

# Hales & Heckingham Parish Council

## TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY<sup>1</sup>

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### 1. Purpose and Scope

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<sup>1</sup> Based on NALC's Model Template for Training & Development.

The purpose of this policy is to set out HHPC's position on the provision of training and development opportunities for staff. It applies to all staff whether part time, temporary or fixed term, and also to applies to volunteers and councillors.<sup>2</sup>

In relation to Councillors, HHPC actively encourages a new councillor to attend 'Being an Effective Councillor' training provided by Norfolk ALC, and this was made mandatory at the 8/9/2021 meeting. Training is now online so is more accessible for working councillors and/or councillors who might otherwise need childcare provision.

It is also important that the Council's HR Committee consider the three-year overall strategy for the Council and the Neighbourhood Plan<sup>3</sup> as it develops. Both might indicate future skills and knowledge or qualifications that will be required and for which training provision and a training budget will need to be agreed and incorporated into future budget plans.

## **2. Identifying, Meeting and Evaluating Training and Development Needs**

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

- Induction and probationary periods
- One-to-ones
- Annual appraisals and reviews
- The annual plan
- Change processes.

In addition, HHPC will encourage staff, councillors and where appropriate, volunteers, 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 and journals etc.)
- In house training
- Work shadowing and/or via a mentor
- Time for self-directed research and learning.

## **3. Consideration of Request for Training**

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, the individual's employment record and the Council's need for increased expertise in the area identified for training.

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<sup>2</sup> 'Volunteers & councillors' are included as it is critical that all involved in the Parish Council are supported in their training needs. Volunteers and councillors are giving up their free time to support the needs of the community so ensuring they have the right training, especially in relation to Health & Safety, is important.

<sup>3</sup> The NP is still at the very early stages but as progressed, may shed light on further training needs.

In order to ensure that HHPC is able to consistently evaluate requests, training and development opportunities have been organised into three categories according to the degree of importance each intervention has for different roles.

#### 4. Categorising Training and Personal Development

The three categories are:

##### a. **Mandatory Training**

This is legally required for the post-holder, or a qualification deemed to be so fundamental to the role, that the Council makes it a mandatory requirement. Any mandatory training or qualifications are to be stated on the job description. For mandatory qualifications, it is unlikely that an applicant would be recruited without having previously attained the qualification. Where a qualification becomes mandatory for the role, the Council will provide reasonable assistance for the employee to attain the qualification. See section: Guidance for Support.

Some mandatory training may be specific to a particular job role whilst other training may be a generic requirement. Examples of mandatory training include:

Generic

- Health & Safety<sup>4</sup> (Personal Safety, Manual handling, Display Screen Equipment)
- Data Protection; training in GDPR.<sup>5</sup>

##### b. **Desirable**

Desirable training is not legally required for the post, but it is directly relevant to the individual's job. Any desirable training or qualifications will be stated on the job description.

For desirable qualifications or training, an individual may be recruited without having previously attained the qualification or undergone the training but may be expected to attain the qualification within a defined period of time. The need for training may also be identified through one-to-one meetings or annual appraisals. A desirable qualification is likely to enhance the skills and reputation of the Council. Examples may include:

Job specific

- Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA)<sup>6</sup>
- Microsoft Excel

##### c. **Optional**

An optional qualification or optional training may not be directly linked to the individual's current job. Optional training or development is generally more beneficial to the individual's career than it is for the Council.

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<sup>4</sup> The Insurance company will require this in certain circumstances. E.g. if a Councillor is conducting the weekly or monthly playground checks.

<sup>5</sup> Provided by Norfolk ALC; advisable for the Clerk to have.

<sup>6</sup> The Person Specification for the Clerk states as 'Desirable' that the individual is "*willing to work towards this qualification*". Given the Council wish to develop a Neighbourhood Plan, it is important for the Clerk to have this qualification as it allows the Council to adopt the General Power of Competence introduced by the Localism Act 2011.

