



Helston Town Council

Konsel an Dre Hellys

LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Reviewed August 2020

Learning & Development Policy

1. Introduction

Learning and development is about creating the culture and environment for individuals and organisations to learn and grow. It's knowing the current and future capability needs of the organisation, as well as how to create a learning culture that drives engagement in continuous professional development. (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development 2020).

Helston Town Council is committed to continuous learning and development to enable Councillors and staff to effectively contribute to achieving the Council's aims and objectives by providing the highest quality representation and services.

Helston Town Council recognises that its Councillors and staff are its most important resource. The Council is committed to encouraging both Councillors and staff to enhance their role relevant skills, knowledge and qualifications through learning and development activities. Some learning and development is necessary to ensure compliance with all legal and statutory requirements.

2. Policy Brief & Purpose

Helston Town Council's Learning & Development policy refers to the Council's learning and development activities for Councillors and staff.

In the ever-changing environment, Councillors and staff need to replenish their knowledge and acquire new skills to enable them all to be more effective. This will benefit both them and the Council. We want them to feel confident about improving efficiency and productivity, as well as finding new ways towards personal development and success.

2.1 Learning and Development

- Improves the quality of the services and facilities provided by Helston Town Council;
- Enables the organisation to achieve its corporate aims and objectives;
- Improves the skill base of staff to produce confident, highly qualified staff working as an effective and efficient team;
- Demonstrates that staff are valued.

Learning and development will be achieved by including a realistic financial allocation for learning activities in the annual budget as well as by taking advantage of any relevant partnership or in-house provision available.

2.2 The key objectives of this policy are to:

- Encourage Councillors and employees to undertake appropriate Learning and development activities;
- Allocate learning and development in a fair manner;
- Ensure all statutory and legislative learning and development is completed in a time and cost effective manner.
- Ensure all learning is evaluated to assess its value.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all Councillors and permanent, full-time or part-time, employees of Helston Town Council. Employees with temporary/short-term contracts might attend trainings at their manager's discretion.

This policy does not cover supplementary employees such as contractors or consultants.

Learning and Development STATEMENT OF INTENT

(as contained in para.25 of the Employee's Handbook)

Helston Town Council is an organisation in which learning is valued. Councillors and staff will be supported to undertake the learning and development which they need to help them achieve and maintain a high standard of performance and will be encouraged and supported to achieve their full potential. This will allow them to provide a satisfactory and expected level of service to the community of Helston.

All are entitled to:

- Equality of opportunity in all aspects of their development
- An induction programme into their own roles as well as the workings of the Council
- An understanding of the Council's role in the Community
- An understanding of the direction and objectives of the Council
- An understanding of the contribution to the council that is expected of them

For staff

- Clear and measurable objectives for their performance at work
- An annual review of their performance, role and development needs
- A personal development plan which addressed their identified development needs
- A Council that is committed to staff development
- Release from work commitments to undertake agreed development activities
- Training and certification in accordance with all legal and statutory requirements according to their role and equipment under their control

For Councillors

- General training including;
 - Roles and duties of a Councillor
 - Code of Conduct
 - Standing Orders and Financial Regulations
- Specialist training
 - Chairmanship
 - Planning

Resources

- The Council will set an annual learning and development budget to ensure the above aims are achieved.

Providers include

- Cornwall Association of Local Councils
- Ellis Whittam Ltd
- South West Employers
- Society of Local Council Clerks
- Cornwall College
- Truro & Penwith College

Commitment to Learning and Development

General guidelines

- All Councillors and eligible staff are covered by this policy without discriminating against role or protected characteristics.
- Managers should evaluate the success of any learning and development. They should keep records for reference and better improvement opportunities.
- Staff should try to make the most out of their trainings by studying and finding ways to apply knowledge to their work.
- 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. Records of the CPD activities will be provided as part of the annual performance review

Identification of learning and development needs

Staff will be asked to identify their development needs with advice from their line manager during their annual Appraisal. Members' and staff development needs may also be identified through:

- Questionnaires;
- During interview;
- Following confirmation of election/appointment;
- Formal and informal discussion.

Learning and development needs may also be identified due to:

- Legislative requirements;
- Changes in legislation;
- Changes in systems;
- New or revised qualifications become available;
- New working methods and practices;
- Complaints to the Council;
- A request from a member of staff;
- Devolved services/ delivery of new services.

Staff who wish to attend or complete a learning programme should discuss this with their line manager. All requests will be considered in relation to the Council's needs by the Town Clerk.

New Councillors and staff

All new Councillors and staff will receive basic induction training on the workings of the Council, Council policies and governance. This will also include Council finance, assets, health, safety and welfare. Specific mandatory training (such as Code of Conduct Training for Councillors) will be included as well as an assessment of any essential training or development needed to effectively carry out the role.

Any need identified in the assessment will be met in accordance with the Council's commitment to training and development.

Corporate Learning & Development

Corporate Learning & Development is necessary to ensure that Councillors and staff are aware of their legal responsibilities or corporate standards e.g. Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities, Code of Conduct, Information Governance & Safeguarding.

Staff will be required to complete specific courses, workshops, seminars or on-line training where a suitable option has been identified.

Financial Assistance

It is important to note that all sponsored learning and development must be appropriate to the needs of the Council, 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 Council will be identified. All costs for identified mandatory training will be met by Helston Town Council.

Councillors and staff will be required to attend the nearest venue offering the required training unless an alternative is authorised in the interest of operational effectiveness or ensuring value for money.

Consideration will also be given to:

The impact on operational capability;

- The most economic and effective means of providing the learning;
- Provision and availability of the learning and development budget.

Councillors and staff can expect the following to be sponsored for approved learning and development activities:

Course fee;

- Examination fees;
- Associated membership fees(when required as part of the course);
- One payment to re-take a failed examination/assessment.

Councillors and staff attending sponsored courses are required to inform the Town Clerk immediately of any absences, giving reasons.

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.

Return on Service

Helston Town Council operates a Return of Service arrangement. Any employee undertaking post entry qualifications funded by the Council must be aware that, should they voluntarily leave Helston Town Council's employment within two years of completing the qualification, they will be required to repay proportionate costs(one twentyfourth reduction per month from completion) associated with undertaking such training. An exemption to this clause may be granted if an employee takes up employment with another local authority.

Study Leave

Employees who are given approval to undertake external qualifications will be granted the following:

- Study time to attend day release courses;
- Time to sit examinations;
- Study time of one day per examination/assessment (to be discussed and agreed by their line manager in advance);
- Provision of study time must be agreed with the line manager prior to the course being undertaken.

Short Courses/ Workshops/ Residential Weekends

Where officers attendance is required, out of normal working hours, at a short course, salary will be paid in accordance with the Members and Officers Expenses Policy. Councillors and staff attending approved short courses/ workshops/ residential weekend can expect the following to be paid:

- Course fee;
- Travelling expenses in accordance with the Council's Members and Officers Expenses Policy;
- Subsistence in accordance with the Council's Members and Officers Expenses Policy.

Progress Reporting

The Town Clerk will produce an Annual Staffing Report, to include employees' learning and development activities and achievements together with proposed requirements in the following year, for consideration by the Policy, Finance & Resources Committee.