

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

1. Introduction

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

- The Council's commitment to training
- The identification of training needs
- Corporate training
- Financial assistance
- Study leave
- Short courses/workshops
- Links with other policies
- Reporting on progress

1.2 The objectives of this strategy 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

2. Commitment to Training

2.1 The City of Durham Parish Council is committed to the ongoing training and development of all Members 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 City.

2.2 According to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2007), 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".

2.3 The City of Durham Parish Council recognises that its most important resources 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 with all legal and statutory requirements.

2.4 The Council expects its staff to undertake a programme of continuing professional development (CPD).

2.5 Providing training yields a number of benefits:

- Improves the quality of the service and facilities that the City of Durham Parish Council provides;
- Enables the organisation to achieve its corporate aims and objectives;
- Improves the skill base of the employees, producing confident, high qualified staff working as part of an effective and efficient team with Members; and,

- Demonstrates that the employees are valued.

2.6 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 partnership or in-house provision available.

2.7 The process of 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;
- Designing and delivering the training; and,
- Evaluating the effectiveness of training.

3. The identification of training needs

3.1 Employees of the Parish Council will be asked to identify their development needs with advice from their line manager (in the case of the Parish Clerk, this will be the Chair of the Parish Council) during their annual appraisal or regular meetings with their line manager. There are a number of additional ways that the training needs of both Members and employees may be recognised:

- Questionnaires
- During interview
- Following confirmation of appointment
- Formal and informal discussion

3.2 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

3.3 Employees who wish to be nominated for a training course should discuss this in the first instance during their appraisal; where it will be determined by the Clerk and the Chair of the Council whether the training is relevant to the Council's needs and/or service delivery.

4. Corporate Training

4.1 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.

5. Financial Assistance

5.1 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 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 college/venue offering the required course, unless an alternative is authorised by the Personnel Committee in the interest of operational effectiveness or best value.

5.2 Other considerations include the following:

- Implication of employee released 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

5.3 For approved courses Members and employees can expect the following to be sponsored:

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

5.4 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.

6. Study Leave

6.1 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 line manager in advance)
- Provision of study time must be agreed with the line manager prior to the course being undertaken

7. Short Courses/Workshops/Residential Weekends

7.1 Where attendance is required at a short course, paid study leave will be granted. The employee should speak with their line manager prior to booking the course to confirm.

8. Post Training

8.1 Records of all training undertaken by Members and employees will be kept in the personnel files and also collated on to a spreadsheet.

8.2 In certain circumstances an employee may be required to provide a briefing note or discuss the training at a team meeting.

9. Linking with Other Council Policies

9.1 How will this link to the Council's other 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 accreditation and re-accreditation of the Local Council Award Scheme;
- 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.

10. Reporting on Progress

10.1 The Parish Clerk will report annually to the Personnel Committee, detailing attendance at training over the year.

11. Conclusion

11.1 The adoption of a training 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 employees.

Date adopted: July 2025

Date to be reviewed: May 2026