

RIVERHEAD PARISH COUNCIL

TRAINING/ LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This document forms the Council's Training and L & D Policy. It sets out:
- The Council's commitment to training
 - The identification of training needs
 - Corporate training
 - Financial assistance
 - Study leave
 - Short courses/workshops
 - Evaluation of training
 - Links with other policies
 - Reporting on progress
- 1.2 The objectives of this strategy are to:
- Encourage Councillors and employees to undertake appropriate training /L&D
 - Allocate training in a fair manner
 - Ensure that all training is evaluated to assess its value

2 Commitment to Training

- 2.1 Riverhead Parish Council is committed to the ongoing training and development of all Councillors and employees to enable them to make the most effective contribution to the Council's aims and objectives in providing the highest quality representation and services for the people of the village.
- 2.3 Riverhead Parish Council recognises that its most important resource is its Councillors and employees and is committed to encouraging both Councillors and employees to enhance their knowledge and qualifications through further training. Some training is necessary to ensure compliance with all legal and statutory requirements.
- 2.4 The Council expects Councillors and employees to undertake a programme of continuing professional development.
- 2.5 Providing training yields a number of benefits:
- Improves the quality of the services and facilities that Riverhead Parish Council provides;
 - Enables the organisation to achieve its corporate aims and objectives;
 - Improves the skills base of the Councillors and employees;
 - Produces confident, highly qualified Councillors and employees working as part of an effective and efficient team; and
 - Demonstrates that the Councillors and employees are valued.
- 2.6 Training and development will be achieved by including a realistic financial allocation for training and development in the annual budget, as well as taking advantage of any relevant partnership or in-house provision available.

- 2.7 The process of development is as follows:
1. Training needs should be identified by considering the overall objectives of the Parish Council, as well as individual requirements.
 2. Planning and organising training to meet those specific needs.
 3. Evaluating the effectiveness of training.

3 **The Identification of Training Needs**

3.1 Council Councillors and employees will be asked to identify their development needs with advice from the appropriate committee or chairman of committee, clerk, Councillors of the standing committee. There are number of additional ways that the training needs of Councillors may be recognised:

- Questionnaires
- During review
- Following election/co-option
- Following confirmation of an employee or councillor appointment
- Formal and informal discussion

3.3 Other circumstances may present the need for training:

- Legislative requirements i.e. First Aid, Fire Safety, Manual Handling.
- Changes in legislation
- Changes in systems
- New or revised qualifications become available
- Accidents
- Professional error
- Introduction of new equipment
- New working methods and practices
- Complaints to the Council
- A request from a Councillor or employee
- Devolved services / delivery of new services

3.4 Employees who wish to be nominated for a training course should discuss this in the first instance during their appraisal; where it will be determined whether training is relevant to the Council's needs and/or service delivery.

4 **Financial Assistance**

4.1 It is important to note that all supported training must be appropriate to the needs of the Council, be relevant to the individual's role and is subject to the availability of financial resources.

Each request will be considered on an individual basis and the benefits to the individual and the organisation will be identified.

In order to best ensure cost effectiveness, Councillors and employees will be required to attend the nearest college/venue offering the required course, unless an alternative is authorised by the Committee in the interest of operational effectiveness or Best Value.

4.2 Other considerations include the following:

- Implication of Councillor or employee release for training course(s) on the operational capability of the council
- The most economic and effective means of training

- Provision and availability of training budget
- One payment to re-take a failed examination.

4.3 For approved courses Councillors and employees can expect the following to be sponsored:

- The course fee
- Examination fees
- Associated membership fees
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4.4 Provision of study time for paid employees must be agreed with the Finance Committee prior to the course being undertaken.

4.5 Councillors and employees attending assisted courses are required to inform the Clerk immediately of any absences, giving reasons.

4.6 Failure to sit an examination may result in the Council withdrawing future course funding and/or requesting the refunding of financial assistance. Each case will be considered on an individual basis.

5 **Short Courses/Workshops/Residential Weekends**

5.1 Where attendance is required at a short course, paid leave shall be agreed in advance of committing to the course by the finance committee.

5.2 Councillors and employees attending approved short courses/workshops/residential weekends can expect the following to be paid:

- The course fee (usually invoiced following the event)
- Travelling expenses in accordance with the Council's current policy

6 **Evaluation of Training**

6.1 Records of all training undertaken by Councillors and employees will be kept by the Clerk and any personnel file as appropriate.

6.2 As part of Riverhead Parish Council's continuing commitment to training and development, attendees are asked to provide feedback on the value and effectiveness of the training they undertake highlighting in particular the key implications of new legislation, guidance and/or best practice for the ongoing efficiency and effectiveness of the authority.

7 **Linking with other Council Policies**

7.1 Training, learning and development supported by Riverhead Parish Council should have a clear relationship with other Council policies. For example:

- Equality of opportunity in all aspects of Councillor and employee development;
- Risk Management Policy – a commitment to Training and Development greatly assists in achieving good governance and an effective system of Risk Management;
- Health and Safety Policy – ongoing training and development is key to ensuring a positive approach to Health and Safety is embedded throughout the authority;
- Undertaking training is a clear indication of Continuing Professional Development.

8 **Conclusion**

- 8.1 The adoption of a training or learning and development policy should achieve many benefits for the Council. It will assist in demonstrating that the Council is committed to continuing professional development and enhancing the skills of both Elected Councillors and employees.
- 8.2 The adoption of a training or learning and development policy has a practical implication for Riverhead Parish Council's budget and ensures that the Council is aware of the implication of its commitments and allocates adequate and appropriate funding in a long term and sustainable platform that supports these aspirations and commitments.

9 **Alternative Formats**

- 9.1 *Equality Act 2010*: Riverhead Parish Council as a committed and compliant Local Authority to all aspects of Equality Legislation will make every effort to ensure that access to material including this policy is available in alternative format: please contact the Clerk for further information.

10 **Freedom of Information**

- 10.1 In accordance with the *Freedom of Information Act 2000*, this Document will be posted on the Council's Website www.riverheadpc.kentparishes.gov.uk and copies of this document will be available for inspection on deposit in the Council Office.

Appendix 1:

11 **Commitment to Employees and Councillors**

- 11.1 Riverhead Parish Council has a fully integrated policy in the field of training and Learning and Development based in this document and the commitment to funding in its regular budget. Your Council supports the concept of investing in life-long Learning and Development for Councillors and employees and will commit an appropriate percentage (%) of its budget on a regular sustainable basis..
- 11.2 Riverhead Parish Council makes the following commitment to its Councillors: that every new Councillor of the Council whether elected or co-opted will be trained to an adequate standard as set out by the Council and reflecting prevailing accepted standards within in a year of taking office. To this aim, it will be required from any new councillor to spend 4 hours of training with an existing Councillor during the first month of office. In addition skills audits will be acted upon to ensure specialist Councillors receive additional training along with the bulk of the Council to take account of legislative changes and new initiatives.
- 11.3 Riverhead Parish Council makes the following commitment to its Councillors, employees and employees of the Council that they will be trained to an adequate standard as set out in prevailing legislation, Local Authority standards and reflecting the aspirations of the Council as soon as possible upon appointment and on an on-going and rolling programme reinforcing professional development.