TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Introduction

Great Coates Village Council is committed to learning and development for all councillors and employees by identifying training requirements promptly and providing the necessary resources to provide the necessary training. This may include financial assistance, study leave, short courses and workshops and links with other policies.

The objectives of this policy are to encourage all councillors and employees to undertake appropriate learning and development activities.

Commitment to Training and Development

Great Coates Village Council recognises that its councillors and employees are its most important assets and is committed to encouraging everybody to enhance their skills, knowledge and qualifications through learning and development activities. Some learning is also necessary to ensure compliance with all legal and statutory requirements.

Great Coates Village Council are committed to continuous learning and development to enable councillors and employees to effectively contribute to achieving the council's aims and objectives by providing the highest quality representation and services.

Learning and Development

Learning and development improves the quality of the services and facilities provided by Great Coates Village Council and helps to enable the organisation to achieve its corporate aims and objectives. The skill base of employees is improved to produce confident and qualified staff working as an effective and efficient team and ultimately demonstrates that employees are valued.

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

Identification of Learning And Development Needs

Employees will be asked to identify their development needs with advice from others. Members' and employees' learning needs may also be identified through the interview process, line management, through the appraisal process and day to day discussion.

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Learning and development needs may also be identified due to:

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

Employees who wish to attend a learning course should discuss this with their line manager/Council and all requests will be considered positively.

New Councillors and Employees

All new councillors and employees will receive basic induction in the workings of the council, council policies and governance. This will also include council finance, assets, health, safety and welfare. Specific mandatory learning (such as an understanding of the Code of Conduct for Councillors) will be included as well as an assessment of any essential learning needed to effectively carry out the role. Any need identified in the assessment will be met in accordance with the Council's commitment to learning and development.

The council will provide all employees / members with a Council Handbook.

Corporate Learning

This is necessary to ensure that Members and employees are aware of their legal responsibilities and corporate standards e.g. Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities, Code of Conduct. Employees will be required to attend courses, workshops or seminars where suitable learning opportunities have been identified.

Financial Assistance

It is important to note that all learning must be appropriate to the needs of the council, relevant to the individual's role and 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. Members and employees will be required to attend the nearest venue offering the required development course or event unless an alternative is authorised by council in the interest of operational effectiveness or ensuring value for money.

The council will also consider:

- The impact on operational capability;
- The most economic and effective means of providing the learning;
- Provision and availability of the learning budget.

Members and employees can expect the following costs to be met by council for approved learning and development activities:

- The course fee;
- Examination fees;
- Associated membership fees;
- One payment to re-take a failed examination.

Members and employees attending financially assisted courses are required to inform the 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.

Great Coates Village Council operates a Return of Service agreement. Any employee undertaking post entry qualifications funded by the Council must be aware that, should they voluntarily leave the council's employment within two years of completing the qualification, they will be required to repay all costs associated with obtaining that qualification.

Study Leave

Employees who are given approval to undertake external qualifications are granted study time to attend day release courses, time to sit examinations; and study time and provision of study time must be agreed with the line manager/chairman prior to the course being undertaken.

Short Courses/ Workshops/ Residential Weekends

Where attendance is required out of normal working hours at a short course, an attendance allowance will be granted. Members and employees attending approved short courses/ workshops/ residential weekends can expect the following to be paid:

- The course fee;
- Travelling expenses in accordance with the council's current policy;
- Subsistence in accordance with the council's current policy.

Linking with other Council Strategies and Policies

Great Coates Village Council learning and development policy links with other council strategies, policies and activities; notably

- Risk Management Policy: a commitment to learning and development greatly assists in achieving good governance and an effective system of risk management.
- Health and Safety Policy: ongoing learning and development is critical to ensuring a positive approach to health and safety is embedded throughout the council.
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD).
- Continuous improvement.

Progress Reports

The clerk will report annually to the council detailing learning and development activities over the year, attendance and evaluation