



KETTERING TOWN COUNCIL TRAINING POLICY AND PLAN

Aims

This policy defines the expectation of the Council in relation to the training needs of its staff and its members. The council recognises that it is important to train staff and councillors in order to operate in an efficient, effective and professional manner. Attached at the end of the policy is a training plan for the period 2024-2026, which will be replaced in due course and periodically thereafter.

The purpose of the policy is to set out clearly what training the council will provide to employees and members in order that it can perform effectively, avoid service or policy failures and ensure that it gets best value from its activities.

In the period in question, the Council will undergo two significant changes which highlight the need for a robust training policy and plan for the next two years.

- New councillors will be elected at the May 2025 all council elections
- The Town Clerk will be retiring when he reaches the age of 66

There may also be significant change in the functions and responsibilities of the Town Council itself if North Northamptonshire Council looks to devolve any assets or services to parish councils.

Principles

The Council must ensure that it has the skills, knowledge and aptitudes both to provide best value in the delivery of services and in how it makes decisions about services and policies.

The Council's corporate risk assessment set out the various risks that a lack of knowledge might create.

It is vital that the Council receives the best advice it can from its staff and that councillors feel properly equipped to carry out their role as local representatives, as decision makers and as participants in the civic life of the town.

Staff must be aware of the law and good practice as they relate to local government and have the necessary technical knowledge to deliver services, to influence others and to work in partnership. They should be equipped to horizon scan and to plan ahead, and engage with others in the sector to increase their knowledge. .

The Council should therefore, within the confines of a modest training budget, provide employees and members with the opportunity to develop new skills and knowledge.

Training will primarily focus on specific topics relevant to local government, but other relevant training that will improve service delivery will also be offered, e.g. training on a new piece of software. Training may include:

- Formal training courses
- Briefings and seminars
- Local, regional and national conferences

Training needs may be triggered in several ways; the list below is indicative, but not exhaustive:

- As a result of staff appraisals or through staff identifying their own training needs at any time
- A change in working practices (as a result of, for example, a complaint, accident or new policy)
- The introduction of new equipment
- Changes in legislation
- New councillors joining the council

The benefit of training will be evidenced through, for example:

- Well chaired meetings
- Professional and pertinent responses to planning applications
- Well documented policies and reports
- Well managed projects, events and services
- Well managed finances
- Well informed staff and councillors
- High professional conduct of staff and councillors

Specific Objectives

There are a number of objectives set out below. These are intended to reflect where the Council is now in its development as a still new organisation. Given the potential for significant change, these objectives can only deal with the known opportunities and challenges and even within the narrow confines of a two year period, may still need to be supplemented from time to time.

Professional qualification

Additional statutory powers and freedoms result from the Council having a senior employee who is qualified to CiLCA standard (The Certificate in Local Council Administration). The Council will always have one employee who is so qualified or is in the process of becoming qualified. The Council will pay for that qualification to be obtained.

Professional standards

The Council encourages its employees to remain up to date with current developments in service delivery, policy development, the law and good practice. This can be achieved by attendance at conferences, seminars, specialist training events or workshops.

The Council will normally allow and pay for an officer to attend at least one SLCC conference per year and will encourage its staff to participate in virtual seminars and training sessions on a regular basis. A summary of courses attended will be provided to staffing

committee annually. Attendance at external courses can often earn CPD points for the attendee.

Technical

For new office staff, induction into the workplace and its processes can be delivered in house. For each new member of staff, a simple audit will be conducted after appointment of their training needs. A personalised plan will be drawn up for their first six months in role. This may require external training to be sourced.

The Council provides a number of events and specialist markets, as well as the general market. All permanent and casual employees who manage these events and markets must have undertaken and passed a one day first aid at work course before they begin work. The Council will pay for a course if the employee has not already passed a suitable course less than two years before starting work.

All staff involved in events management or supervision must also undertake a free online anti-terrorism training module provided by ACT awareness, as recommended by the police.

Employees and agency workers engaged in erecting market stalls and similar structures must have undertaken and passed a one day manual handling course before they begin work. The Council will pay for a course if the employee has not already passed a suitable course less than two years before starting work.

Member training

There is generally little demand for structured member training during the course of a normal year, but in election year, when a proportion of the Council will be newly elected, there is clearly a need to bring new members up to speed and to refresh the training for continuing members, for whom it will be four years since their last training experience.

