



Christchurch Town Council

Training and Development Policy

Policy name	Version	Owner	Date Adopted	Review Date
Training & Development Policy	V1.0	Town Clerk	January 2021	May 2023

CHRISTCHURCH TOWN COUNCIL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

Statement of Intent

“Learning and Development is about creating the culture and environment for individuals and organisations to learn and grow. It’s the current and future capability needs of the organisation, as well as how to create a learning culture that drives engagement in continuous professional development.” (Chartered Institute of Professional Development, 2021¹)

Christchurch Town Council is committed to the continual training, learning and development of all councillors and employees. Where resources allow it shall promote the pursuit of relevant qualifications and training opportunities to all councillors and staff when requested. The Town Council also takes seriously its statutory obligations as a prudent and diligent employer² and where necessary any statutory qualifications or certifications are required these shall be supported.

This policy also underpins two out of four of the Council’s core values identified in its Strategic Plan (2021-2025):

3. *“We embrace knowledge to learn and adapt”.*

4. *“We strive for excellence”.*

This undertaking and statement of intent towards training and development of both its staff and officers reflects the Council’s organisational commitment to serving our communities.

2. IDENTIFICATION OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

An employee who feels they need further support and training to perform their role shall discuss this need with their immediate line manager. The line-manager shall note the request and if necessary escalate the matter so that any suitable training needs can be delivered in a timely and cost-effective fashion. Likewise, if a line-manager feels that an employee would benefit from training, a dialogue shall be established with the employee to see whether any further support or assistance is required by identifying any training needs.

Individual staff training needs will be discussed at an annual appraisal and: any requests for training documented; training or courses in progress noted; as well as any training or courses completed by the member of staff. The process for identifying training needs is however holistic and shall have the Council’s core values and strategic aims in mind when assessing need and may arise at any time during the year as and when a job role develops.

A councillor shall be able to approach the Town Clerk with any personal training they feel they would benefit from. The Town Clerk shall consider the request respecting the councillor’s rights to privacy and data-protection; however, the Town Clerk shall inform the councillor whether they feel all councillors would benefit from the suggested training. With the agreement of the individual councillor the request may be offered to all councillors, rather than on a bespoke individual need.

¹ CIPD Website: <https://peopleprofession.cipd.org/profession-map/specialist-knowledge/learning-development> (accessed 3/01/2020).

² Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and associated Regulations.

The Town Clerk shall place on an Annual Council agenda any training needs the Members feel they would benefit from, as well as the continual review of this policy.

Training needs may also be identified through the following:

- During interviews;
- Following an election and/or co-option (especially when councillors new to local government/public service are elected);
- Mandatory legislative requirements and/or statutory guidance;
- Changes in Council systems such as IT programmes and/or software/hardware;
- New or revised qualifications become available;
- New working methods and practices (eg: Lean Systems methods, or AGILE practices);
- Complaints to the Council;
- Recommendations from an external body (Monitoring Officer, Independent Person following a complaint, auditors).

3. NEW COUNCILLORS AND EMPLOYEES

All new Councillors and employees will receive basic induction training on the workings of the Council, Council policies and governance. This will also include Council financial regulations, assets, and Code of Conduct Training. Planning training shall also be provided for those members who sit on Planning & Regulatory committee.

4. CONSIDERATION AND ALLOCATION OF TRAINING

Training will be allocated in a fair and consistent manner and shall be assessed with the added value to any essential job requirements. The Council shall consider where necessary its annual training budget and prioritise any mandatory training required to fulfil and/or to continue a role.

5. TRAINING METHODS

The Council shall use the most cost-effective measures available to provide and deliver the necessary training identified:

Internally

Training may be provided internally where any such specialist knowledge can be shared. For example this may include: legislation updates, computer software and IT training (website, social media etc..), council procedures and so on.

Collaboratively

The Council has links with other organisations and may utilise the expertise and share knowledge and skills through its many partner organisations. This may include: the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils (DAPTC), Hampshire Association of Local Councils (HALC), the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), BCP Unitary Council and so on.

Seminars/Webinars

When Council Officers receive information on seminars and or webinars or similar this should be shared with employees and councillors, where relevant.

Conferences

The Town Clerk shall attend the national conferences of the Society of Local Council Clerks (if a member) and/or the National Association of Local Councils conference. Details of conferences should be shared with employees and councillors, where relevant.

External Training Providers

The Town Clerk should always consider the most effective way in which the training can be sourced and whether others may benefit from the training.

Continual Professional Development

All employees who have passed their probationary period are eligible to be considered for training and development. Employees can be absent for training for up to 10 days per financial year (75 hours equivalency). Study leave for assignment/exam preparation and/or attendance is not to be considered in this figure. Employees shall be asked to provide proof of attendance.

