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Fakenham Town Council

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT POLICY

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1. Introduction

Fakenham Town Council recognises the value and benefit of training and continuous development of its staff, councillors and volunteers and is committed to encouraging training and development attendance, providing opportunities to meet the aims and objectives of the council.

2. Objectives

- To provide suitably trained and qualified staff, councillors and volunteers.
- To consider the changing needs of the council and provide facilities for training and retraining.
- To ensure staff, councillors and volunteers understand the purpose of the council and their role within it.
- To encourage a positive attitude towards personal development.

3. Training needs

The Town Council will identify training needs in the light of the overall objectives of the Council and the requirements of the individual. There are number of additional ways that training needs may be recognised;

- staff appraisals
- questionnaires
- interviews
- formal and informal discussions
- Legislative requirements
- System or equipment changes

All should have regard to the following when considering training needs:

- Workload implication of training.
- The capabilities of the individual to benefit from the training.
- If the application is for continued academic sponsorship, consideration should be given to past attainments.

- The most economic and effective means of training.
- Councillors and volunteers will be expected to attend relevant training days as their personal circumstances allow.
- Councillors and staff undertaking qualifications and/or training will attend the nearest location offering the required course at the appropriate level; or online learning qualifications/training.
- The provision and availability of a training budget.

Councillors

New Councillors will have an induction meeting with the Town Clerk and will be provided with digital information pack containing essential information including Council Policies, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. This pack will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it contains up-to-date and relevant information.

General training includes;

- Councillor basic skills
- Effective Councillor
- Chairing Council meetings
- Council Finance roles
- Planning

Staff

Training needs will be identified at the initial induction meetings held with all new employees and then reviewed at their annual appraisals. Additional training requirements may be identified due to;

Changes in legislation

Changes in equipment

Changes in role or systems

Qualifications are revised

4. Budget

The Councils yearly budget includes a training budget. All training must be appropriate to the needs of the council and relevant to the role of the councillor, volunteer or employee and is subject to available budget prioritised by individual need. The Council will not meet a financial commitment where prior approval has not been given. Councillors, volunteers or staff should attend the nearest location offered or use distance learning where possible. The council will cover with prior approval;

- Course fees
- Examination fees
- Associate membership fees
- One payment to re-take a failed exam
- Travel expenses

Employees attending training events outside of the normal working pattern will accrue Time off in Lieu (TOIL). Anyone unable to attend training must inform the office as soon as possible. Failure to do so or late notification other than for legitimate reasons may result in action being taken under the Disciplinary Policy for Staff, or under the Code of Conduct for Councillors and result in costs incurred by the Council, that cannot be recovered.

The Council will, in addition to the Training budget, pay the annual subscription to the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), and Norfolk Association of Local Councils (NALC) to enable staff and councillors to take advantage of training courses and conferences arranged by those associations.

The Town Council will maintain a library of current publications on books offering advice concerning all aspects of local government

Any absence from attending any training/courses must be reported as if absent from the workplace. If an employee fails to sit an examination, the Town Council will withdraw its support and may require the refunding of any financial assistance received to date

Failure to attend a course or sit an examination may result in the Council withdrawing further course funding and/or request the refunding of the cost of the course/exam. Each case will be considered on an individual basis

5. Evaluation

The Town Council will evaluate and measure the impact and effectiveness of all training. Employee appraisals will provide the basis for both identifying training needs and the effectiveness of training provided. HR Sub committee meetings, formal and informal discussions may also be used to evaluate training. Records of training will be kept.

6. Study Leave

Provision of study time must be agreed with the Council prior to the course being undertaken. Employees who are given approval to undertake training are granted the following:

- Study time to attend courses
- Time to sit examinations
- Study leave to complete distance learning courses as appropriate
- Travel time as appropriate.

Reviewed at Policy & Resources 16th July 2024

Ratified at Full Council 31st July 2024