

Worth Parish Council

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Worth Parish Council reviewed and adopted this Training and Development Policy at their Annual Parish Meeting, May 2022.

This document forms the Council's Training and Development Policy and sets out:

- Commitment to training
- Identification of training needs
- Corporate training
- Financial assistance
- Study leave
- Short courses/workshops
- Evaluation of training
- Links with other policies
- Reporting on progress

The objectives of the policy are 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

Commitment to Training

Worth Parish 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.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2007), states that 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."

Learning and development describes the formal, ongoing efforts that are made within organisations to improve the performance and self-fulfilment of their employees and in our case members through a variety of educational methods and programs. In the modern local government, these efforts have taken on a broad range of applications from instruction in highly specific job skills to long-term professional development. In recent years, training and development has emerged as a formal business function, an integral element of strategy, and a recognised profession with distinct theories and methodologies. More and more companies of all sizes have embraced "continual learning" and other aspects of training and development as a means of promoting employee growth and acquiring a highly skilled work force.

Worth Parish Council recognises that its most important resource is 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 with all legal and statutory requirements.

Benefits of training:

- Improves the quality of the services and facilities that Worth Parish Council provides
- Enables the council to achieve its aims and objectives
- Improves the skills base of employees and members
- Demonstrates that the employees are valued

Training and development will be achieved by including a realistic financial allocation in the annual budget, as well as taking advantage of any relevant partnership provision available.

The process of training and development is as follows:

- Training needs should be identified by considering the overall objectives of the organisation, as well as individual requirements.
- Planning and organising training to meet those specific needs.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of training.

The Identification of Training Needs

Employees will be asked to identify their development needs. There are number of additional ways that the training needs of staff may be recognised:

- During formal interview/review
- Following confirmation of appointment.
- Formal and informal discussion

Members will be asked to identify their development needs:

- Following election/co-option
- Formal and informal discussion

Other circumstances may present the need for training:

- Legislative requirements i.e. First Aid, Fire Safety, Manual Handling.
- Changes in legislation
- Changes in systems
- New or revised qualifications become available
- Accidents
- Professional error
- Introduction of new equipment
- New working methods and practices
- Complaints to the council
- A request from a member of staff

- Devolved services / delivery of new services

Employees and members who wish to be nominated for a training course should discuss this with the chairman.

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.

Financial Assistance

All supported training must be appropriate to the needs of the council, be 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 organisation will be identified.

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 the council in the interest of operational effectiveness or 'best value'.

Other considerations include the following:

- 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 to be sponsored:

- 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 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.

Worth Parish Council operates a Return of Service agreement. Any employee undertaking post-entry qualifications funded by the Council must be aware that should they leave Worth Parish Council employment within two years of completion of the qualification they will be required to repay all costs associated with the undertaking of such training.

If the employee takes up employment with another local authority an exemption to this clause may be granted.

Study Leave

Employees who are given approval to undertake external qualifications are 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 the council in advance)
 - Provision of study time must be agreed with the council prior to the course being undertaken.

Short Courses/Workshops

Where attendance is required at a short course, paid leave will be granted to employees.

Members and staff attending approved short courses/workshops/residential weekends can expect the following to be paid:

- The course fee (usually invoiced following the event)
- Travelling expenses in accordance with the Council's current policy
- Subsistence in accordance with the Council's current policy

Evaluation of Training

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

As part of Worth Parish 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.

Links with other Policies

Relationship with other Council policies:

- Equality of opportunity in all aspects of member and officer development
- A 'Statement of Intent' on training for both Members and staff is a requirement for the Re-accreditation of any national recognised charter marks.
- 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 authority
- Undertaking training is a clear indication of Continuing Professional Development.

Reporting on Progress

The chairman / clerk as appropriate will report annually to the council detailing attendance at training over the year, as well as the inclusion of the member and staff evaluation of courses attended.

Conclusion

The adoption of a training and development policy should achieve many benefits for the council. It will assist in demonstrating that the council is committed to continuing professional development and enhancing the skills of both elected members and staff.

The adoption of a training and development policy has a practical implication for Worth Parish Council's budget and ensures that the council is aware of the implication of its commitments and allocates adequate and appropriate funding in a long term and sustainable platform that supports these aspirations and commitments.

Alternative Formats

Equality Act 2010: Worth Parish Council as a committed and compliant local authority to all aspects of equality legislation will make every effort to ensure that access to material including this policy is available in alternative format. Please contact the Parish Clerk for further information.

The council may also be able arrange to provide versions in other languages.

Freedom of Information

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this document will be posted on the council's website www.sholdenpc.kentparishes.gov.uk and copies of this document will be available for inspection on deposit in the council office.

Commitment to Officers and Members

Worth Parish Council has a fully integrated policy in the field of training and development based in this document and the commitment to funding in its regular budget. Worth Parish Council supports the concept of investing in life long learning and development for members and officers and will commit an appropriate percentage (%) of its budget on a regular sustainable basis. The council will work closely with the Kent Association of Local Councils and avail itself of the resources of the SLCC and other bodies as appropriate to ensure high quality Learning and Development programmes.

Worth Parish Council makes the following commitment to its members: that every new member of the council whether elected or co-opted will be trained to an adequate standard as set out by the council and reflecting prevailing accepted standards within in a year of taking office. In addition skills audits will be acted upon to ensure specialist members receive additional training along with the bulk of the council to take account of legislative changes and new initiatives.

Worth Parish Council makes the following commitment to its officers and employees of the Council that they will be trained to an adequate standard as set out in prevailing legislation, local authority standards and reflecting the aspirations of the council as soon as possible upon appointment and on an on-going and rolling programme reinforcing professional development.