

STILLINGFLEET PARISH COUNCIL

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Purpose and scope

Stillingfleet Parish Council is committed to the training and development of its Councillors and staff, in order to assist the Council in achieving its aims, objectives, priorities and vision, as well as ensuring the Council is kept up to date with all new legislation. To support this, funds are allocated to a training budget annually to enable Councillors and staff to attend relevant training and conferences.

The Council will procure or provide such training and development opportunities as it deems necessary and relevant for the delivery of its work. It is essential that Councillors and staff are given equal opportunity to develop their knowledge of local government and the law relating to parish councils and to learn new skills to promote partnership working and community engagement in order to become effective councillors and lead a modern and progressive Parish Council of the future. Councillor and staff development should be regarded as an integral part of the Council's business.

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

Identifying, Meeting and Evaluating Training and Development Needs

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

- One-to-ones
- Appraisals
- Parish Council meetings
- Parish Annual plan
- Change processes

In addition, the council will encourage councillors and the clerk to identify their own learning and development needs 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, circulation of briefings, newsletters and magazines, etc.)
- Time for self-directed research and learning

The Council will aim to review the training and development needs of its councillors and staff each year and develop a Training Plan for the year.

Consideration

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 Council shall be responsible for the costs associated with any training and development that it considers necessary. This may include the cost of training and development courses or examinations, and payment of mileage expenses and other expenses in accordance with the Council's expenses policy.

In order to ensure that the Council 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.

Categorising training and personal development

The three categories are as follows:

1. Mandatory

Mandatory training 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. Currently there are no mandatory training requirements for the role of Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer for Stillingfleet Parish Council.

2. Desirable

Desirable training is not legally required for the post, but it is directly relevant to the individual's role. Participation in desirable training and development activities is likely to enhance the skills and reputation of the council.

3. Optional

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

Training and development for each of the Councillors will be reviewed regularly but will contain, as a minimum requirement:

Councillors

- Attendance at induction sessions explaining the role of a councillor, such as YLCA's 'Off to a Flying Start' training course for new councillors – within six months of the date on which they are elected or co-opted.
- Provision of a Councillor Information Pack which includes copies of 'The Good Councillor's Guide', Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct and a list of the policies of the Council, together with any other information deemed relevant. This pack is to be provided within seven days of the date on which they are elected or co-opted.
- Councillor's with primary responsibility (lead) for specific areas of work will receive relevant training within six months of the date on which they take on the specific role. For instance, those responsible for planning will receive training basic planning training, including how to respond to planning applications.
- The Chair of the Council (and of any sub-committee) shall receive Chairmanship skills training as soon as possible but within six months of the date on which they are elected as Chair.

Clerk/Responsible Financial officer

- Induction sessions explaining the role of Clerk, such as attendance at a 'New Clerks' training course, or similar – within three months of the date on which they are employed.
- Provision of a Councillor Information pack which contains copies of 'The Good Councillor's Guide', Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct and a list of the policies of the Council, together with any other information deemed relevant – to be This is to be provided within seven days of the date on which they are employed.
- The council will encourage the Clerk to gain the Certificate of Local Council Administration (CiLCA) within twenty-four months of appointment.
- Any other training relevant to the proficient discharge of their duties such as I.T., Legal Powers, Finance and understanding the planning system, identified through regular training needs and assessments – within three months of the need being identified.
- Attendance at relevant training courses and/or local meetings of external bodies such as Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), NALC, YLCA, County and District Councils. The Council will meet the costs of all pre-approved training undertaken or meetings attended, including mileage and parking costs involved. The Council will pay for pre-approved subscriptions to relevant publications and advice services, including the purchase of the approved handbook, Local Council Administration.

Measure the Impact of Training

Any Councillor or member of staff attending training should provide feedback to the Council on their return - highlighting any relevant material to Councillors with regards to the working of the Parish Council.

Linking with other Council Policies and Plans

- Supports the development and implementation of the Stillingfleet Parish Council Plan
- Equality of opportunity in all aspects of Councillor and Clerk development.
- A 'Statement of Intent' on training for both Councillors and staff is a requirement for the Local Council Award Scheme.
- Risk Management Policy – a commitment to Training and Development greatly assists in achieving good governance and an effective system of Risk Management.
- Health and Wellbeing – ongoing training and development is key to ensuring a positive approach to the health and wellbeing is embedded throughout the council.

Date of policy: February 2023

Approving council: STILLINGFLEET PARISH COUNCIL

Date of council meeting when policy is to be adopted: 6 April 2023

Policy effective from: May 2023

Date for next review: May 2024