

Stretton Grandison Group Parish Council Training and Development Policy – Adopted 14th May 2018

1. Introduction

The Parish Council is committed to ensuring its councillors and staff are trained to the highest standard and kept up to date with all new legislation. To support this, funds are allocated to a training budget each year to enable staff and councillors 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.

In this document training and development are defined as follows:

- **Training** is a form of development which specifically addresses the acquisition and development of new knowledge and skills, or fills gaps in existing knowledge and skills, both of which are required for adequate performance in the workplace (i.e. parish council).
- **Development** is a short-form for people development, which can involve a wide range of learning activities (including training) all of which are aimed at improving and sustaining workplace performance in terms of knowledge, skills and behaviours.

2. Policy Statement

The 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, the Clerk and volunteers are suitably equipped with knowledge and skills to carry out their roles and maintain effective working practices. The Council will procure or provide such training and development opportunities as it deems necessary and relevant.

3. Training and Development Activity

The Parish Council consists of nine elected councillors and employs one part-time Clerk. On occasion volunteers provide invaluable support to the Council. Training and development for each of these groups will be regularly reviewed.

4. Training and Development for Councillors

- a) Attendance at induction sessions explaining the role of councillors;
- b) provision of a Councillor Information Handbook containing copies of the Standing orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct, policies of the Council and other information deemed relevant;
- c) training on the use of the General Power of Competence – if relevant;
- d) access to relevant courses provided by bodies such as the Herefordshire Association of Local Councils (HALC);
- e) expenses for attending briefings, consultations and other general meetings for councillors in the Herefordshire Council area, and;
- f) circulation of documentation such as briefings, newsletters and magazines.

5. Training and Development for the Clerk

- a) Induction session explaining the role of the Clerk;
- b) provision of copies of the Standing orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct, policies of the Council and other information deemed relevant;
- c) gaining the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) within 12 months of appointment;
- d) any other training relevant to the proficient discharge of their duties such as IT, legal powers, finance and understanding the planning system, identified through regular training needs assessments;

- e) attendance at relevant local meetings of bodies such as the Association of Local Council Clerks (ALCC) and briefings by HALC;
- f) subscription to relevant publications and advice services;
- g) provision of Local Council Administration by Charles Arnold Baker and other relevant publications, which will remain the property of the Council;
- h) arranging mentoring opportunities with suitably qualified Clerks from neighbouring parishes if needed, and;
- i) regular feedback from the Chairman of the Council in their performance.

6. Training and Development for Volunteers

- a) Briefings on relevant health and safety matters and the scope of their work prior to starting;
- b) assessment of their skill, knowledge and capacity to complete the task in hand;
- c) briefing on the safe use of any equipment provided by the Council, and;
- d) training for volunteers will not be beyond that which is deemed necessary for their role.

7. Identification of Training Needs

- a) Training requirements for councillors will usually be identified by themselves, the Chairman and Clerk. Opportunities to attend courses will be investigated by the Clerk and brought to the attention of Council;
- b) annually, the Council will formally review this policy and the training needs of councillors and the Clerk at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council;
- c) training needs for the Clerk will be identified through the recruitment process for new clerks, including application form and interview, formal and informal discussions and annual staff appraisal, and;
- d) the Clerk is expected to keep up-to-date with developments in the sector and highlight to the Council any training required.

8. Training Resources

- a) Annually, an allocation will be made in the budget each year as required to enable reasonable training and development. The amount will be reviewed at the meeting where the Council sets a budget, usually **January**;
- b) annually, the Council will consider an allocation in the budget for the payment of a subscription to the SLCC and HALC to enable the Clerk and Councillors to take advantage of their training courses and conferences, and;
- c) the purchases of relevant resources such as publications will be considered on an ongoing basis.

9. Evaluation and Review

- a) 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 identification of training needs process (section 8);
- b) training will be reviewed in the light of changes to legislation or any quality systems relevant to the Council; new qualifications; new equipment; complaints received or incidents which highlight training needs and requests from Councillors, the Clerk or volunteers, and;
- c) the Clerk will maintain a record of training that they, councillors and volunteers attend.

A commitment to training and development greatly assists in achieving good governance and an effective system of risk management. Ongoing training and development is key to ensuring a positive approach to health and safety is embedded throughout the council. It is also acknowledged that undertaking training and development is a clear indication of continuing professional development.