Personal development aimed at developing the skills or knowledge of an individual in order to provide a successor for an existing job is deemed to be optional. However, depending on the circumstances, training for succession may be 'desirable'. Examples may include:

Job specific

- Community Governance
- Charities and Parish Councils

## 5. Guidance for Support

Support for qualifications, training and personal development could include a full or part contribution to the cost of the tuition<sup>7</sup>, examinations and resource materials. Additionally, reasonable time off for study leave and taking an examination will also be considered. Any financial and non-financial support for training and development is entirely at the discretion of the Council.

The Council reserves the right to reclaim financial support where the employee:

- Leaves the Council during the duration of the course, or up-to one year following completion of the course.
- Fails to complete the training without a valid reason such as incapacity due to ill-health or injury.
- Fails to attend training without good reason.

## 6. Study Leave

Where an individual requires study leave to undertake mandatory training, they will be able to take all the leave within normal working hours.<sup>8</sup> Where individuals require study leave to undertake study which is not mandatory but part of the individual's formal continuous professional development, the Council will contribute up to 50% of study leave time, to a maximum of 3 days per annum.<sup>9</sup>

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 1 day study leave per annum for courses which are directly related to the individual's role.

Time off for study leave must be approved in advance. To make a request the individual is asked to write to the HHPC HR Committee, setting out the details of the course of study, how it relates to their work, and the time being requested.

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 HHPC HR Committee will consider requests for flexible working to allow the study to take place, as long as the needs of the Council can be met.

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<sup>7</sup> This would be considered in the light of whether it was mandatory/essential, desirable or optional training.

<sup>8</sup> The Clerk does not currently have 'set' hours so this could include day or evening training courses.

<sup>9</sup> Study for CiLCA averages 200 hours of which 140 is 'on the job', 20 is training related and 40 is personal study. If CiLCA is being considered, it is advisable to clarify the support available from the Council in advance.

## 7. Review of Learning Outcomes

To assist the Council to assess the value of the training, any member of staff, a councillor or volunteer attending training is requested to provide a short summary covering their views on:

- Quality of the training provided.
- Their perceived value of attending the training course, and
- How they think it will impact their ability to perform their role or community activity.

This will help inform the Council on whether the training was appropriate and/or should be offered to others in future.

This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed periodically.

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Date for next review:	20 <sup>th</sup> October 2023

— Policy ends here —

## 8. Background Notes

### a. Green Book terms<sup>10</sup>

If the Council adopts Green Book terms and conditions of employment, staff attending or undertaking required training are entitled to payment of normal earnings; all prescribed fees and other relevant expenses arising. Employees are also entitled to paid leave for the purpose of sitting for required examinations. When attending training courses outside contracted daily hours, part-time employees should be paid on the same basis as fulltime employees.

### b. “Being a good employer – a guide for parish and town councillors”

The “Being a good employer guide” provides comprehensive advice and guidance around training and development, including what a policy might contain, identifying training needs, as well as information and guidance on how to conduct appraisals. Electronic copies of the guide are available from: NALC [www.nalc.gov.uk](http://www.nalc.gov.uk) and SLCC [www.slcc.co.uk](http://www.slcc.co.uk).

### c. Sources of Funding for Training

There are sources of funding to help smaller councils cover training costs. The SLCC and NALC should be approached to enquire about possible sources of funding as necessary.

## 9. Important Notice

The original template this training & development policy is based on was designed for a small council adhering to statutory minimum requirements and does not constitute legal advice. It should be consistent with HHPC terms and conditions of employment. If they change, this document needs to be reviewed at the same time.

### Acknowledgement

The original this document is based on was commissioned by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) in 2019 for the purpose of its member councils and county associations. Every effort was made to ensure that the contents of this document were correct at time of publication. NALC cannot accept responsibility for errors, omissions and changes to information subsequent to publication.

The original model document was written by the HR Services Partnership, that provides HR advice and guidance to town and parish councils. To contact them ring: 01403 240 205.

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<sup>10</sup> The 2004 National Agreement between NALC and the SLCC (*the National Agreement*) agreed a model employment contract and national pay scales for clerks (and others). The main provisions of the model employment contract are drawn from the *National Joint Council for Local Government Services National Agreement on Pay and Conditions* i.e. the Green Book.