Corporate training programs

In certain situations, the Council may decide to collectively train both officers and councillors. The cost of this training shall be met by the Council.

Examples of this kind of training and development are:

- Conflict resolution training;
- First Aid training;
- Standards training.

6. MEMBERSHIP OF PROFESSIONAL BODIES.

The Council will consider applications from employees for membership of professional bodies relevant to job description and role.

7. PROCEDURES

Procedures for Employees

This procedure should be followed when employees wish to attend external training, courses, conferences, webinars etc..

The employee shall discuss the request with their immediate line-manager. In the case of the Town Clerk s/he shall discuss the request with the Mayor and Chairmen of all the Town Councils' committees. A record of the training need expressed and subsequently identified shall be recorded. The Town Clerk/Line-Manager shall then present a report to the Resources Committee for considerations (if necessary this matter can be placed into an exempted agenda item for the purposes of data protection relating to a living individual). The report shall contain as a minimum the rationale for the training request and the training identified and the cost, and any other relevant considerations (i.e current courses in progress, courses completed, amount of CPD hours expended in the current financial year etc). The Resources Committee shall then consider the request and

officer report. If the matter is approved the Line-Manager/Town Clerk shall arrange and tend to the necessary administration in booking, monitoring, and reviewing the training. If the Resources Committee reject the request the employee shall be entitled to reasons in writing which shall be delegated to the Town Clerk/Line-Manager to send to the employee.

If the training identified shall culminate in sitting an examination any certificate, award or equivalent shall be notified to the Town Council and a record placed on the employee's personnel file.

The Town Council shall only pay for one third of the cost for any need to re-sit any module, assignment, or exam.

Procedure for Councillors

Councillors who wish to attend training (other than that recommended by the Town Clerk or other bodies) must discuss the training under consideration with the Town Clerk. For any training courses costing over £150 or for attendance at a conference, seminar, or other outside training where the councillor will be representing the Council a proposal to Full Council shall be made by the Town Clerk. The Full Council will consider the report with attention focussed upon meeting the Council's strategic objectives in mind along with the budget and training content. For training under £150 the Town Clerk shall consider the proposal with the same focusses in mind. If the request is rejected the Town Clerk shall provide the councillor with reasons in writing. Any approved request and the Town Clerk shall make any necessary arrangements such as reserving places and any associated administration.

If the training identified shall culminate in sitting an examination any certificate, award or equivalent shall be notified to the Town Council and a record placed on the employee's personnel file.

The Town Council shall only pay for one third of the cost for any need to re-sit any module, assignment, or exam. This payment shall only be made once.

Training identified by an individual councillor which in the Town Clerk's opinion may further the development of all councillors shall also be considered by Full Council upon receipt of a written report detailing how the strategic objectives of the Town Council would be met, along with the budget and training content.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Training Budget

Training and development resourcing shall be allocated in the budget (precept). This shall take into account any identified needs following annual appraisals or any mandatory changes to job roles (which have come about due to legislative changes or membership qualification criteria, etc..) as well as expressed training needs from councillors. Consideration shall also be budgeted for any mandatory training required for newly elected/co-opted councillors.

When sourcing training from any external provider the Council shall always be directed by the principle of achieving best value and the proximity of any provider given that travel expenses may be a variable to account for.

For approved courses the Council will cover the course fee, examination fees, associated membership fees and one-third payment towards re-take of one failed examination/module/unit.

Recovering Costs

The Council shall consider where appropriate to ask for a return of service as a condition to any training or development activity. Where the employee or councillor resigns or the employment is terminated prior to the return of service having been completed, the employee/councillor shall be liable to repayment of the course/training fees. Such measures shall be considered for courses or awards which have an impact upon the Council's strategic objectives and shall not normally be considered for courses or awards which are short in duration (less than a month). The employee or councillor shall be asked to sign a contractual obligation agreeing to the return of service as a condition of meeting any fees, which shall be proportionate to the cost to the Council in providing the necessary training.

Travel Expenses

Employees or councillors attending training outside of Dorset may submit an expenses claim to cover travel costs to and from the venue, including parking. Where possible, if there is more than one attendee from the Council, car-pooling or shared travel arrangements should be made. Any expenses claim must be supported by receipts and evidence.

9. TIME OFF WORK FOR STUDY

Where an employee requires time off work for a work-related exam or study leave prior to a work-related exam, the Council will be flexible when considering the request.

10. EVALUATION

All training shall be recorded and assessed for value for money, content and its usefulness.

11. RECORD KEEPING

Any training, CPD courses, webinars or learning and development activity shall be recorded on the employee's file. Any certificates and awards shall also be kept, as shall any training requested, refused, awarded and completed. This shall be held in-line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Council's data retention policies.