

COLEBROOKE PARISH COUNCIL

Training and Development Policy

Purpose and Scope

Parish Colebrooke Council is committed to ensuring that all staff and councillors have access to learning, development and training opportunities which enable them to be suitably knowledgeable and skilled to carry out their role within the organisation, and to develop their talents in any ways that fit with the organisation's strategic objectives. In addition to this the Parish Council may also offer training to regular volunteers.

- i. All training will be accessed via the Clerk

Aims

The main aims of this policy are to:

- Ensure that all staff and elected members are supported and enabled to meet the changing demands of the organisation and its service users so that the organisation achieves its strategic objectives.
- Facilitate all staff and elected members development and/or personal development through assisting them to broaden, deepen and thereby further enhance their existing skill base in line with strategic objectives of the council.
- Provide a working environment where continuous learning and development takes place that helps staff, elected members and regular volunteers to gain more enjoyment from their roles, increase motivation and enhance staff retention.

1. Responsibilities

1.1 Staff and Volunteers

Colebrooke Parish Council believe that employee / member development is most effective when the individual takes responsibility for identifying any opportunities for self-development which will enhance work performance through increased skills and knowledge. Employee learning needs and opportunities will also be identified through the support, supervision and appraisal process, and through internal assessments to meet business need. The Council expects all employees to also take a proactive approach to furthering organisational wide learning and development. Staff and volunteers will have the opportunity to identify learning needs on a regular basis during support and supervision sessions.

1.2 Council

The co-ordination of the learning and development process is the responsibility of the Clerk. The Council is responsible for agreeing the learning and development budget on an annual basis. The learning budget is controlled by the Clerk supported through the Council's Finance Committee.

1.3 Elected members

Elected Members have a responsibility to attend appropriate training in order for them to perform their legal duties.

2. Training Resources/Providers

An annual budget will be set for employee training and Members training. All employees or members attending training may claim travel expenses. The Council will ensure that membership fees for NALC, DALC and SLCC are included annually in the budget.

Training Providers for both employees and members:

- Society of Local Council Clerks
- Devon Association of Parish and Town Councils
- National Association of Local Councils
- Regional and national seminars/conferences
- Principal Authorities
- In-house

3. Routes to Learning & Development

Options for learning & development may include:

- On the job learning including learning from other members of staff via job shadowing, mentoring, in house skill sharing, staff away days etc.
- Secondments and placements/visits to other organisations
- Setting up job development opportunities such as public speaking, in house presentations
- Attending internal or external training days/ workshops
- Attending conferences, forums
- An external course of study
- Web based e learning
- Self-directed study – such as books, manuals, online information

Colebrooke Parish Council is committed to sharing the learning and lessons gained by staff and volunteers throughout the organisation. This will be accomplished in a number of ways:

- Giving time in meetings to share core lessons from training
- Networking with partner and same sector organisations and incorporating their literature, reports and research documents into office resource libraries.

4. Key Professional and Skills Based Learning

Colebrooke Parish Council aims to prioritise learning that focuses on areas which:

- Enable us to fulfil our strategic objectives
- Pertain to any organisational statutory/contractual obligations
- Are essential in order to generate and maintain income

- Enable effective responses and management of legislative changes
- Ensure IT skills meet business need
- Are essential to ensure the quality of service provision
- Enable employees and elected members to meet their responsibilities in completing continuous professional development required by relevant professional bodies.
- Enable management development in relation to those who have managerial/supervisory responsibilities.

5. Staff performance and development

5.1 Core Learning

There are specific areas of learning which are essential for all employees and cover a rolling programme of needs which have been identified as part of a continuous programme of learning and development. Core learning will therefore cover the following areas:

- a) Induction - All new employees are given a timely programme of induction including introduction to all policies for the organisation. This is an essential part of staff learning and development, and integration into the working environment.
- b) Council roles and responsibilities as set out in legislation and Council Policy
- c) Customer service– all staff are customer facing and as such should be given the opportunity to enhance their skills to interact with members of the public
- d) ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) it is important that all employees are given opportunities to enhance their ICT skills base. The organisation is committed to ensuring that all employees have competent grounding in the use of ICT in the wider context of their professional roles. Employees are positively encouraged to become familiar with the Council's website, internet, email other electronic facilities and computer software packages at their disposal. Initial information and training will be provided on commencement of the role or when any technology changes occur.
- e) It is the duty of the Council to ensure it meets its obligations under Health and Safety Legislation therefore some training requirements will be seen as mandatory and will be identified through the requirements of the role.

5.2 Recording, Monitoring & Evaluating Learning

The Clerk is responsible for ensuring that a central record of employee and elected member learning is created and maintained, and that all learning and development activities are monitored and evaluated in terms of suitability, effectiveness and value for money.

5.3 Performance Management

Performance management is an on-going communication process, which involves both the line manager and their employee in:

- Identifying and describing essential job functions and relating them to the strategic and operational objectives of the organisation
- Developing realistic and appropriate performance standards
- Giving and receiving feedback about performance
- Participating in constructive performance appraisals
- Planning learning and development opportunities to sustain, improve or build on employee work performance. Regular meetings/communications between staff and line manager facilitates this process.

5.4 Appraisals and one to one meetings

Colebrooke Parish Council has a culture of effective informal mentoring on an on-going basis; this is based around continuous support. The formal aspects to this however are: Annual Appraisals.

Appraisal process

Annual Appraisals are an essential component of Colebrooke Parish Council's performance management framework and are supported by regular support and supervision sessions between line managers and their employees throughout the course of the year. The appraisal scheme allows for every employee to be formally appraised with their line manager through a structured discussion on work performance over the previous year and which, must also incorporate the employee's learning and development needs for the following year. It is an opportunity to build on strengths and address areas, which require support, thereby enhancing the potential skill base of the individual employee.

The purpose of the Appraisal process is:

- to develop and support all employees to carry out their role effectively, meeting competencies set out by the council
- to ensure staff deliver the Council's priorities as set out in the Strategic Plan

A full Appraisal is carried out by line managers through discussion with each employee on an annual basis; a Personal Development Plan for the year is then created.

- The form in the annex will be used for all appraisals.
- The Clerks appraisal will be carried out first then other staffing levels.
- All performance and development appraisal procedures must ensure that the Council's vision, values and objectives are translated into personal, and, where relevant, team objectives and competencies.
- Appraisers must ensure that all appraisal processes are fair and equitable for all appraisees and that they are applied in line with the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy and Guidance.

- Formal disciplinary and grievance issues are not to be part of any performance and development appraisal procedure and will be dealt with separately

6. Member Training

- Training requirements for members will be identified by the Clerk or Council. Opportunities to attend courses will be investigated by the Clerk and brought to the attention of the Council
- New Councillors will be offered an induction
- New councillors will be offered a mentoring facility with an experienced councillor.
- A member's folder will be provided for all newly elected members setting out the Council's policies and procedures
- Newly elected members are encouraged to attend the DALC 'Roles and responsibilities Training'
- Councillors who wish to refresh their skills/knowledge can request to attend authorised courses at any time during their term of office
- Elected Members will be offered the opportunity of a one to one meeting with the Clerk and /or Chairman to ensure they are able to perform their legal duties.
- Specialist training will be provided as need is identified by Council