



Staff and Councillor training policy:

This Staff and Councillor Training Policy outlines the training and development (or continuous professional development) that staff and councillors can expect to receive.

As the first tier of local government, parish and town councils are uniquely placed to make a major contribution to localism. If parish and town councils are to play a significant part in democracy, it is essential that councillors fully understand their role and responsibilities.

Engaging in learning, training and development is essential in gaining experience and enabling both staff and councillors to understand their role and contribute fully to the democratic process.

There is a wide range of training available to local councils. Sector-specific training is delivered through a number of different mechanisms and organisations at both national and local (county) level.

Staff

Training and Development

The council recognises that its employees are its principal asset. To ensure that the council can deliver the appropriate services to the community it is essential that all employees are fully trained to perform their roles to the highest level. The responsibility for growth and development is shared between employees and the council. The council will support employees to develop the skills and experience needed for their roles and work with employees develop their abilities; and will identify time and budget to enable this to happen.

Performance Management

Each line manager will undertake an annual appraisal with all employees to review the past year's performance, identify training or development needs, and plan for the coming year. The Clerk's appraisal will be undertaken by the Staffing Committee. Feedback from Elected

Members, fellow staff, service users and other council contacts may be sought in support of the appraisal process. Employees are encouraged to discuss in an open and honest manner any ideas or issues they have concerning their employment. Appraisal forms can be found in Appendix Y of the Staff Handbook. Further training and refresher courses will be arranged where there is an identified need.

Councillors

On expressing an interest in joining the council:

Any resident interested in joining the council will be invited to speak with the Clerk to learn more about the council's role, and will be directed to the council's website to view the council's activities.

Prospective councillors should first complete an application form confirming that he/she meets the statutory requirements to be a councillor, and also includes a personal profile for consideration by the council. They should then be available for interview with the Chairman and/or other councillors at a mutually convenient date and time. It is anticipated that prospective councillors will attend a number of council meetings to see the council in action before seeking office, suggested to be at least two.

On joining the council by election or co-option:

All new councillors will be given an information pack containing copies of the following documents:

- a. New councillor guide
- b. The Code of Conduct for parish councillors
- c. Shinfield Parish Council's dispensations procedure
- d. A copy of all the council's current policies
- e. Council's current Standing Orders and Financial Regulations
- f. A timetable of all the scheduled council meetings for the year
- g. Terms of Reference for the committees of the council.
- h. Information (facts and figures) about the parish
- i. Staff contact details

j. Councillor contact details

Training courses:

Many of the recommended training courses are run by the Berkshire Association of Local Councils (BALC).

The following training is required for new councillors:

- New Councillor training, such as provided by BALC

Training on specific committee areas:

- Finance and Budgeting for Town & Parish Councils
- VAT for Town and Parish Councils
- Being a good employer – HR training for councillors
- Planning for town and parish councils
- Planning workshops (run by Wokingham Borough Council)

Further development:

- Chairmanship Training
- Refresher courses for all councillors where appropriate.

Other sources of support:

- Working closely with another councillor acting as a mentor for the first six months of office;
- Reading through council agendas and minutes of meetings and asking members of staff for an explanation or clarification of the various terms used.
- Reading the various council sector publications that the council subscribes to, including the BALC s and the National Association (NALC) bulletins; LCR (Local Council Review) and the Clerk magazine, which can help to familiarise both new and more experienced councillors with issues affecting Local Government.