



Willaston
Parish Council

Training and Development Policy

1. Introduction

Willaston Parish Council is committed to the training and development of its Councillors and staff, in order to assist the Council in achieving its aims, objectives, priorities and vision, as well as ensuring the Council is kept up to date with all new legislation. To support this funds are allocated to a training budget annually to enable Councillors and staff to attend training and conferences relevant to their office. Prospective Councillors and applicants for the post of Clerk should be made aware of the content of this policy and the expectations placed upon them.

The Staffing Committee has the delegated responsibility for training and development as set out in section 4 of the Committee's terms of reference: *"To establish a programme of training for Councillors and employees such as will encourage professional advancement and make recommendations for expenditure to support these goals".*

2. Policy statement

Willaston Parish Council is committed to ensure that it continues to fulfil its duties and responsibilities to residents professionally. To that end the Council's intention is that Councillors, Clerk and any other workers of the Council are suitably equipped with the correct knowledge and skills to carry out their roles and maintain effective working practises.

The Council will procure or provide such training and development opportunities as it deems necessary and relevant for the delivery of its work. It is essential that Councillors and staff are given equal opportunity to develop their knowledge of local government and the law relating to parish councils and to learn new skills to promote partnership working and community engagement in order to become effective councillors and lead a modern and progressive Parish Council of the future. Councillor and staff development should be regarded as an integral part of the Council's business.

3. Training and development activity

Willaston Parish Council consists of twelve elected or co-opted Councillors and one part time Clerk who is also the Responsible Financial Officer.

Training and development for each of the Councillors will be reviewed regularly but will contain, as a minimum requirement:

3.1 Councillors

- Attendance at induction sessions explaining the role of a councillor, such ChALC' training course for new councillors – within six months of the date on which they are elected, re-elected or co-opted.
- Provision of a Councillor Information Pack which includes copies of 'The Good Councillor's Guide', Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct, Committee Terms of Reference and a list of the policies of the Council, together with any other information deemed relevant. This pack is to be provided within seven days of the date on which they are elected or co-opted.
- Councillor's with primary responsibility for specific areas of work will receive relevant training within six months of the date on which they take on the specific role. For instance, those responsible for finance will receive basic finance training, those responsible for planning will receive training basic planning training, including how to respond to planning applications.
- The Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Council (and Chair of committee) shall receive Chairmanship skills training as soon as possible but within six months of the date on which they are elected as Chairman.
- Attendance at relevant courses provided by external bodies or online course, County Association of Local Councils (ChALC) related to the Council's aims and objectives, as and when required and within three months of a training need being identified.

3.2 Clerk/Responsible Financial officer

- Induction sessions explaining the role of Clerk, such as attendance at a 'New Clerks' training course, or similar – within three months of the date on which they are employed.
- Provision of a Councillor Information pack which contains copies of 'The Good Councillor's Guide', Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct and a list of the policies of the Council, together with any other information deemed relevant – to be This is to be provided within seven days of the date on which they are employed.
- Gaining the Certificate of Local Council Administration (CiLCA)
- Any other training relevant to the proficient discharge of their duties such as I.T., Legal Powers, Finance and understanding the planning system, identified through regular training needs and assessments – within three (3) months of the need being identified.
- Attendance at relevant training courses and/or local meetings of external bodies such as Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), Cheshire County Association of Local Councils (ChALC), County and District Councils.

The Council will meet the costs of all pre-approved training undertaken or meetings attended, including mileage and parking costs involved.

The Council will pay for pre-approved subscriptions to relevant publications and advice services, including the purchase of the approved handbook, Local Council Administration.

4. Training needs identified

Training requirements for Councillors will be ongoing but will usually be identified by the Councillors, the Chairman and/or the Clerk with opportunities to attend courses being investigated by the Clerk and brought to the attention of full Council.

The Chairman of the Council in agreement with the Clerk may request a councillor to attend specific ChALC training if they are deemed to have broken a standing order on several occasions within a twelve-month period.

Annually the Council will formally review the training needs of the Councillors and the Clerk at a meeting of the Parish Council.

Training needs for the Clerk will be identified initially through the recruitment process for new Clerks, including the application form and interview, and then through formal and informal discussions and annual staff appraisals.

The Clerk is expected to keep up to date with developments in the sector and highlight to the Council any training required.

5. Resourcing training

Annually an allocation will be made in the budget, each year as required, to enable necessary training and development.

Annually the Council will consider an allocation in the budget for the payment of a subscription to the Society of Local Council Clerks and Cheshire County Association of Local Councils to enable the Clerk and Councillors to take advantage of their training courses and conferences. Purchase of relevant resources such as publications will be considered on an ongoing basis.

6. Evaluation and review of training

All training undertaken will be subsequently evaluated by the Council to gauge its relevance, content and appropriateness. Any additional training needs highlighted as a result will be brought into the training identification process .

Training will be reviewed in the light of changes to legislation or any applicable regulations relevant to the Council: This will include requirements for new qualifications; new equipment; complaints received; incidents which highlight training needs; requests from the Clerk, Councillors or volunteers.

The Clerk will maintain a record of training attended by themselves and Councillors.

7. Status

This policy was adopted by Willaston Parish Council's Staffing Committee on 10th October 2023.

THIS POLICY MUST BE COMPLIED WITH AT ALL TIMES.