The following training is essential for new members and those serving on the relevant committees

- Town Council Finance and Governance - including sustainability (compulsory for all members)
- Code of Conduct (compulsory for all members)
- Planning (compulsory for planning committee members)

These courses can be delivered in house or by buying in specialist support – given the time of year, and the capacity of the office at a time when the new Council is being set up, the option of buying in some of the training will be an essential one. It may be possible to share costs with other town council (s) who will have the same pressures.

The Council has declared a climate emergency and member training on matters of sustainability are an implicit element of the Council's policy. A variety of courses and seminars are usually available throughout the year and some shorter sessions can be delivered either as part of full Council meetings or as stand alone seminars during the course of the year. It has been agreed to provide carbon literacy training to all members on a regular basis and this can be done within the envelope of a Council meeting.

Obligations

Employees undertaking training will be given time off from their duties to undertake training and may do so in their normal working week. Where casual staff are required to undertake a course, they will be paid at their normal hourly rate for doing so.

Where the Council has paid for a professional qualification to be secured, the employee who has benefited from that qualification will be required to make a repayment of the course fees if they resign from their post within two years of the qualification having been paid for, on the following sliding scale

- Within 6 months of the payment having been made – full reimbursement
- Between 6 months and 12 months – 50% of the course fees
- Between 12 month and 24 months – 25% of the course fees.

If an employee benefits from training before they start work and then does not take up their role, the Council will be entitled to recover the cost of the training from them.

Budgets

The Council will make separate budgetary provision in each financial year for staff training and for member training. In a year in which all councillors are due to be elected it is expected that the member training budget will be greater than in non elected years.

The budgets for the next two financial years will be:-

Budget	2024-5	2025-6	2026-7
Member training	£500	£1200	£500
Staff training	£800	£ 800	£1000

(In 2024/5, the member training budget was used to pay part of the cost of the CiLCA course attended by the Deputy Clerk).

Training providers

Professional and technical courses can be sourced on the open market or via the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) in the case of the CiLCA qualification. They deliver their courses in association with Northamptonshire Association of Local Councils (NCALC)

Current suppliers and partners – e.g. Cloudy IT, Scribe, Affinity Lottery – provide regular seminars and courses to provide updates on their products or related topics; these are often free or at a nominal cost. SLCC also provide a regular flow of training opportunities for a fee which is discounted for members.

Member training is available from the open market and NCALC, for an enhanced fee for non members. Induction training for members can be delivered in house. Other more specialist courses, e.g. on issues of climate change can be sourced externally.

Training Plan for 2024-26

Course/subject	Person	Cost	Supplier	Timescale	Outcome
CiLCA qualification	Emma Dezelu	£1,540 in two payments	SLCC and NCALC	April 2025	Secures CiLCA qualification, which in turn enables Council to use general power of competence.
Annual SLCC Conference ; Hinckley October each year	Town Clerk	£200 approx. for single day attendance	SLCC	October each year	Updating on current issues; Networking; supplier interaction;
First aid at work courses	New events staff before starting work	£185 approx each attendee	St John's Ambulance, Kettering	As required	Ensures events can be managed safely
Anti-terrorism awareness – on- line training module	New events staff before starting work	Free	ACT Awareness	As required	Ensures events can be managed safely
Manual handling courses	Any temporary markets staff	£185 approx each	St John's/ CDR	As required	Ensures market and specialist events can be managed safely
Carbon literacy training	Member sand officers	£20 per delegate	Carbon Literacy project	October 2024 and October 2025	To provide knowledge and information to members and offices, to improve policy making and service delivery
Member induction training – compulsory for all members	All members – new and returning	Free	In house	May and June 2025	To enable new and returning members to understand the Council's functioning, responsibilities and policies.
Code of Conduct training – compulsory for all members	All members – new and returning	To be explored	In house possibly with external support	June 2025	To ensure members understand the legal framework for councillors
Planning training – compulsory for	All members – new	To be explored	In house possibly with	June 2025	To enable new and returning members to

those appointed to planning committee and neighbourhood planning committee	and returning		external support		understand the Council's role on planning and neighbourhood planning functioning, responsibilities and policies.
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Adopted by Council 23.10.24

Review date- April 2026