

WIVELISCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Introduction

This purpose of this policy is to set out the Council's position on the provision of training and development opportunities for staff and councillors. It sets out:

- The Identification of training need
- Corporate training
- The Council's commitment to training
- Financial assistance
- Study leave
- Courses and workshops
- Evaluation of training
- Links with other council policies

Objectives

- To encourage members and staff to undertake appropriate training
- Allocate training in a fair manner
- Ensure that all training is evaluated to assess its value

The identification of training needs

Training and development needs will be identified from a variety of sources:

- Induction and probationary periods
- One-to-ones
- Appraisal
- Workforce planning
- Team meetings
- Annual plan
- Change processes

In addition, the council will encourage staff and members to identify their own learning styles and will seek to provide a wide variety of learning and training methods, including:

- Attendance at conferences, seminars and short courses
- Online training
- Internal coaching
- Shared in-house learning resources (books, journals, DVDs etc.)
- In house training
- Work shadowing
- Time for self-directed research and learning

Employees who wish to be nominated for a training course should discuss this with the staffing committee during their appraisal; where it will be determined whether the training is relevant to the authority's needs and/or service delivery. A number of factors will be taken into account when assessing a request from an individual. This policy provides one element of the decision-making process. Other factors will include availability of finance and the individual's employment record.

Members should contact the Clerk if they wish to attend any training.

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.

Commitment to Training

Wiveliscombe Town Council is committed to the ongoing 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 parish.

Wiveliscombe Town Council recognises that its most important resource are its members and officers and is committed to encouraging both members and officers to enhance their knowledge and qualifications through further training. Some training is necessary to ensure compliance and all legal statutory requirements. The Council expects its senior officer to undertake a programme of continuing professional development (CPD) in line with requirements of their professional bodies.

Providing training yields a number of benefits

- Improves the quality of the services and facilities provided by Wiveliscombe Town Council
- Enables organisations to achieve its corporate aims and objectives
- Improves the skill base of the employees, producing confident, highly qualified staff working as part of an effective and efficient team
- Demonstrates that employees are 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 partnerships or in house provision available.

The process of development is as follows

1. Training needs should be identified by considering the overall objectives of the organisation, as well as individual requirements.
2. Planning and organising training to meet those specific needs
3. Designing and delivering training
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of training

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 available resources.

In order to best ensure cost effectiveness, members and employees will be required to attend the nearest venue offering the required course, unless an alternative is authorised by Full Council in the best interest of operational effectiveness or best value.

Other considerations include

- 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:

- The course fee
- Examination fees
- Associated membership fees
- One payment to re-take a failed examination

Members and officers attending assisted courses are required to inform the Town Clerk immediately of any absences, giving reasons.

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.

Wiveliscombe 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 WTC employment within a year of completion of the qualification they will be required to repay all costs associated with undertaking such training.

Study leave

Where individual requires study leave to undertake mandatory training, they will be able to take all the leave within normal working hours.

Where individuals require study leave to undertake training which is not mandatory but part of the individual's desire for career development, the council will contribute up to 3 days study leave per annum for courses which are directly related to the individual's role.

No study leave will be granted where individuals undertake study which is not required for their role, or not directly related to their role. However, the Clerk will consider requests for flexible working to allow the study to take place, as long as the needs of the council can be met.

Short Courses and Workshops

Where attendance is required at a short course or workshop, a full day of paid leave will be granted.

Evaluation of Training

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

As part of Wiveliscombe Town Council's continuing commitment to training and development, employees and members 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 Council.

Links with other Council Policies

- Equality of opportunity in all aspects of member and officer development
- 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 – Ongoing training and development is key to ensuring a positive approach to health and safety is embedded throughout the Council
- Undertaking training is a clear indication of continuing professional development
- Undertaking training highlights any new legislation, guidance or best practice

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Date of policy: February 2026