

Training and Development Policy

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Document History

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 It is the Council's policy to ensure that all employees and councillors will be trained to a high standard, to ensure that the Council's aims and objectives can be delivered as efficiently as possible.
- 1.2 Employees and councillors are expected to embrace the ethos of training and the merits of a well-run and pro-active Council structure.
- 1.3 Local Council laws, regulations and procedures are unlike those found in any other sector and are subject to change.
- 1.3 The Council is responsible for significant public assets and amounts of public money. It is therefore important that its members are appropriately trained to be able to understand, consider and determine matters concerning the Council's affairs. All members, no matter how experienced, will benefit from regular training and development.

2. Staff Training

- 2.1 The Council's employees are seen as fundamental to all areas of development and service delivery. It is essential that they are trained to carry out their duties as effectively as possible.
- 2.2 Each employee will receive a staff appraisal (once a year) and this will be an opportunity to discuss any training needs.
- 2.3 In addition, employees are encouraged to raise at any time the perceived need for further training in any of the areas of work they are required to carry out, if need is identified. Any requests should be submitted to the Chair of the Personnel Committee for evaluation.
- 2.4 The Town Council may request that staff undertake further training at its discretion, where this is deemed necessary, and in view of any specialist activities that the employee is required to undertake on its behalf.
- 2.5 Full support will be given to all employees undertaking training of any kind in furtherance of the Council's activities.
- 2.6 It is an aim that the Town Clerk should be either CiLCA or University of Gloucester Level 4 qualified or be working towards one of these qualifications.
- 2.7 The Council will support the Town Clerk in their work by encouraging their membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks.
- 2.8 The Assistant Clerk will maintain a record of training undertaken and present this record to the Personnel Committee annually.

3. Councillor Training

- 3.1 The Council will encourage all members to attend training in relation to the corporate activities of the Council, and its administrative procedures.
- 3.2 Councillors will also be expected to undertake specialist courses as need arises, and dependent on any specific responsibilities that are allocated.

- 3.3 All Council policies will reflect the requirement for member training and updating on key elements of council procedure and policy.
- 3.4 The Council is a member of the Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils and has full access to its training programme.
- 3.5 If additional, specialist training is required on any matter, the Town Clerk will source the appropriate qualified person to deliver that training in-house to members.
- 3.6 A record of all training attended by members will be kept and publicised via the Council's Publication Scheme, and the Council's website.

4. Training and Development Opportunities

- 4.1 Members will be given the opportunity to access training and development through LALC (Lincolnshire Association of Local Council) courses, In House training, Training delivered by West Lindsey District Council or any other provider deemed appropriate.
- 4.2 Training and development may take many forms. As well as attending courses delivered either in person or online, assessed or not, training can also take the form of reading relevant publications such as the Good Councillor Guides, the JPAC Practitioner's Guide etc.

5. Training Expenses

- 5.1 Gainsborough Town Council will reimburse members for costs incurred for attending appropriate training events. Please refer to the ***Scheme of Members Allowances*** for full details.

6. Finance Training

- 6.1 Gainsborough Town Council is responsible for considerable financial and physical public assets. "The authority generally, and members individually are responsible for risk management." (JPAG Practitioner's Guide 2025, p. 43). Members must therefore be suitably equipped to assess and evaluate the financial risks the Council faces. All councillors, not just those serving on the Finance and Strategy Committee, are therefore encouraged to attend finance training for councillors. Non-attendance of such training does not relieve members of their joint and individual responsibility for the Council's finances.
- 6.2 In recognition of the growing responsibility of the Finance and Strategy committee, members must attend an 'Introduction to Council Finance' training course at the earliest opportunity following their appointment to the committee. Failure to attend may prejudice their re-appointment to the committee in the future.

7. Planning Training

- 7.1 Gainsborough is subject to significant growth plans and the volume of planning applications is likely to increase significantly in the coming years. This alongside the Neighbourhood Plan and the need for monitoring the adherence to its policies will place a significant responsibility on the Council's Planning committee.
- 7.2 Planning law is extensive but specific in terms of its application. Members who have not been trained can often be ineffective in the way they comment on applications and interpret matters before them.

