



Learning & Development Policy

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1. Introduction

1.1 This document forms Pembury Parish Council's Learning and Development 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 staff to undertake appropriate training, learning and development.
- Allocate training in a fair manner.
- Ensure that all training is evaluated to assess its value.

2 Commitment to Training

2.1 Pembury Parish Council is committed to the ongoing training and development of all Councillors and Staff 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.

2.2 According to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2007), training can be defined as: "A planned process to develop the abilities of the individual and to satisfy current and future needs of the organisation." Learning and development describes the formal, ongoing efforts that are made within organizations to improve the performance and self-fulfilment of their staff and, in our case, Councillors through a variety of educational methods and programs. In the modern local government, these efforts have taken on a broad range of applications—from instruction in highly specific job skills to long-term professional development. In recent years, training and development has emerged as a formal business function, an integral element of strategy, and a recognized profession with distinct theories and methodologies. More and more companies of all sizes have embraced "continual learning" and other aspects of training and development as a means of promoting employee growth and acquiring a highly skilled work force.

2.3 Pembury Parish Council recognises that its most important resource is its Councillors and staff and is committed to encouraging both Councillors and staff 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 senior and specialist staff to undertake a programme of continuing professional development (CPD) in line with the requirements of their requisite professional bodies.

2.5 Providing training yields a number of benefits:

- Improves the quality of the services and facilities that Pembury Parish Council provides;
- Enables the organisation to achieve its corporate aims and objectives;
- Improves the skills base of Councillors and staff;
- Produces confident, highly qualified staff working as part of an effective and efficient team; and
- Demonstrates that the staff 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:

- Training needs should be identified by considering the overall objectives of the Council, as well as individual requirements.
- Planning and organising training to meet those specific needs.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of training.

3 The Identification of Training Needs

3.1 Staff will be asked to identify their development needs with advice from their line manager during their annual appraisal or regular meetings with their line manager. There are number of additional ways that the training needs of staff may be recognised:

- Questionnaires.
- During formal interview/review.
- Following confirmation of appointment.
- Formal and informal discussion.

3.2 Councillors will be asked to identify their development needs with advice from the appropriate body or person: i.e. working group, committee during informal meetings with the Clerk. There are number of additional ways that the training needs of Councillors may be recognised:

- Questionnaires.
- Following election/co-option.
- 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 member of staff.
- Devolved services / delivery of new services.

3.4 Staff 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 the training is relevant to the Council's needs and/or service delivery.

4 Corporate Training

4.1 Corporate training is necessary to ensure that staff are aware of their legal responsibilities or corporate standards e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management and Equal Opportunities. Staff will be required to attend training courses, workshops or seminars where suitable training is identified.

5 Financial Assistance

5.1 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 staff will be required to attend the nearest college/venue offering the required course, unless an alternative is authorised by the Finance & HR Committee in the interest of operational effectiveness or Best Value.

5.2 Other considerations include the following:

- Implication of staff 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.

5.3 For approved courses Councillors and staff can expect the following to be sponsored:

- The course fees.
- Examination fees.
- Associated membership fees.
- One payment to re-take a failed examination.

- 5.4 Councillors and staff attending assisted courses are required to inform the Clerk immediately of any absences, giving reasons.
- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 Pembury Parish Council operates a Return of Service agreement. Any member of staff undertaking post-entry qualifications funded by the Council must be aware that should they leave PPC's employment within two years of completion of the qualification they will be required to repay all costs associated with the undertaking of such training. If the employee takes up employment with another Local Authority an exemption to this clause may be granted.

6 Study Leave

- 6.1 Staff who are given approval to undertake external qualifications are granted the following:
- Study time to attend day-release courses.
 - Time to sit examinations.
 - Study time of one day per examination (to be discussed and agreed by line manager in advance).
 - Provision of study time must be agreed with the line manager prior to the course being undertaken.

7 Short Courses/Workshops/Residential Weekends

- 7.1 Where attendance is required at a short course, paid leave will be granted to staff.
- 7.2 Councillors and staff 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.
 - Subsistence as agreed beforehand on a case-by-case basis.

8 Evaluation of Training

- 8.1 Records of all training undertaken by staff will be kept in the personnel files of each member of staff.
- 8.2 As part of Pembury Parish Council's continuing commitment to training and development, Staff 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.

9 Linking with other Council Policies

9.1 Relationship with other Council policies:

- Equality of opportunity in all aspects of Councillor and staff development.
- A 'Statement of Intent' on training for both Councillors and staff is a requirement for the Re-accreditation of any national recognised charter marks.
- 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.

10 Reporting on Progress

10.1 The Clerk will report annually to the Finance & HR Committee detailing attendance at training over the year, as well as the inclusion of the member and staff evaluation of courses attended.

11 Conclusion

11.1 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 staff.

11.2 The adoption of a training or learning and development policy has a practical implication for Pembury 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.

12 Alternative Formats

12.1 *Equality Act 2010: Your Local 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.

12.2 The Council may also be able arrange to provide versions in other languages.

13 Freedom of Information

13.1 In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this document will be posted on the Council's Website www.pemburyparishcouncil.gov.uk and copies of this document will be available for inspection in the Council Office.

Appendix 1

14 Commitment to Councillors and Staff

- 14.1 Pembury 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 staff and will commit an appropriate percentage of its budget on a regular sustainable basis. The Council will work closely with the Kent Association of Local Councils and avail itself of the resources of the SLCC and other bodies as appropriate to ensure high quality Learning and Development programmes.
- 14.2 Pembury Parish Council makes the following commitment to its Councillors: that every new Member 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. 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.
- 14.3 Pembury Parish Council makes the following commitment to its staff 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.