

Staff Training and Development Policy

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Document History

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1. Purpose and scope

This purpose of this policy is to set out the Council's position on the provision of training and development opportunities for staff. It applies to all staff whether full or part time, temporary or fixed term.

2. 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
- Appraisal
- Workforce planning
- Team meetings
- Annual plan
- Change processes

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
- Internal coaching
- Shared in-house learning resources (books, journals, DVDs etc.)
- In house training
- Work shadowing
- Time for self-directed research and learning

3. Consideration

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.

4. Categorising training and personal development

The three categories are as follows:

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. They should also be stated in the contract for new starters, along with whom is responsible for the costs of the training/qualifications. 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 (see the section on Guidance for Support below).

Some mandatory training may be specific to a particular job role whilst other training may be a generic requirement. Examples of mandatory training include:

Generic training

- Health and Safety (Personal Safety, Manual handling, Display Screen equipment)

- [Food hygiene
- Data Protection]

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.

For desirable qualifications or training, 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. Examples may include:

Job specific

- [Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA)
- Cemetery Legal Compliance
- Microsoft Excel]

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'.

Job specific

- [Community Governance
- Town Planning Technical Support - Level 3 Diploma]

5. Guidance for support

Since 2020 new contracts need to referenced any training provided by the employer. It should also note if there is a requirement to gain a qualification within a stipulated amount of time, or where it is required that a qualification is maintained. If it is possible that the employment will be ended, if the qualification is not gained in the stipulated time, then the contract should state this.

Support for qualifications, training and personal development can include [financial assistance towards the cost of tuition, examinations and resource materials in addition to half / day release and time off for study leave and taking the examination]. Any financial and non-financial support to training and development is entirely at the discretion of the council.

[Any financial support in excess of [£xxx], including the offer of a loan, will always be conditional upon the employee's agreement to either a full or partial repayment of the financial support provided. 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]

6. Study leave

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

[Where individuals require study leave to undertake study which is not mandatory but part of the individual's formal continuous professional development, the council will contribute up to 50% of study leave time, to a maximum of 3 days per annum.

Where individuals require study leave to undertake training which is not mandatory but part of the individual's desire for career development, the council will contribute up to 3 days study leave per annum for courses which are directly related to the individual's role.

Time off for study leave must be approved in advance. To make a request the individual is asked to write to the Clerk (or Chairman of the Council), setting out the details of the course of study, how it relates to their work, and the time being requested.]

No study leave will be granted where individuals undertake study which is not required for their role, or not directly related to their role. However, the Clerk (or Chairman of the Council) will consider requests for flexible working to allow the study to take place, as long as the needs of the council can be met.

7. Training Cost Agreement

General principles:

From time to time the Council may require for employees to attend training and development opportunities. The Council will carry the cost of most training you will need to undertake to carry out your job role as required. However, from time to time the Council may agree to finance training and development opportunities that exceed the requirements for your post. This may be training to obtain qualifications at a higher level than your current job role, for instance, or training that is particularly expensive.

In certain scenarios that are detailed in this policy the Council may in consideration of this, ask that you agree to incur liability by way of a training cost agreement, should your employment terminate within a certain timeframe of the training being completed.

This policy outlines the scenarios and processes that the Council will follow when agreeing to pay for employee training. The policy does not form part of any individual training cost agreement.

What is a training cost agreement?

A training cost agreement is a written agreement between an employer and employee setting out the conditions of any training the employer pays for. It will detail the cost of the training, the training provider and who is responsible for paying for it in the first instance.

When will training cost agreements be required:

Scenario 1

You may be asked to enter into a training agreement if you are requesting training or are being asked to attend training that will give you a higher level of qualification than your current job role entails. For instance you may want the council to sponsor you to obtain a degree (level 6) in your field of work, but the job role merely requires you to be educated to A-level (level 3) standard.

Scenario 2

The qualification or training you would like to attend is at the same level you are already working to but it would enhance your knowledge and understanding. The training, however, is very costly, maybe hundreds or even thousands of pounds.

The above scenarios are merely examples. There may be many more scenarios in which the council may ask you to enter into a training agreement before committing to fund the training. You will always be advised whether an agreement will be required before your training is approved.

The procedure for training cost agreements:

All training cost agreements need to be signed prior to the training and you must complete individual agreements for each piece of training. You cannot list more than one.

Recovery of Training Costs:

The full terms & conditions will be listed in an individual training cost agreement but in summary the standard repayment amounts will usually be:

- a) if you cease employment during the training course or within 12 months of completing the training course, 100% of the costs shall be repaid;
- b) if you cease employment more than 12 months but no more than 18 months after completion of the training course, 50% of the costs shall be repaid;
- c) if you cease employment more than 18 months but no more than 24 months after completion of the training course, 25% of the costs shall be repaid;
- d) thereafter, no repayment shall be required.

The Council reserve the right in exceptional circumstances to amend the repayment terms. Should you have any questions in relation to this policy please do not hesitate to raise these with the Town Clerk.