

 Okehampton Town Council	Okehampton Town Council Training and Development Policy for Employees and Councillors
--	---

Aim

The Training and Development Policy for staff and councillors is in place in order to enable the council to operate and maintain a high level of performance.

Okehampton Town Council is committed to providing employees and councillors with the access to necessary training and development opportunities to ensure that the council can meet its aims and objectives. It is committed to assisting employees and councillors, to broaden, deepen and share their existing skill base leading to increased motivation and enhanced staff retention. It applies to all employees whether full or part time, temporary or fixed term, and all councillors.

The development of skills and abilities of employees and councillors will result in the delivery of high-quality services, the efficient management of those services, compliance with and utilisation of legislative powers. It ensures that employees and councillors, are supported and can meet the changing demands of the Council.

Okehampton Town Council values the time given by its councillors to their community and can maximise the benefits from that contribution by strengthening their community role.

Council Commitments

- To develop employees and councillors skills and knowledge to achieve the objectives of the Council
- To regularly review the training needs for employees, members and volunteers
- To regularly evaluate the investment in training to ensure the provision of adequate training budgets
- To ensure that employees who are required to undertake mandatory training will be allocated the necessary study time during normal working hours
- To consider training requests by employees for non-mandatory job-related courses that enhance and develop their skills
- To continue to subscribe to relevant bodies and provide necessary resources for both employees and councillors

Equal Opportunities

Okehampton Town Council is committed to ensuring equality of learning opportunities. No employee, councillor or volunteer will be excluded from learning on the grounds of any protected characteristics. Part time and fixed term employees will have equal access to learning and development appropriate to their post, and councillors and volunteers will be given access to relevant training.

Identifying, Meeting and Evaluating Training and Development Needs of Employees

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

- Induction and probationary periods
- One-to-one meetings
- Annual Appraisal and Development Reviews
- Workforce planning
- Team meetings
- Strategic/Annual Plans
- Change of processes and services provided

In addition, the council will encourage staff to identify their own learning 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, DVDs etc)
- In house training
- Work sharing
- Self-directed research and learning

Categorising Training and Personal Development of Employees

Training is identified in three categories:

Mandatory – This is the legal/council's identified requirement for the post-holder or a qualification deemed to be so fundamental to the role, that the council makes it a mandatory requirement.

An individual may be recruited without having previously attained the qualification or undergone the training but may be expected to attain the qualification within a defined period of time. Where a qualification becomes mandatory for the role the council will provide reasonable assistance for the employee to attain the qualification. Some mandatory training may be specific to a particular job role, whilst other training may be a generic requirement.

Mandatory Training at Okehampton Town Council includes:

- Health and safety - personal safety, manual handling, display screen equipment
- GDPR
- First Aid
- Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) for the Clerk

Desirable - This is not a requirement for the post-holder but is directly relevant to the individual's job. A desirable qualification is likely to enhance the skills and the reputation of the council.

Training that falls within this category will be considered by the Clerk on a case-by-case basis and, depending on the course and/or cost, may be referred to the council for a decision.

Optional - This training may not be directly linked to the individual's current job.

Optional training or development is generally more beneficial to the individual's career than it is for the council. Personal development is aimed at developing the skills or knowledge of an individual.

Training that falls within this category and which may be beneficial to the council will be considered by the Clerk and referred to the council for a decision.

Employees

- Induction training is provided for new members of staff
- Staff training can be identified in a number of different ways including annual appraisal and development reviews, staff meetings and informal discussions
- Relevant additional training may be requested or required at any time
- Employees are encouraged to be proactive in identifying their own training and development needs linked to achieving the aims of the council and in developing their knowledge in relation to their post

Councillors

- Induction folders are provided for all newly elected/co-opted councillors setting out the Council's policies and procedures and includes a copy of the Good Councillor Guide
- Induction sessions are provided by the Clerk as required
- A mentoring scheme is available with a number of Councillors identified who will act as mentors for any new councillors or existing ones who need or request additional support
- Opportunities for attendance at relevant courses will be brought to the attention of councillors by the Clerk.
- Newly elected members are encouraged to attend DALC's 'New Councillor Training' and to sign up to receive newsletters which detail training and courses as they become available
- Councillors are encouraged to attend other training relevant to the committees they are appointed to sit on, for example Planning, Finance and Being a Good Employer. The Mayor/Deputy Mayor, Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees, and any councillor who aspires to be appointed to one of these roles is encouraged to attend the DALC Chairmanship course.
- Councillors who wish to refresh their skills/knowledge can request to attend relevant courses at any time during their term of office
- Specialist training may be provided on an ad-hoc basis

Training Support for Employees

Support for non-mandatory qualifications, training and personal development can include financial assistance towards the cost of tuition, examinations, travel, resource materials, time off for study leave and taking any examinations.

Support for non-mandatory training and development is entirely at the discretion of the Council and a training agreement may be required which could include the refund of costs; for example if the employee fails to complete the course, or leaves within a specified period of time.

Training Requests by Employees and Councillors

A number of factors will be taken into account when assessing a request from an employee including the budget and the benefit to the council.

Councillors must request training through the Clerk who will book it on the members behalf. This is to ensure:

- Compliance with the council's Standing Order (24.a.ii)
- Consideration can be given to budget availability

- The Council's policy in relation to who can attend events is complied with, for example attendance at the DALC AGM and Conference is restricted by the council to the Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee and the Clerk
- Training other than standard training for Councillors offered by DALC may need council approval.

Councillors must not book courses that will incur a fee to the Council or a claim for expenses themselves.

Training Resources

An annual budget will be set for employee and councillor training. Employees or councillors attending face to face training may claim travel expenses. The council will ensure that membership fees for DALC, ICCM and SLCC are included annually in the budget.

Providers of training and advice for both employees and councillors include:

- Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC)
- National Association of Local Councils (NALC)
- Regional and national seminars/conferences
- Principal Authorities

Subscriptions to relevant bodies, publications and access to the advice services of NALC, DALC, SLCC and ICCM are maintained by the council. Relevant publications such as Arnold Baker on Local Council Administration for reference and to enable employees to properly undertake their roles are purchased and updated as required and are available for use by all employees and councillors.