

WRIGHTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

TRAINING POLICY

PURPOSE OF LEARNING

Wrightington Parish Council believe that Parish Councillors and Clerks development and learning should be an integral part of the Council's strategic planning, so that each can perform their individual jobs effectively and, in doing so, ensure that the Council achieves its objectives.

The central aim is therefore to provide an environment where continuous development can take place and where Councillors and the Clerk are supported and enabled to meet the changing demands and priorities of Wrightington Parish Council and associated service users.

To achieve this aim, learning and development needs will be regularly reviewed and Councillors and the Clerk will be encouraged to play an active part in identifying their own learning needs, selecting appropriate learning methods and in assessing the outcomes and effectiveness of their learning.

OPTIONS FOR LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT MAY INCLUDE:

- On the job learning/learning from others in the organisation.
- Internal workshops for groups or teams.
- Attending courses run by LALC, NALC, the Society of Local Councils, County and Borough Councils or other providers.
- Visits to other organisations.
- Cascading of training from others in the Council.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Introduction

Wrightington Parish Council operates an informal introduction programme which helps Councillors and Clerks to familiarise themselves with the Council, get to know others and to become more quickly at ease in their new environment. All new Councillors will be introduced to Wrightington Parish Councillors, the Clerk, our aims, history, goals and targets, all Parish Council Policies, working practices and procedures as detailed in the Parish Councillors Information Pack to ensure that they are able to effectively represent the Council to outside agencies.

Identifying and assessing learning needs

Wrightington Parish Council believes that this should be an ongoing process for all Councillors and Clerks. Individual, and collective, Councillor and Clerks learning needs will be identified during the year and suitable and appropriate learning methods will be identified. The Clerk will ensure that the learning needs of Wrightington Parish Council are reviewed annually with members of the Council.

Recording, Monitoring and Evaluation

The Parish Council will ensure that a clear procedure is in place for recording, monitoring and evaluating learning activities. Councillors will provide feedback on learning and development activities through the appraisal procedures. Feedback will be communicated to Wrightington Parish Council who will determine the effectiveness of Councillors and Clerks Training programmes and determine any amendments which may be required.

Annual learning plan and budget

Wrightington Parish Council will initiate the development of an annual learning plan in consultation with Parish Councillors and the Clerk. It will include areas of learning development specified by the Parish Councils together with learning needs identified by individuals and Councillor groups. The plan will be developed prior to the annual budget discussions so that adequate resources for learning can be built into the Precept request.

Time off for learning, reimbursement of travel costs and payment of subscriptions, membership and course fees will be at the discretion of the Council. A programme of learning will be agreed at the beginning of each 4 year electoral term following which funding will either be secured from alternative sources or included in future budgets once costings have been realistically assessed. The programme may be amended or added to during the year, to take account of new priorities, or in response to newly identified learning needs.

LEARNING/TRAINING REQUESTS

To assess the appropriateness/usefulness of required training all Councillors wishing to access training must check whether

- (a) Other Councillors/Clerks have attended the same course
- (b) Check feedback/comments of Councillors/Clerks
- (c) Make observations as to whether learning/information can be obtained directly from previous Councillors who have attended.

Regardless of comments (positive/negative), should a member feel it in their best interest to attend a particular training course, they must:

- Make a formal request to the Parish Council.
- Requests for training must be appropriate to the role of a Councillor/Clerk.
- It is the responsibility of each individual to record details of training request detailing:
 - i) a description of the learning/training.
 - ii) agreed objectives/aims or outcomes of the learning/training.
 - iii) method of learning/training.
 - iv) resources needed to undertake the training if any (at the discretion of the Council.
 - v) cost.

All requests for training will be discussed and must receive authorisation from the Parish Council. However, the availability of learning resources will depend on factors such as budgetary constraints, work commitments and learning priorities necessary to fulfil the Parish Councils objectives. In practice, there may be occasions when a learning request is postponed or refused due to other priorities.

Individual Councillors/Clerks may be interested in obtaining accreditation or a nationally recognised qualification. Wrightington Parish Council will be sympathetic to requests of this sort, where the learning has a demonstrable relevance to Wrightington Parish Councils objectives, and in cooperation with the Councillor/Clerk will seek to provide appropriate support and assistance if possible.

The Clerk to Wrightington Parish Council is available at all times for advice, assistance and support to Parish Councillors, and Wrightington Parish Council holds reference materials on a wide range of Parish Council related business and issues.

MONITORING PURPOSES

Training Evaluation

To assist Wrightington Parish Council, on completion of training, all Councillors and Clerks must report the outcome of the training in the following ways:

- An evaluation form must be completed and forwarded to the Clerk to be kept in a training file to ensure that other Councillors/Clerks can readily access information relating to the training.
- It is advisable that the individual for his or her own personal record also keep a copy.