



TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

**Adopted by full Council 15.06.21
Reviewed and adopted 19.12.23**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Odiham Parish Council values training and development for staff and councillors. The Council will ensure that staff and councillors are provided with the means to develop and enhance their skills and abilities to deliver high quality services, management skills to plan those services, kept informed of all new and changes to legislation and also to further develop the OPC's Strategic Plan.

1.2 The intention of this policy is to provide a framework for identifying training needs for staff and councillors.

1.3 Odiham Parish Council recognises its duty to provide equal access for all councillors and staff to training and development in accordance with equal opportunities legislation.

2. COMMITMENT

2.1 Odiham Parish Council is committed to developing its staff and councillors in order to assist the Council in achieving its aims and priorities.

2.2 The Council will ensure that everyone has the opportunity to access training to meet the particular demands of their job or role.

2.3 The Council will provide resources to enable staff and councillors to access relevant training, support and sources of information.

3. STAFF TRAINING

3.1 New members of staff will receive on-the-job training as an induction which will include compulsory H&S training required by law. They will also be encouraged to attend training provided locally by Hampshire Association of Local Councils (HALC) and by the Society for Local Council Clerks (SLCC). For staff who are new to the sector, this could include attending the two 'What You Need to Know' sessions. Additional training sessions relevant to the individual's particular role and experience include: minute-taking, finance, planning, cemetery management and health and safety.

3.2 As part of their on-going development, members of staff are required to be proactive in identifying training courses, workshops, briefings, etc which will support them in effective delivery of services. All staff can access the HALC calendar of training which is available online and can ask to enrol on a course relevant to their role or personal development at any time throughout the year. Decisions will be made subject to available training budget and other work commitments and, where necessary, decisions will be referred to the Staffing Committee for consideration.

3.3 Training is also available through 'webinars', on-line modules and discussion forums. This method of training is often a simple and cost effective way of attending a short course or update.

3.4 The Parish Clerk is CiLCA qualified and Odiham Parish Council would expect anyone recruited to this position to hold this qualification

3.5 In addition to formal courses, Officer updates, networking meetings, Councillor updates and sector specific AGMs are also useful.

3.6 Training needs will be considered throughout the year where training will allow staff to meet a gap in skills when the Council starts a new project or provide a new service. Training needs will routinely form part of the annual staff appraisal.

3.7 OPC will consider staff requests for financial support for training and decisions will be dependent on the training supporting the Council and the individual in fulfilling their role and personal development.

3.8 Where OPC funds training over the value of £500:

- i) The employee must re-pay 75% of the course fee if they leave OPC within 1 year of obtaining the qualification, or completing the paid for course, whichever is later.
- ii) The employee must re-pay 50% of the course fee if they leave OPC within 2 years year of obtaining the qualification, or completing the paid for course, whichever is later.

3.9 Staff will be allowed reasonable time off work to attend work related training courses. This does not apply to course assigned homework or time to prepare course portfolios.

COUNCILLOR TRAINING

4.1 New councillors receive an induction pack including printed material and links to OPC's policies and key documents

New councillors are also invited to meet with the Parish Clerk to receive an overview of the Council.

4.2 All new councillors are encouraged to attend HALC's 'The Knowledge' and 'Core Skills' course which give an introduction to the essentials a councillor should know. These two sessions may be delivered in-house by arrangement with HALC.

4.3 All Councillors are strongly advised to attend training on GDPR, covering their role as a Councillor.

4.4 Councillors who chair meetings, either of the full Council or of a committee of the Council, are advised of the relevant training and are recommended to attend HALC's 'Chairing Skills'.

4.5 All councillors who are members of the Planning Committee are encouraged to attend HALC's sessions to support their knowledge of planning matters. The sessions available currently are 'Basic Planning for Local Councils' and 'The Planning Framework'.

4.6 All councillors who are members of the Staffing Committee must attend HALC's 'The Council as an Employer' course at the earliest opportunity or evidence recent completion of other industry-appropriate employment training.

4.7 All councillors involved in financial matters (eg as bank signatories) should attend 'Local Finance for Councillors' run by HALC.

4.8 OPC's H&S Policy covering all OPC's activities provides guidance on H&S practices. OPC will consider all reasonable requests for further H&S related training.

4.7 Other training will be identified for councillors as needed. Councillors are required to actively participate in identifying their training and development needs.

5. RESOURCES

5.1 The Council provides an annual budget for training and development.

5.2 The training budget takes into account the following factors:

- the identified training and development needs of staff and councillors (eg for an election year it would be anticipated that an increase in the budget would be required to accommodate training for new councillors)
- training and development needs which are essential to improve and progress the agreed policies and strategies of the Council
- high priority training needs arising from legislation
- high priority training due to health & safety, financial or reputational risk
- the costs of training, development and learning.

5.3 In addition to the cost of training courses, Odiham Parish Council covers associated travel and parking costs for agreed attendance at training.

5.4 The Council pays the subscription to relevant publications and to advice services such as HALC, the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the SLCC (subject to annual agreement by the Staffing Committee).

5.5 The Council pays a subscription to “Onboarding”, a learning management system.

5.6 ‘Local Council Administration’ by Charles Arnold Baker and other relevant publications are provided for reference and remain the property of the Council. Magazines including SLCC’s ‘The Clerk’, NALC’s ‘LCR’ and ‘Clerks and Councils Direct’ are examples.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 The Parish Clerk maintains a record of training undertaken by councillors and staff.

6.2 Training undertaken will be evaluated to gauge its relevance, content and appropriateness.

6.3 Training will be reviewed in the light of changes to legislation, new qualifications, complaints received or incidents which highlight training needs.

7. DATE OF REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually.