

Training and Development Policy for Councillors and Staff

Adopted by Council: 23rd September 2019

Introduction

Newmarket Town Council recognises that its most important resource is its Members and officers and is committed to keeping them appraised of current issues and to developing them to their potential. Some training is necessary to ensure compliance with all legal and statutory requirements.

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” (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development)

The objectives of this Policy are to:

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

Commitment to Training

Newmarket Town Council is committed to the training and development of all councillors and staff to enable them to make the most effective contribution to the Council’s aims and objectives in providing the highest quality representation and services to the Town.

There are a number of benefits to training:

- Improves the quality of the services and facilities provided by the Council.
- Enables the organisation to achieve its corporate aims & objectives.
- Demonstrates commitment to employees and acts as a motivator, attractor and retention aid.
- Improves the skill base of both councillors and employees and aids team working.

Councillors

Members bring a vast range of skills and experience to the Council. However, both local government and the world around it are fast changing and it is a good investment to develop councillors to their full potential. In addition, the Council is likely to have a number of new functions over the next few years and it will be important for councillors fully appreciate the implications.

The Council has established a comprehensive Development Programme for members, based on the following approach:

- Skills development for individual members or groups of members.
- Seminars, Briefings & Workshops to raise general awareness of topical issues.
- Briefings and awareness raising prior to making a key decision or policy

A rolling programme will be established immediately following the adoption of this Policy and following normal elections and updated annually.

Certain training is identified as essential for all councillors including Induction for new Councillors; General Power of Competence; Code of Conduct and Ethical Framework and Equality responsibilities. Some councillors may have undertaken relevant training at district or county council level or in some cases as part of their employment.

Training needs are prioritised by the Human Resources Committee following advice from the Town Council Manager and completion of a questionnaire by councillors.

Employees

An annual training and development plan is also established by the Town Council Manager and approved by Human Resources Committee for employees and volunteers. It is however flexible to accommodate new staff or newly identified needs.

Training needs are determined by the appraisal process and are set as targets for individual Staff members by the Town Council Manager on a yearly basis. Training needs are also identified during the appointment process and by informal discussion. Although sometimes training does need to be prioritised, the Council do try to accommodate requests from staff which are reasonable and appropriate.

Certain staff are required to hold valid First Aider qualifications or be trained as fire wardens

Training is prioritised on the following grounds:

- Legislative requirements e.g. health and safety
- Changes in legislation
- Changes in systems, new working methods or equipment
- New or revised qualifications available
- Unexpected need e.g. following a service failure or accident
- Identified competence issue

Corporate training is necessary for subjects including corporate objectives or working practices, equality, health and safety.

Funding

Sufficient funds are allocated in the budget for Staff and Members for training purposes with a forecast of anticipated expenditure presented to Members for consideration each year as part of the Budget setting process. Separate budget headings are allocated for Members and Staff.

Where staff attend qualification courses they can expect support with course fees, examination fees, and associated membership fees. Failure to complete a course or sit an examination may result in Council funding being withdrawn. Each case will be considered on its merits. In appropriate cases study leave may be granted.

Delivery

Members are offered a variety of training through local training companies and by inviting “guest speakers” to Council meetings. This is supplemented by internal briefings and external providers as necessary.

Corporate training is provided by nominated external providers. Most staff training needs are catered for by NALC, LCPAS, LCS Ltd or local colleges, again supplemented by specialist providers. Staff attending courses are encouraged to pass on what they have learned to colleagues where appropriate.

Some joint training with members is not only cost effective but often gives added value through a cross fertilisation of ideas.

Outcome

All courses and seminars are evaluated by requesting staff and councillors for feedback.

Policy Review

The Policy will be reviewed 2 years after adoption to ensure it remains current and relevant.

The Training and Development Plan for Members and staff, will be reviewed and updated annually.