

LITTLE BEALINGS PARISH COUNCIL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY FOR EMPLOYEES AND COUNCILLORS

Purpose and scope

Little Bealings Parish Council recognises the benefits of an ongoing programme of training and development for its employees and councillors. In order to fulfil their duties and responsibilities, both employees and councillors should be given access to training and development. Any training or development to be undertaken should enable employees and councillors to support the Council in its objectives.

This training and development policy covers the following roles;-

- All Councillors
- All employees
- Volunteers

Councillors

After election or co-option, new councillors are sent various council documents including the councils' standing orders and the Councillors Code of Conduct as well as a comprehensive collection of appropriate materials available both on paper and electronically. The chairman and clerk will ensure that the new councillor has a basic understand of his/her duties.

All new councillors, within the first year should attend the introductory two-part course "Councillor Basics", provided by Suffolk Association of Local Councils. A copy of The Good Councillor's Guide is issued as part of this course.

The clerk will regularly distribute information on further courses to cover key skills and are mainly available via Suffolk Association of Local Councils to cover core skills, councillors are encouraged to attend these. Although unpaid, a councillor is the holder of a public office and must be given access to knowledge to help them conduct business appropriately.

Employees

The Council recognises that employees may require additional knowledge and skills to be effective in their role.

Identifying, Meeting and Evaluating Training and Development Needs

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

- Induction and probationary periods
- One-to-ones
- Annual appraisal
- Workforce planning

- Annual plan
In addition, the council will encourage staff to identify their own learning styles and will seek to provide a wide variety of learning and training methods, including:
 - Attendance at conferences, seminars and short courses
 - Online training
 - In house training
 - Work shadowing
 - Time for self-directed research and learning

Consideration, Categorising training and personal development

A number of factors will be taken into account when assessing a request from an individual. This policy provides one element of the decision-making process. Other factors will include availability of finance and the individual's employment record.

In order to ensure that the council is able to consistently evaluate requests, training and development opportunities have been organised into three categories according to the degree of importance each intervention has for different roles.

1. Mandatory

Mandatory training is legally required for the post-holder, or a qualification deemed to be so fundamental to the role, that the council makes it a mandatory requirement. Any mandatory training or qualifications are to be stated on the job description. For mandatory qualifications, it is unlikely that an applicant would be recruited without having previously attained the qualification. 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.

2. Desirable

Desirable training is not legally required for the post, but it is directly relevant to the individual's job. Any desirable training or qualifications are to be stated on the job description. 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. The need for training may also be identified through one-to-one meetings or annual appraisals. A desirable qualification is likely to enhance the skills and reputation of the council.

3. Optional

An optional qualification or optional 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 aimed at developing the skills or knowledge of an

individual in order to provide a successor for an existing job is deemed to be optional. However, depending on the circumstances, training for succession may be 'desirable'.

Guidance for support

Any financial and non-financial support to training and development is entirely at the discretion of the council.

The council reserves the right to reclaim financial support where the employee:-

- Leaves the council during the duration of the course, or up-to 1 year following completion of the course
- Fails to complete the training
- Fails to attend training without good reason

Study leave

Where individual requires study leave to undertake mandatory training, they will be able to take all the leave within normal working hours.

Resources

Little Bealings Parish Council holds membership to the Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) and National Association of Local Councils (NALC). The Parish Council pays for the clerk, RFO to have membership to the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and has access to a range of training programmes offered by those bodies.

Any professional or other specific training and certification required under legislation should be made available to employees and the Clerk should advise councillors of any such requirements or shortfalls.

The "Good Councillors Guide to Employment" provides comprehensive advice and guidance around training and development.

Budget

During the annual budgetary process, a review of training and development needs will be undertaken by the Council to identify potential areas of improvement that the Parish Council could enhance through training. Consideration will be given to the likelihood of new councillors and volunteers and any known changes to legislation. An agreed budget will be put in place to cover training courses, annual subscriptions and purchasing of relevant publications.

Membership to National Association of Local Councils, Suffolk Association of Local Council and Society of Local Council Clerks ensures access to sector specific and recognised programmes of training. All fees for recognised and approved training and development for employees and councillors will be paid for from Parish Council funds. Recognised training will be included within the employees' working hours.

Record Keeping

The Clerk will maintain a record of all training undertaken by all employees and councillors.

Feedback on each course should be given to the chairman and clerk.

Review

This Policy will be reviewed every two years and may be subject to alteration in light of any statutory obligation changes or other implications for the Council as an employer, or the rights of its employees or members.

Volunteers

Little Bealings Parish Council has a responsibility to ensure that volunteers are operating on its behalf in a safe manner. When using volunteers the clerk and councillors will need to consider what training is required and ensure that it has been received or can be provided.

Adopted: May 2026

To be reviewed: May 2028