- 7.3 In recognition of the growing responsibility of the committee, members must attend an 'Introduction to Planning' training course at the earliest opportunity following their appointment to the committee. Failure to attend may prejudice their re-appointment to the committee in the future.
- 7.4 The Council will aim to provide the relevant training to new Planning Committee members either in-house or local to Gainsborough. However, where this is not possible members may have to attend external training provided by LALC or some other training provider.

8. General

- 8.1 The Council will set aside an adequate training budget each year to meet training needs for staff and councillors.
- 8.2 Anyone attending training is required to report back to the Council – either verbally or in writing – informing others of the value of the training, and how appropriate it was to the particular issues concerned.
- 8.3 Any useful training material should be shared between employees and members, either in hard copy or via e-mail, to ensure everyone is made fully aware of important updates relating to law and administration.
- 8.4 The Council will take note of any matters which should be pursued as a result of training attended, and where best practice procedures should be implemented or updated as a result.

APPENDIX ONE**SCHEDULE OF COMPETENCIES****COUNCILLORS**

Requirement	Knowledge and Skills	Effective Behaviours
Understanding the Role of the Councillor	The extent and limits of a councillor's individual responsibilities and the powers and responsibilities of the Council as a corporate body in law.	Undertakes the role effectively in the council, the community and with partners. Understands the difference between the role of an individual member and the Council as a whole and ensures that this understanding is reflected in their work.
Understanding of the legal basis upon which the Council delivers services to the community	Understanding of the services delivered and the associated governing law, policies, procedures, plans and strategies that are in place to guide the work of the Council.	Is able to describe the work of the Council to the public and contributes to the development of the Council's work.
Understanding the planning system	Understanding of planning law, the development control process and the importance of the local development plan. It would also be helpful for councillors to understand the importance of place or community plans in this context.	Is able to assess planning applications in relation to material considerations, the relevance of technical advisory notes, the link with the local development plan and have an understanding of Section 106 and community infrastructure levy contributions from developers.
Conduct	Understanding of the ethical framework governing the work of councillors, specifically the code of conduct. Appreciation of the importance of accountability, integrity and transparency and openness.	Abides by the code of conduct at all times, always declares interests when appropriate, seeks advice from the Proper Officer when needed, treats others with respect at all times, demonstrates integrity, values others and never bullies any other councillor or employee, listens and stays calm in difficult situations.
Equality and Diversity	Personal skills in demonstrating respect for others regardless of sex, race, religion, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity or sexual orientation. Understanding Equalities and Diversity law relating to the work of the Council and the role of the Councillor. Understanding of the need for and what constitutes respectful behaviour towards others.	Demonstrates equalities values in personal behaviour and council decisions. Applies appropriate equalities legislation and demonstrates equalities values in personal behaviour and council decisions. Treats everyone with respect at all times when acting as a councillor whether in the Council, community or political group.
Financial Governance and Accountability	An understanding of the internal and external audit process.	Engages effectively with the audit, inspection and regulatory process within the council, using this information to constructively challenge and support the financial management of the council.

