses / workshops / residential weekends

Where attendance is required at a short course, paid leave will be granted to employees.

Members and staff attending approved short courses / workshops / residential weekends can expect the following to be paid:

- The course fee (usually invoiced following the event)
- Travelling expenses in accordance with the Council's policy
- Subsistence in accordance with the Council's policy.

10 Evaluation of training

Records of all training undertaken by employees will be kept in the personnel files.

Feedback will be requested on the value and effectiveness of the training undertaken. Such feedback should be provided to the Clerk.

11 Linking with other Council policies

- Equality of opportunity in all aspects of member and employee development
- A "Statement of Intent" on training for both members and employees is a requirement for the re-accreditation of any nationally recognised charter marks. (Local Council Award)
- Risk Management policy – a commitment to training and development greatly assists in achieving good governance and an effective system of risk management.
- Health & Safety policy – ongoing training and development is key to ensuring a positive approach to Health & Safety throughout the Council.
- Undertaking training is a clear indication of continuing professional development.

12 Reporting on progress

The Clerk will report annually to the Council, detailing attendance at training over the year, as well

as the inclusion of member and employee evaluation of courses attended.

13 Conclusion

The continued adoption of this policy should achieve many benefits for the Council. It will assist in demonstrating that the Council is committed to CPD and enhancing the skills of both members and employees.

The continued adoption of this policy has a practical implication on the Council's budget and ensures that the Council is aware of the implication of its commitments and allocates adequate and appropriate funding in a long term and sustainable platform that supports these aspirations and commitments.