

Sleaford Town Council

CONSTITUTION Chapter 6 Training Statement of Intent



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TRAINING STATEMENT OF INTENT

1. INTRODUCTION

This document forms the Council's Training Statement of Intent. It sets out:

- a) The Council's commitment to training
- b) The identification of training needs
- c) Corporate training
- d) Financial assistance
- e) Study leave
- f) Short courses/workshops
- g) Evaluation of training
- h) Links with other policies
- i) Reporting on progress

2. COMMITMENT TO TRAINING

Sleaford Town Council is committed to the on-going 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 town.

According to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development [2007], 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."

Sleaford Town Council recognises that its most important resource is its Members and staff and is committed to encouraging both Members and staff to enhance their knowledge and qualifications through further training. Some training is necessary to ensure compliance with all legal and statutory requirements.

The Council expects senior and specialist staff to undertake a programme of continuing professional development [CPD] in line with the requirements of their requisite professional bodies and all staff to undertake training as deemed necessary to fulfil their duties on accordance with their contract of employment and job description.

Providing training yields a number of benefits:

- a) Improves the quality of the services and facilities that Sleaford Town Council provides;
- b) Enables the organisation to achieve its corporate aims and objectives;
- c) Improves the skill base of the employees, producing confident, highly qualified staff working as part of an effective and efficient team; and
- d) Demonstrates that the employee is valued.

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. The process of development is as follows:

- a) Training needs should be identified by considering the overall objectives of the organisation, as well as individual requirements.
- b) Planning and organising training to meet those specific needs.
- c) Designing and delivering the training.
- d) Evaluating the effectiveness of training.

3. THE IDENTIFICATION OF TRAINING NEEDS

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 both Members and staff may be recognised:

- Questionnaires
- During interview
- Following confirmation of appointment.
- Formal and informal discussion [e.g. as part of staff Annual appraisal process]

Other circumstances may present the need for training:

- Legislative requirements i.e. 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 for Council Member
- Devolved services/delivery of new services

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 authority's needs and/or service delivery.

4. CORPORATE TRAINING

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. RESOURCING TRAINING

An allocation will be made in the budget each year to fund training fees and travel expenses. The amount will be reviewed annually.

The Town Council subscribes to the National Association of Local Councils, Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils and The Society of Local Council Clerks in order to receive regular up-dates on matters relevant to the sector and have access to the courses and conferences which are provided. There will also be sufficient funds set aside for appropriate technical literature and other information.

6. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

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. 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

For approved courses Members 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

Members and staff attending assisted courses are expected to inform the Acting Town Clerk immediately of any absences.

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.

Sleaford Town Council operates a Return of Service agreement. Any employee undertaking post-entry qualifications funded by the Council must be aware that should they leave STC employment within two years of completion of the qualification they may be required to repay all costs [de minimis value of £500] associated with the undertaking of such training. Each case to be reviewed by the Acting Town Clerk, or in the case of the Acting Town Clerk's training by the Chair of the Council.

7. STUDY LEAVE

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

- Studytime 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 and in any case not compromise the operational efficiency of the Council.

8. SHORT COURSES/WORKSHOPS/RESIDENTIAL WEEKENDS [INCLUDING CONFERENCES]

Where employee attendance is required at a short course on a Saturday or Sunday, up to a normal working day of straight TOIL per day may be taken.

Members and staff 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

9. EVALUATION OF TRAINING

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

As part of Sleaford Town Council's continuing commitment to training and development, Members and employees are encouraged to share information received and circulate training presentation papers for in-house training use. They 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 on-going efficiency and effectiveness of the authority.

10. LINKING WITH OTHER COUNCIL POLICIES

How will this link to the Council's other Policies:

- Equality of opportunity in all aspects of Member and officer development;
- A 'Statement of Intent' on training for both Members and staff is a requirement for the Accreditation of Quality Council Status;
- 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 – on-going training and development is key to ensuring a positive approach to Health and Safety is embedded throughout the authority;
- Undertaking training is a clear indication of Continuing Professional Development reporting on Progress

The Acting Town Clerk will report annually to the Council, detailing attendance at training over the year, as well as the inclusion of the Member and staff evaluation of courses attended.

11. CONCLUSION

The adoption of a training policy will achieve many benefits for the Council.

Training will:

- Widen skills and experience
- Provide opportunities to network
- Provide the skills to confront challenges
- Encourage innovation
- Raise the standards of Sleaford Town Council and the services that it provides to the community.