Attendance at and preparation for meetings and other organised events	Understanding of the importance of regular attendance and engagement and the need to prepare effectively for meetings.	Attends meetings and events on a regular basis and gives priority to such attendance. Ensures that all papers included with council agendas are read before the meeting.
Information Management	Understanding and interpreting information and data. Ability to handle data in the format provided by the council. Understanding of the definition of confidentiality and how to handle confidential information - Understanding of the legal requirements of Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation.	Receives information and data from a variety of sources and is able to store, share and use it effectively and where possible electronically. Does not keep records about people without seeking their agreement. Responds promptly and appropriately to FOI requests. Does not distribute or share confidential or restricted information.
Using ICT and social media	Seeks to develop Skills in all 'Office' applications such as word processing, presentation and spreadsheets and conducts council business electronically. Understands the social media policy of the council.	Communicates with the Clerk and other members electronically and through social media where appropriate.
Working with the Clerk and other employees	Understanding the role of the Clerk and other employees generally and the 'rules' they need to abide by. Skills in acting as a corporate employer. Understanding of the appointments process and interviewing skills.	Maintains professional relationships with employees recognising appropriate boundaries and abiding by the Member Officer Protocol (if adopted). Acts as an effective member of an appointment panel, applying sound HR and equality and diversity principles to secure the best candidate.
Health and Safety	Understanding of Health and Safety legislation in the work of the Council. Understand how to assess risks and ensure personal safety and that of others.	Promotes and ensures the health and safety of everyone in the council. Ensures personal safety when working in the Council and when in groups or alone in the community.
Continuing professional and personal development	Ability to identify personal development needs and to participate in development activities.	Undertakes regular personal development reviews taking account of role descriptions and competency frameworks. Takes responsibility for developing personal skills and knowledge, attends learning and development activities seeking tangible outcomes.
Financial Capability	Understanding of the way councils and services are funded. Understanding and skills in budget setting. Personal financial capability.	Engages effectively in the budget setting process. Is prepared to take hard, evidence-based decisions. Demonstrates skills in numeracy when interpreting data and asking questions.
Sustainable Development	Understanding of issues that impact on future generations such as health and wellbeing, financial security and the environment.	Takes decisions based upon the needs of future generations as well as the current population.
Local Leadership	Knowledge of community groups and leaders. Understanding of community issues and concerns. Ability to	Understands the needs of the local community and secures action from the council on behalf of local people.

	seek the views of all relevant parties. Understands the role and functions of the principal council.	Communicates with the community, individuals and the council to ensure engagement and understanding of all parties.
Chairing	Understanding of meeting protocols and the rules of debate. Ability to manage the agenda, contributions and time. Chairs clearly and authoritatively, enforcing the rules and encouraging fair participation. Manages the agenda by introducing items, summarising debate, focussing on outcomes and limiting contributions which do not contribute to the outcomes.	Ensures that the public feel welcome, understand the meeting purpose and how they can contribute. Commitment to enabling all committee members to develop skills and participate effectively in meetings. Builds relationships with the Clerk to ensure that the work of the council/committee is relevant, well informed and provides the outcomes needed. Work programme development and management Understanding of the subjects within the scope of a committee and how these interact with council policies generally and the roles of other committees. Ability to develop a balanced work programme for the committee and clear terms of reference and outcomes for any subgroups. Works with the Clerk and committee members to develop the work plan taking account of the work of other committees. Ensures that the work programme takes account of national, regional and local plans, policies and the expressed needs of the community for services. Makes sure that the committee also takes account of inspections or reports from audit, inspection and regulation bodies.
Civic Leadership	In depth understanding of standing orders and rules of engagement. Effectively chairs meetings of the Full Council demonstrating meeting management and leadership skills. Representing the Council at civic functions Ability to manage the Council's reputation. Skills in public speaking. Skills in relationship management.	Demonstrates high level communication, interpersonal and social skills.

Source: One Voice Wales and Society of Local Council Clerks (2022): Guidance on preparing a council's training plan including a model plan template.

APPENDIX TWO**LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN TEMPLATE (Councillor)**

Name of Councillor.....

Core competency	Assessed Competency Level (1-4)	Brief Description of Training Required (By reference to core competences) – Appendix 1	Priority (Put in Year)	Courses to Attend	Date Course Attended
Role of Councillor					
Legal Basis for Delivery of Services					
Understanding the planning system					
Conduct					
Equality and Diversity					
Financial Governance and Accountability					
Attendance/Preparation for Meetings and Events					
Information Management					
Using ICT and social media					
Working with Clerk/Other Employees					
Health and Safety					

Continuing professional and personal development					
Financial Capability					
Sustainable Development					
Local Leadership					
Chairing Skills					
Civic Leadership					

A separate form should be completed for each councillor

An assessment should be made for each councillor to identify their current competency level using a scale of 1-4 where 4 is fully proficient. Priority should be given to competency levels assessed as 1 or 2