

STAFF TRAINING POLICY

1. Introduction

1.1 This document sets out:

- a) The Council's commitment to training
- b) The identification of training needs
- c) Financial assistance
- d) Study leave
- e) Short courses/workshops
- f) Evaluation of training

1.2 The objectives of this strategy are to:

- a) Require staff to undertake appropriate training
- b) Allocate training in a fair manner
- c) Ensure that all training is evaluated to assess its value

2. Commitment to Training

2.1 The Council is committed to the ongoing training and development of all employees to enable them to make the most effective contribution to the Council's objectives in providing the highest quality representation and services for the people of the town. Training can be defined as 'a planned process to develop the abilities of the individual, contribute to their continuing professional development and to satisfy current and future needs of the organisation'. The Council recognises that its most important resource (apart from its elected members) are its officers and staff and is committed to encouraging individuals to enhance their knowledge and qualifications through further training. Some training is necessary to ensure compliance with legal and statutory requirements.

2.2 The Council expects senior officers to undertake a programme of continuing professional development (CPD) in line with the requirements of their professional bodies (such as the Institute of Local Council Management).

2.3 Providing training yields a number of benefits:

- a) It improves the quality of the services and facilities that the Council provides
- b) It improves the skill base of the employees, producing confident, highly qualified and motivated staff working as part of an effective and efficient team;
and
- c) It demonstrates that employees are valued.

2.4 The process of development is as follows:

- a) Training needs should be identified by considering overall objectives of the Council as well as individual requirements.
- b) Planning and organising training to meet those specific needs
- c) Designing and delivering the training (where appropriate)
- d) 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 performance management review. Staff training needs may also be identified through discussion with their Line Manager.
- 3.2 Other circumstances may present the need for training:
- a) Legislative requirements i.e. Health and Safety, first aid etc
 - b) Changes to operational systems
 - c) New qualifications become available
 - d) Accidents
 - e) Professional error
 - f) New equipment
 - g) New working methods and practices, complaints to the Council
 - h) Delivery of new services
- 3.3 Employees who wish to be considered for a training course should discuss this in the first instance with their Line Manager. The Line Manager will consider, together with colleagues and budget available & with Council if required, to determine whether the training is relevant to the authority's needs and/or service delivery, the training costs represent value for money, and if there is sufficient funding available.

4. Financial Considerations

- 4.1 Each request will be considered on an individual basis on the benefits to the individual and the Council & within the available budget.
- 4.2 Other considerations include:
- a) The implications of employee release for training course attendance on the operational capacity of the Council
 - b) The most economic and effective means of training (value for money)
 - c) The provision and availability of the training budget and other demands on it.
- 4.3 For approved courses, employees can expect the Council to fund the following:
- a) The course and registration fee
 - b) The examination fees (if any)
 - c) Associated membership fees (if any)
 - d) One payment to re-take a failed examination or assignment
 - e) Travel costs
 - f) Accommodation costs (only if necessary and only by prior agreement).
- 4.4 Staff attending training courses must inform their Line Manager immediately of any absence, giving reasons.
- 4.5 Failure to sit an examination (where there is one) may result in the Council withdrawing future course funding and/or requesting the employee reimburse the Council. Each case will be considered on an individual basis.
- 4.6 The Council operates a Return of Service agreement. Any employee receiving training at the Council's expense, which costs £100 or more (or several courses which together

cost more than £100) must be aware that should they leave the employment of the Council within one year of completion of the qualification, they may be required to repay all costs associated with the undertaking of such training.

- 4.7 In the case of further education, such as the Certificate in Higher Education or Degree course, employees may be required to repay all costs associated with the study if they leave within two years following the completion of the course.
- 4.8 Decisions will be made on a case by case basis by the Executive Committee.

5. Study Leave

- 5.1 Employees who are given approval to undertake external qualifications are granted the following:
- a) Study time to attend day-release courses
 - b) Time to sit examinations
 - c) Study time to be discussed and agreed with the Town Clerk and Executive Chair in advance.

6. Short Courses/Conferences and Continuing Professional Development

- 6.1 Duration of travel and attendance on a full day or half day (short) course to attend training, will be on full pay or TOIL.
- 6.2 Staff attending workshops, residential or day conferences can expect the following to be paid by Council:
- a) The course or conference fee (with accommodation and meals if this forms part of the cost package)
 - b) Travelling expenses in accordance with Council policy
 - c) Subsistence in accordance with Council policy
 - d) Council may also pay an additional nights' accommodation where this will improve the ability of the attendee to gain most of the event where significant travel is required

7. Evaluation of Training

- 7.1 Records of all training undertaken by employees will be kept in the personnel files of each member of staff.
- 7.2 As part of the 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 authority.