



# Heybridge Parish Council

## Training Policy – Staff and Councillors

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### 1. Introduction

1.1 This document forms the Council's staff and Councillors training policy and also sets out requirements relevant to its current and future quality award status:

- The Council's commitment to training
- The identification of training needs
- Corporate training
- Financial assistance
- Study leave
- Short courses/workshops
- Evaluation of training

1.2 The objectives of this strategy are to:

- Require all staff and Members to undertake appropriate training
- Allocate training in a fair manner
- Ensure that all training is evaluated to assess its value

### 2. Commitment to Training

2.1 The Parish Council is committed to the ongoing training and development of all Councillors and employees to enable them to make the most effective contribution to the Council's aims and objectives in providing the highest quality representation and services for the people of the parish.

2.2 Training can be defined as 'a planned process to develop the abilities of the individual and to satisfy current and future needs of the organisation.'

2.3 The Parish Council recognises that human resources are key to its functionality and is committed to encouraging all individuals to enhance their knowledge and qualifications through further training and experience. **Some training is necessary to ensure compliance with all legal and statutory requirements.**

2.4 The Council expects Members and senior officers to undertake a programme of continuing professional development (CPD) in line with the requirements of their professional bodies.

2.5 Providing training yields a number of benefits:

- It improves the quality of the services and facilities that the Parish Council provides
- It enables the organisation to achieve its corporation aims and objectives
- It improves the skill base of the employees, producing confident, highly qualified and motivated staff working as part of an effective and efficient team; and
- It demonstrates that employees are valued

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

2.7 The process of development is as follows:

- Training needs should be identified by considering overall objectives of the organisation as well as individual requirements;
- Planning and organising training to meet those specific needs;
- Designing and delivering the training (where appropriate)
- Evaluating the effectiveness of training

2.8 The Council expects Councillors to undertake training<sup>1</sup> to enable members to understand the role of a Councillor in all aspects.

2.9 Under Sch 12 of LGA 1972, para 42 the Council requires that Members seeking the position of Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Council shall have obtained formally a qualification for that purpose<sup>2</sup>. All Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Committees are also expected to complete an appropriate training course.

### **3.0 The identification of training needs**

3.1 Employees will be asked to identify their development needs with advice from their line manager during their annual appraisal or regular meetings with their line manager. There are a number of additional ways that staff training needs may be recognised or identified:

- During interview
- At appraisal
- Through formal and informal discussion

3.2 Other circumstances may present the need for training:

- Legislative requirements i.e. Health and Safety, First Aid, etc.
- New or changes to existing legislation (e.g. general power of competence)
- Accidents
- Professional error

- Introduction of new equipment
- New working methods and practices
- Complaints to the council
- A request from a member of staff
- Devolved services/delivery of new services

3.3 Employees who wish to be considered for a training course should discuss this in the first instance with their line manager, either during appraisal or informal discussion. The line manager will consider, together with colleagues and (depending on the training and the cost involved) with council, to determine whether: the training is relevant to the authority's needs and/or service delivery; the training costs represent value for money; and, if there is sufficient funding available.

3.4 The EALC and other relevant bodies offer various training courses for Councillors including:-

- Councillor Training Days
- Advanced Councillor Training Days
- Chairman Days

The Council receives notification of the courses available which are then considered at full Parish Council meetings.

#### **4.0 Corporate training**

4.1 Corporate training is necessary to ensure employees are aware of qualifications to ensure the council's legal compliance with such legislative requirements as Health and Safety, Risk Management, Equality etc. Employees will be required to attend training courses, workshops or seminars where suitable training is identified.

#### **5.0 Financial Considerations**

5.1 It is important to note that all sponsored 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 organisation will be identified.

In order to best endure cost effectiveness, employees will be required to attend the nearest college/venue offering the required course, unless no alternative is available, it is nationally offered (rather than regionally), urgency or the interests of operational effectiveness require otherwise. Where necessary the Council (or the Personnel Committee) will consider specific training requests (for example, for reasons of cost or benefit).

5.2 Other considerations include the following:

- The implications of employee release for training course attendance on the operational capacity of the Council
- The most economic and effective means of training (value for money)
- The provision and availability of the training budget and other demands on it.

5.3 For approved courses, employees can expect the Council to fund the following:

- The course and registration fee
- The examination fees (if any)
- Associated membership fees (if any)
- One payment to re-take a failed examination or assignment
- Travel costs
- Accommodation costs (only if absolutely necessary and only by prior agreement)

5.4 For approved courses, Councillors can expect the Council to fund the following:

- The course and registration fee
- The examination fees (if any)
- Travel costs (subject to Standing Orders where a report is presented to Council)

5.5 Staff attending training courses must inform the Clerk immediately of any absence, giving reasons.

5.6 Failure to sit an examination (where there is one) may result in the council withdrawing future course funding and/or requesting the refunding by the employee of costs paid by council. Each case will be considered on an individual basis.

## **6.0 Study Leave**

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

- Study time to attend day-release courses
- Time to sit examinations
- Study time of one day per examination or assignment (to be discussed and agreed by the Personnel Committee)
- Provision of study time must be agreed with the line manager prior to the course being undertaken

## **7.0 Short Courses/Workshops/Conferences and Continuing Professional Development**

7.1 Where attendance is required on a full day or half day (short course), leave will be granted on full pay for the duration of travel and attendance.

7.2 Staff attending workshops, residential or day conferences can expect the following to be paid by Council:-

- The course or conference fee (with accommodation and meals if this forms part of the cost package)
- Travelling expenses in accordance with council policy
- Subsistence in accordance with Council policy
- In exceptional circumstances, Council may also pay an additional nights' accommodation where this will improve the ability of the attendee to gain the most of the event (particularly if significant travel is required.)

## **8.0 Evaluation of Training**

8.1 Records of all training undertaken by employees will be kept in the personnel files of each member of staff.

8.2 Records of all training undertaken by Councillors will be kept by the Clerk.

8.2 As part of the Parish Council's continuing commitment to training and development, employees are asked to provide feedback on the value and effectiveness of the training they undertake highlighting in particular the key implications of new legislation, guidance and/or best practice for the ongoing efficiency and effectiveness of the authority.

## **9.0 Status of Policy**

This policy will be considered for adoption by full Council on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2014 and will be subject to review periodically. Adopted 20 November 2014. Reviewed April 2016. Amended Nov 2016.

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1- Essex Association of Local Councils hold regular Councillor training courses.

2 – Essex Association of Local Councils holds regular 3-day Chairman training courses.