



SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

AIMS OF THE POLICY

Shrewsbury Town Council is committed to ensuring its staff and councillors are trained to the highest standard and kept up to date with all new legislation, as well as being able to deliver the Council's corporate aims and objectives each year by having the appropriate skills required.

To support this commitment, funds are allocated by the Town Council to a training budget each year to enable staff and councillors to attend training and conferences relevant to their office and prioritised to meet the needs of the Town Council in terms of service delivery, service and organisational planning and development.

COMMITMENT TO TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Shrewsbury Town Council is committed to continuous training and development to enable both **councillors and employees** to effectively contribute to achieving the Town Council's aims and objectives by providing the highest quality representation and services. The Town Council recognises that its councillors and employees are its most important resource.

The Town Council is committed to encouraging both councillors and employees to enhance their skills, knowledge and qualifications through training and development activities. Some training is also necessary to ensure compliance with all legal and statutory requirements.

The Town Council expects senior officers to undertake a programme of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in line with the requirements of their requisite professional bodies.

Training and development:

- improves the quality of the services and facilities provided by The Town Council
- enables the organisation to achieve its corporate aims and objectives
- improves the skill base of employees to produce confident, highly qualified staff working as an effective and efficient team
- demonstrates that employees are valued.

Training and development will be achieved by including a realistic financial allocation for learning activities in the annual budget as well as by taking advantage of any relevant partnership or in-house provision available.

The learning and development process will:

- identify training needs by considering The Town Council's objectives as well as individual requirements
- plan and organise training and development activities to meet those specific needs
- ensure the appropriate activity is delivered
- evaluate the effectiveness of the training and development activity

IDENTIFICATION OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

Employees

Employees will be asked to identify their development needs with advice from their line manager during their annual appraisal. Councillors' and employees' training needs may also be identified through:

- questionnaires
- during interview
- following confirmation of election/appointment
- formal and informal discussions

Training and development needs may also be identified due to:

- legislative requirements
- changes in legislation
- changes in systems
- new or revised qualifications become available
- new working methods and practices
- complaints to the Town Council
- a request from a member of staff
- devolved services / delivery of new services.

Internal training is also arranged for operational staff on a regular basis particularly in relation to health and safety. If you do not feel that you have received all necessary training please discuss this with your line manager in the first instance.

Employees who wish to attend a training course should discuss this with their line manager. All requests will be considered in relation to the Town Council's needs by the Town Clerk.

Councillors

If a councillor feels they have a training need they should discuss this in the first instance with the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk will be able to assess the request and ascertain whether this is something all councillors may be interested in/benefit from undertaking. The Council will undertake an annual training needs analysis with councillors soon after each Annual Meeting of the Council in May. This will encourage councillors to look at any personal development areas or knowledge gaps as a councillor that they wish to address and importantly, consider any training needs they feel they may have with regards to Committees they are councillors of following the Annual Meeting. On completing the training needs analyses, the results will be collated and reviewed by the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk will then take steps, to arrange any training required.

A large number of training opportunities for councillors are provided by Shropshire Association of Local Councils on a regular basis. These will be advertised to you as they become available. Below is a list of some of the training opportunities they provide:

- Fundamentals for Councillors
- Code of conduct
- Chairmanship
- Conduct at meetings
- Introduction to Planning from a Local Council Perspective
- Be a Better councillor
- Applying for grant funding

METHODS OF TRAINING

There are a number of different ways in which training and development can be achieved.

- **Internally:** If training can be given utilising the in-house expertise and knowledge, this possibility will be explored. This often includes general computer training, training on specific work procedures or Council specific practices and legislation.
- **Partnership:** The Council has links with other partners where training can be sourced, such as through SALC or Shropshire Council.
- **Day Workshops/Seminars:** When Council Officers receive information on workshops and seminars this is shared with employees and councillors, where relevant.
- **Conferences:** Details of conferences are shared with employees and councillors, again where relevant.
- **External Training Providers:** There are numerous training providers available. When sourcing training from an external provider, the Council will always seek to obtain the best price and where possible, from a nearby location. Upon identifying a training need, the employee/councillor and their line manager/Town Clerk should consider the most effective way in which the training can be sourced and whether or not others may benefit from the training.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

It is important to note that all sponsored training must be appropriate to the needs of the Town Council, 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 Town Council will be identified.

Councillors and employees will be required to attend the nearest venue offering the required training unless an alternative is authorised in the interest of operational effectiveness or ensuring value for money.

Consideration will also be given to:

- the impact on operational capability
- the most economic and effective means of providing the learning
- provision and availability of the training budget.

Councillors and employees can expect the following to be sponsored for approved training development activities:

- course fee
- examination fees
- associated councillorship fees
- one payment to re-take a failed examination

Councillors and employees attending assisted courses are required to inform their line manager immediately of any absences, giving reasons. Failure to sit an examination may result in the Town Council withdrawing future course funding and/or requesting the refunding of financial assistance. Each case will be considered on an individual basis. The Town Council operates a Return of Service arrangement. Any employee undertaking post entry qualifications funded by the Town Council must be aware that, should they voluntarily leave The Town Council's employment they will be required to repay proportionate costs associated with undertaking such training as defined in the Training Agreement agreed and signed by the employee at the commencement of any such qualification. An exemption to this clause may be granted if an employee takes up employment with another local authority.

STUDY LEAVE

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

- study time to attend day release courses
- time to sit examinations
- study time of one day per examination (to be discussed and agreed by their line manager in advance)
- provision of study time must be agreed with the line manager prior to the course being undertaken.

SHORT COURSES/WORKSHOPS

Where an employee’s attendance is required out of normal working hours at a short course, he or she will be paid additional hours or given time off in lieu in accordance with the terms of their employment contract. Councillors and staff attending approved short courses / workshops / residential weekend can expect the following to be paid:

- course fee
- travelling expenses
- subsistence.

RECORDING AND EVALUATING TRAINING

As part of the Town Council’s continuing commitment to training and development, councillors and employees are asked to provide feedback on the value and effectiveness of the training and development they undertake. This information will be used to assess and improve the training process. Evaluation tools will be developed, which will allow each training and development activity to be evaluated against the following criteria:

- how the training and development will meet the needs of the individual, and the impact on the service users
- the degree of learning that will take place as a result of the training
- the impact of the training on individual performance
- how the training contributes to the achievements of the Town Council’s goals
- the number of Councillors/employees who will gain from the training
- whether the training should be provided externally or can be arranged in-house.

Records of all training undertaken by councillors and employees will be kept in Town Council files.

Approved by Personnel Committee	7 December 2024
Adopted by Council	
Review Date	