

1 Introduction

1.1 This document forms the Council's Training 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 □
- Member specific training □
- Reporting on progress

1.2 The objectives of this strategy are to:

- Encourage Councillors, volunteers** and employees to undertake appropriate training that supports the Council's aims and objectives
- Allocate training in a fair manner
- Ensure that all training is evaluated to assess its value

2 Commitment to Training

2.1 Castle Cary Town Council is committed to the ongoing training and development of all Councillors, volunteers and employees to enable them to make the most effective contribution to the Council's aims and objectives.

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."

2.3 Castle Cary Town Council recognises that its most important resource is its' Councillors, volunteers and employees and is committed to encouraging them all 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 officers 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 Castle Cary Town Council provides; Enables the organisation to achieve its corporate aims and objectives; Improves the skill base of the employees, producing confident, highly qualified employees, volunteers and Councillors working as part of an effective and efficient team; and demonstrates that these team members 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:

1. Training needs should be identified by considering the overall objectives of the organisation, as well as individual requirements.
2. Planning and organising training to meet those specific needs.
3. Designing and delivering the training.
4. Evaluating the effectiveness of training.

3 The Identification of Training Needs

3.1 Employees, volunteers and members will be asked to identify their development needs with advice from the Clerk and HR group. This should be done formally for employees as part of the annual appraisal.

There are number of additional ways that the training needs of members, volunteers and staff may be recognised: □

- Questionnaires □
- During interview □
- Following confirmation of appointment. □
- Formal and informal discussion
- Following review of the Castle Cary Town Council's objectives and the required skills to meet those objectives.
- As part of the regular 'tea party' meetings with volunteers.

3.2 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

3.3 Employees 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 Castle Cary Town Council's needs and/or service delivery.

4. Corporate Training

4.1 Corporate training is necessary to ensure that employees are aware of their legal responsibilities or corporate standards e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management and Equal Opportunities. Employees 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 sponsored 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. Specific request should be made via the HR Working Group which will allocate funding or make further recommendation to Full Council dependant on the requirements of the Financial Regulations.

In order to best ensure cost effectiveness, volunteers, Councillors and employees will be required to attend the nearest learning provider/venue offering the required course, unless an alternative is authorised by TAG in the interest of operational effectiveness or best value.

5.2 Other considerations include the following: □

- Implication of employee 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, volunteers and employees can expect the following to be sponsored: □

- The course fee □
- Examination fees □
- Associated membership fees □
- One payment to re-take a failed examination
- Travel and subsistence allowance

5.4 Councillors and employees attending assisted courses are required to inform the Town 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 Castle Cary Town Council operates a Return of Service agreement. Any employee undertaking post-entry qualifications funded by the Council in excess of £300 must be aware that should they leave The Council's employment within one year they will be required to repay 100% of the costs associated with the training, within two years of completion of the qualification they will be required to repay 50% of 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 Employees 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, up to a full day of paid leave will be granted.

8. Members specific training

8.1 All members of The Council will be provided with and are expected to attend training on

- Castle Cary Town Council Induction
- Planning Training
- Finance Training

8.2 Annual Training will be provided for; all members are expected to participate

- Code of Conduct

8.3 It is the responsibility of members to keep their personal; training log up to date, the log will be kept in the Clerk's office.

9 Evaluation of Training

9.1 Records of all training undertaken by employees will be kept in the personnel files of each member of staff.

9.2 As part of The Council's continuing commitment to training and development, employees 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.

10 Reporting on Progress

10.1 The Town Clerk will report twice pa to TAG / HR working group detailing attendance at training over the year, as well as the inclusion of the Councillor and staff evaluation of courses attended.

10.2 The Chair of the HR working group will provide a report for the Castle Cary Town Council annual report detailing an overview of training undertaken in the previous year and the benefits to the organisation.

*[** Note: The term “Volunteers” means, for the purposes of this document, individuals, other than elected or co-opted councillors, who give help and support to the Town Council on a voluntary basis, either by serving on its working parties or subcommittees (eg MHMG, the Neighbourhood Planning Group) or as volunteers staffing the information desk) or as appointees to specific tasks (eg cleaning the Horsepond, serving as Footpaths Officer etc).]*

Adopted by Castle Cary Town Council at the Town Council Meeting on 15th February (Item TC 31)

Review date: January 2017.