



HEADCORN PARISH COUNCIL

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

1 Introduction

1.1 This document forms the Council's Learning & Development Policy. It sets out:

- The Council's commitment to training
- The identification of training needs
- Corporate training
- Financial assistance
- Study leave
- Short courses/workshops
- Evaluation of training
- Links with other policies
- Reporting on progress

1.2 The objectives of this strategy are to:

- Encourage Councillors and employees to undertake appropriate training /L & D
- Allocate training in a fair manner
- Ensure that all training is evaluated to assess its value

2 Commitment to Training

2.1 *Headcorn Parish Council* is committed to the ongoing training and development of all Councillors 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 village.

2.2 *Headcorn Parish Council* recognises that its most important resource is its Councillors and employees and is committed to encouraging both Councillors and employees to enhance their knowledge and qualifications through further training. Some training is necessary to ensure compliance with all legal and statutory requirements.

2.3 *Headcorn Parish Council* expects employees to undertake a programme of continuing professional development (CPD) in line with the requirements of their requisite professional bodies

2.4 Providing training yields a number of benefits:

- Improves the quality of the services and facilities that Your Local Council provides;
- Enables the organisation to achieve its corporate aims and objectives;
- Improves the skills base of the employees and Councillors.



- Produces confident, highly qualified employees working as part of an effective and efficient team; and
- Demonstrates that the employees and Councillors are valued.

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

2.6 The process of development is as follows:

1. Training needs should be identified by considering the overall objectives of the organisation, as well as individual requirements.
2. Planning and organising training to meet those specific needs.
3. Evaluating the effectiveness of training.

3 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 number of additional ways that the training needs of employees may be recognised:

- Questionnaires
- During formal interview/review
- Following confirmation of appointment.
- Formal and informal discussion

3.2 There are a number of ways that the training needs of Councillors may be recognised:

- Questionnaires
- During review
- Following election/co-option
- Formal and informal discussion

3.3 Other circumstances may present the need for training:

- Legislative requirements e.g. 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 and practices
- Complaints to the Council
- A request from a member of staff
- Devolved services / delivery of new services



- 3.4 Employees who wish to be nominated for a training course should discuss this in the first instance during their appraisal; where it will be determined whether the training is relevant to the Council's needs and/or service delivery.

4 Corporate Training

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

5 Financial Assistance

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

To best ensure cost effectiveness, Councillors and employees will be required to attend the nearest college/venue offering the required course, unless an alternative is authorised by the Full Council in the interest of operational effectiveness or Best Value.

- 5.2 Other considerations include the following:
- Implication of employee release for training course(s) on the operational capability of the council
 - The most economic and effective means of training
 - Provision and availability of training budget
- 5.3 For approved courses which provide a recognised national qualification Councillors 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
- 5.4 Councillors and employees attending assisted courses are required to inform the Clerk immediately of any absences, giving reasons.
- 5.5 Failure to sit an examination may result in the Council withdrawing future course funding and/or requesting the refunding of financial assistance. Each case will be considered on an individual basis.
- 5.6 Headcorn Parish Council operates a Return of Service agreement. Any employee undertaking post-entry qualifications funded by the Council must be aware that should they leave the Council's employment within two years of completion of the qualification they will be required to repay all costs associated with the undertaking of such training.



If the employee takes up employment with another Local Council an exemption to this clause may be granted.

6 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 (to be discussed and agreed by line manager in advance)
- Provision of study time must be agreed with the line manager prior to the course being undertaken.

7 Short Courses/Workshops/Residential Weekends

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

7.2 Councillors and employees 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 current policy
- Subsistence in accordance with the Council's current policy

8 Evaluation of Training

8.1 Records of all training undertaken by employees will be kept in their personnel file.

8.2 As part of Headcorn 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 Council.

9 Linking with other Council Policies

9.1 Relationship with other Council policies:

- Equality of opportunity in all aspects of Councillors and employee development;
- A training policy and training record for both Councillors and employees is a requirement for the accreditation of the national Local Council Award Scheme.
- Risk Management Policy – a commitment to Training and Development greatly assists in achieving good governance and an effective system of Risk Management;
- Health and Safety Policy – ongoing training and development is key to ensuring a positive approach to Health and Safety is embedded throughout the Council.
- Undertaking training is a clear indication of Continuing Professional Development.



10 Reporting on Progress

- 10.1 The Clerk will report annually to the Full Council, detailing attendance at training over the year, as well as the inclusion of the Councillor and employee evaluation of courses attended.

11 Conclusion

- 11.1 The adoption of a training or learning and development policy should achieve many benefits for the Council. It will assist in demonstrating that the Council is committed to continuing professional development and enhancing the skills of both Councillors and employees.
- 11.2 The adoption of a training or learning and development policy has a practical implication for 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.

12 Alternative Formats

- 12.1 *Equality Act 2010*: Headcorn Parish Council as a committed and compliant Local Authority to all aspects of Equality Legislation will make every effort to ensure that access to material including this policy is available in alternative formats: please contact the Clerk for further information.
- 12.2 The Council may also be able arrange to provide versions in other languages.

Author: Caroline Carmichael
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Appendix 1:

14 Commitment to Employees & Councillors

- 14.1 Headcorn Parish Council has a fully integrated policy in the field of training and Learning and Development based in this document and the commitment to funding in its regular budget. Your Council supports the concept of investing in life-long Learning and Development for Councillors and employees and will commit an appropriate percentage (%) of its budget on a regular sustainable basis. The Council will work closely with the Kent Association of Local Councils and avail itself of the resources of the Society Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and other bodies as appropriate to ensure high quality Learning and Development programmes.
- 14.2 Your Council makes the following commitment to its Councillors: that every new Councillor of the Council whether elected or co-opted will be trained to an adequate standard as set out by the Council and reflecting prevailing accepted standards within a year of taking office. In addition skills audit will be acted upon to ensure specialist Councillors receive additional training along with the bulk of the Council to take account of legislative changes and new initiatives.
- 14.3 Your Council makes the following commitment to its employees of the Council that they will be trained to an adequate standard as set out in prevailing legislation, Local Authority standards and reflecting the aspirations of the Council as soon as possible upon appointment and on an on-going and rolling programme reinforcing professional development.

