



FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL

Training and Development Policy for Councillors and Staff

Adopted by: HR Committee September 2025

Planned Review Date: September 2027

Introduction

This Policy supersedes all previous training policies.

Flitwick Town Council recognises that its most important resources are its Members and officers, and it is committed to keeping them appraised of current issues and to developing them to their potential. Some training is necessary to ensure compliance with all legal and statutory requirements.

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” (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development)

The objectives of this Policy are to:

- Encourage Members and staff to undertake appropriate training and development.
- Allocate training in a fair manner.
- Ensure that all training is evaluated to assess its value.
- Ensure that the Town Council has the necessary skills to plan and deliver high quality services.

Commitment to Training

Flitwick Town Council is committed to the training and development of all Members and staff to enable them to make the most effective contribution to the Council’s aims and objectives in providing the highest quality representation and services to the Town.

There are a number of benefits to training, it:

- Improves the quality of the services and facilities provided by the Council.
- Enables the organisation to achieve its corporate aims & objectives.
- Demonstrates commitment to employees and acts as a motivator, attractor and retention aid.
- Enables Members to undertake their duties to the best of their ability.
- Improves the skill base of both Members and employees and aids team working.

Councillors

Members bring a vast range of skills and experience to the Council. However, both local government and the world around it, are fast changing and it is an essential investment to develop Members to their full potential. In addition, the Council have a number of functions and it is important for Members to fully appreciate the implications of the decisions they make.

Certain training is identified as essential for all Members including:

- Induction for new Members.
- General Power of Competence.
- Code of Conduct and Ethical Framework
- Equality responsibilities.

Some Members may have undertaken relevant training at principal council level or in some cases as part of their employment.

Other training opportunities will be offered to Members as and when they become available, such as finance, planning, etc.

Employees

Training needs are determined by the performance review process and are set as targets for individual staff members by the Town Clerk on a yearly basis. Training needs are also identified during the appointment process and by informal discussion. Although sometimes training does need to be prioritised, the Council will try to accommodate requests from staff which are reasonable and appropriate.

Certain staff are required to hold valid First Aider qualifications or be trained as fire wardens

Training is prioritised on the following grounds (not in priority order):

- Legislative requirements e.g., health and safety
- Changes in relevant legislation
- Changes in systems, new working methods or equipment
- New or revised qualifications available
- The delivery of devolved or new services
- Specialists need.
- Unexpected need e.g., following a service failure or accident
- Identified competence issue

Corporate training is necessary for subjects including corporate objectives or working practices, equality, health and safety.

Other considerations include:

- Implications of employee release for training courses upon the operational need and capacity of the Town Council
- Economic and effective means of training the employee
- Provision and availability of the training budget
- Continued professional development in line with requisite professional bodies.

All new staff will receive induction training.

Resourcing training

Sufficient funds are allocated in the budget for Staff and Members for training purposes with a forecast of anticipated expenditure presented to Members for consideration each year as part of the budget setting process.

Qualifications

Employees may apply to take qualification training. These will be considered on an individual basis and will be dependent upon the need or priorities of the Town Council

- National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)-The Town Council view these as accrediting existing knowledge and is greatly encouraged.
- Career Personal Development (CPD)-The Town Council supports the Career Personal Development of all its employees.
- Employees will be required to attend training courses, workshops or seminars where necessary relating to legal responsibilities and corporate standards.

Delivery

Members' training, learning and development opportunities will be arranged predominately by Bedfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils (BATPC). This will be supplemented as appropriate by in-house provision, the use of local training organisations and by inviting "guest speakers" to Council or committee meetings.

Most staff training needs are catered for by BATPC, Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), or local colleges, again supplemented by specialist providers.

Some joint training for both members and officers is not only cost effective but often gives added value through a cross fertilisation of ideas.

Staff and Members attending courses are encouraged to pass on what they have learned to colleagues where appropriate.

Financial assistance

The cost of training for Members will be paid for by the Council and reasonable associated costs such as travel and subsistence, reimbursed.

The Town Council will pay and/ or assist with expenses incurred to cover the cost of tuition and examination fees for employees provided that the training is approved by the Town Clerk

Costs for travel to tuition, courses or examination will generally be paid. This will include such expenses as:

- Course fees
- Examination fees
- Associated membership fees
- The purchase of resources to complete a course or examination

Where training is provided for a qualification or exceeds the general costs of training, then employees will be expected to sign an appropriate agreement to manage the risks associated with the Council's investment in the training. If an employee fails to sit an examination within a reasonable period of time, fails to satisfactorily progress or discontinues the course, the Town Council may withdraw its support and may request reimbursement of the financial assistance the employee has received to that date

Should any absence from attending any training or courses occur, it must be reported to the Town Clerk immediately. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action being taken.

Study leave

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

- Time to attend day release courses
- Time to sit examinations
- Study time (to be discussed and agreed with the Town Clerk in advance)
- Paid leave for courses, studying and examinations

Training evaluation

Records of all employee training will be kept on the Town Councils training matrix, and all Members training will be recorded.

All courses and seminars are evaluated by requesting staff and councillors for feedback.

Policy Review

The Policy will be reviewed 2 years after adoption to ensure it remains current and relevant.