



TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

1. Introduction

Melksham Town Council is committed to the continued training and development of all councillors and employees in order to provide the town with the highest quality representatives and services, in line with the Council's Strategic Objectives.

The purpose of this policy is to encourage councillors and staff to undertake appropriate training, ensure all necessary training is undertaken, allocate training in a fair manner whilst observing our Equality duty and ensure that all training is properly evaluated.

Training and development has a financial allocation within the annual budget, to cover both employees and councillors, as well as providing in-house development and taking advantage of any relevant partnership training.

2. Identification of training needs

There are various circumstances in which the need for training needs may arise, such as:

- Legislative requirements e.g. first aid, fire safety, manual handling etc.
- Changes in legislation
- Meeting the Council's objectives
- 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 or councillor
- Devolved services / delivery of new services

Employees

Under the Employee Rights Act 1996, section 63d, all employees have a right to request studying and training. Therefore, if any employee feels they have a training need they should in the first instance discuss the need with their line manager. Similarly, if it is felt or identified that an employee is in need of training, their line manager will discuss this with them.

Training needs should not be left to be identified during the annual appraisal process; they may arise at any point of the year and should be addressed through the regular one to one meetings or sooner if necessary.

The identified training need will be reviewed and assessed against the responsibilities of the role, the objectives of the Council and the development of the employee i .

Councillors

If councillors feel they have a training need they should approach and discuss it in the first instance with the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk will be able to assess the request and ascertain whether this is something all councillors may be interested in/benefit from undertaking.

The Council will undertake an annual training needs analysis with councillors soon after election to office. This will encourage new and existing councillors to look at any knowledge gaps or relevant skills training that, as a councillor they wish to address. Special consideration will be given to any training needs they feel they may have with regards to Committees and Working Groups they are members of. In particular, the Personnel Sub-Committee, Policy and Resources Committee, Town Developments and Planning Committee, Amenities Committee and the Finance Working Group.

On completing the training needs analysis, the results will be collated and reviewed by the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk will then take steps, to arrange any training required.

Below is a list of examples of internal training councillors may wish to seek, of which it is advised the first four are considered essential:

- Code of conduct
- Standing Orders
- Equality Duty
- Chairmanship
- Conduct at meetings
- Mayor / Deputy Mayor role and responsibilities
- Council's Strategic Objectives
- Specific Council projects
- Budget setting
- Finances and cost centres
- Social media.

3. Training methods

There are variety of ways in which training and development can be achieved:

- **Internally** - This includes induction training for all new employees. If further training can be given utilising the in-house expertise and knowledge, then this will be the first preferred route and will generally cover computer training, training on specific work procedures or Council specific practices and legislation.
- **Partnership** - The Council has links with other partners where training can be sourced, such as through the Wiltshire Association of Local Councils and the training department at Wiltshire Council.
- **Day Workshops/Seminars** - When Council employees receive information on workshops and seminars this is shared with colleagues and councillors, where relevant.
- **Conferences** - Details of conferences are shared with employees and councillors, again where relevant.
- **Professional Qualifications** - Training towards a professional qualification will often be sourced through the professional body and completed at a local University or College.
- **External Training Providers** - There are numerous training providers available. When sourcing training from an external provider, the Council will always seek to obtain the best value and where possible, from a nearby location.

Upon the identification of a training need, the employee or councillor and their line manager or Town Clerk will consider the most effective way in which the training can be sourced and whether or not others may benefit from the training.

4. **Financial implications**

Each year as part of the annual budget setting process, the Council will include a training budget for employees and councillors. When calculating this, any training needs identified as part of the annual appraisal process and councillors training needs analysis will be taken into consideration, along with any refreshment training i.e. renewal of First Aid, Manual Handling etc.

All sponsored training must be appropriate to the needs of the Council and is subject to the availability of financial resources. For approved courses, the Council will cover the course fee, examination fees, associated membership fees and one payment to re-take a failed examination.

Recouping costs

It is standard practice of Melksham Town Council that where the Council is covering the costs of an employee's training course or qualification (this being a course or qualification, rather than one-day course or workshop) a written agreement will be made that if the employee leaves the Council's employment within a set period of time during or having completed the course, the employee will be expected to reimburse the Council as per the agreement.

This does not apply to employees in apprenticeship positions.

Travel expenses

Where employees or councillors attend training further away than their commute to and from their normal place of work or council offices, they may submit an expense claim to cover the additional travel costs to and from the training venue. Where practical and possible, if there is more than one attendee from the Council, shared travel arrangements should be made.

5. Time off work

The Council will grant paid time off work for one-off training courses, providing these are approved with the line manager. Where a training course or workshop falls on an employee's non-working day, time off in lieu (TOIL) may be accrued for hours in attendance at the training.

An employee undertaking a longer training course or qualification not directly beneficial to the council, will be required to use TOIL to cover these absences. Where an employee requires time off work for an exam or study leave prior to an exam, the Council will be flexible to ensure this time off can be granted using either TOIL or annual leave, providing adequate notice is given by the employee.

6. Evaluation

It is important that any training undertaken is assessed for effectiveness, with the exception of internal/on the job training. On completion of a training session/course/workshop, the employee or councillor should complete an in-house Training Report Form and return this to the Town Clerk.

These Report Forms will be collated and reviewed annually and used as part of a training report to the Personnel Sub Committee. The completion of these forms will help assess whether the training is suitable for another individual and if it was considered best value for money. The forms will also help ensure any key points taken from the training are learned and/or acted on.

7. Recordkeeping

Each employee and councillor should give copies of any attendance or qualification certificates to their line manager or the Town Clerk to be held within their personnel records. These records will be kept in accordance with the Council's Document Retention policy, after which they will be disposed of as confidential waste.

Adopted by Full Council on 28 June 2021.

To be reviewed June 2023.