



MEMBERS TRAINING POLICY

WRITTEN BY:

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NEW POLICY:

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INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Biddulph Town Council is committed to providing members with the necessary training and development opportunities to ensure that the council can meet its aims and objectives. The council will ensure that members are provided with the means to develop and enhance their skills and abilities to carry out their roles to the public and to the council.
- 1.2 All members are elected officials of the council and represent the whole electorate. Councillors must actively take part in council meetings and help to make council decisions. Council meetings must run effectively, efficiently and legally.
- 1.3 This policy outlines the council's approach to councillor training, funding of training and how to access it.
- 1.4 The council and members are subject to various requirements, for example, GDPR, and training will equip councillors to help them and the council comply with these requirements.
- 1.5 While training for councillors can't be mandatory, it should be understood that it is essential for all councillors to commit to appropriate training.

WHY DO WE NEED TRAINING?

- 2.1 There are a number of reasons why training is important:

- To gain a better understanding of council meeting procedures and decision making.
- To gain a clear understanding of the role of the council, councillors and duties of the council.
- To understand the legal duties and responsibilities of Town Councillors.
- To keep abreast of changes in legislation.
- To ensure familiarity with new equipment, process and working methods.
- To improve communication.
- To improve and re-fresh essential skills.

THE COUNCILS COMMITMENT TO TRAINING

3.1 The council is committed to developing its elected members in order to assist the council in achieving its objectives.

3.2 The council recognises that without training, councillors do not know the powers, duties and responsibilities of the council.

3.3 The council recognises that without training, councillors do not know their requirements to ensure good governance.

3.4 Councillor development and training is a joint commitment between the Chief Officer and councillors, and by working in partnership, appropriate investment in relevant training and development will be identified and resourced.

3.5 The council recognise that training is a key part of the role of a councillor.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

4.1 It's essential that councillors are given equal opportunity to develop their knowledge and learn new skills in order to become effective councillors.

4.2 Member development should be recognised as an integral part of the council's business.

4.3 Councillors will have training in a format that best suits their needs.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

5.1 The council recognises that new councillors will need to know what the role entails and build up their knowledge and skills, and experienced councillors need to refresh their skills and knowledge to meet the ever-changing legislation.

5.2 Following an election or co-option, the Chief Officer will arrange to meet with the new councillor to ensure they have access to relevant information to support decision-making. All new members will receive a councillor induction pack within one month of taking their seat and will be given the opportunity to attend a new councillor training course, such as 'Councillor Introduction' (or equivalent).

5.3 Continued investment and commitment to training and development are essential to the council if quality services and good governance and transparency are to be provided, maintained and continually improved on.

5.4 Members receiving training on specific subjects (for example planning, data protection, etc.) is of value to the council and its residents.

5.5 Any councillor wishing to be a member of the Planning Committee should consider attending 'Planning – Making Effective Representations' (or equivalent) training within three months of joining the committee.

5.6 Any councillor wishing to be a member of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee should consider attending 'Finance for Councillors' (or equivalent) training within three months of joining the committee.

5.7 All members are encouraged to attend training in relation to Equality and Diversity and Mental Health Awareness.

5.8 If a councillor is elected to the position of a committee chair or Mayor, they should consider attending 'Explore Chairmanship Skills' (or equivalent) within three months of their election.

5.9 The council will provide an adequate training budget each year for staff and member training.

5.10 All members are encouraged to attend further training.

5.11 All members will be kept informed of relevant training courses especially those offered by recognised sources, (the Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association and the National Association of Local Councils.)

5.12 Councillors are invited to meet with the Chief Officer and visit the council's properties/assets to further understand the councils assets and liabilities.

5.13 All members will be asked to complete a 'Councillor Skills Audit' form periodically (see Appendix 1), to identify any areas of training which they

would like to be considered, bearing in mind the 'Councillor – Schedule of Competencies' (Appendix 2).

5.13 Training should be refreshed at least every 2 years.

5.14 A record of all training completed by members will be kept.

ACCESSING TRAINING

6.1 Any councillor wishing to attend a training course or event should discuss the training with the Chief Officer.

6.2 Members will be able to claim back costs incurred for training, such as travel.

RELATED POLICIES

7.1 This policy should be read alongside the Town Council's:

- Induction, Training and Development Policy
- Councillor's Handbook
- Code of Conduct for Members
- Co-option Policy

APPENDIX 1

Councillor Skills Audit

Please complete the scoring sheet below.

If you answer 1 you identify that you have limited knowledge and would require support to increase this.

Answering 4 means you are confident in your ability, and may only require periodic refresher training.

Individual responses will not be shared with colleagues; a summary sheet will be presented to a meeting of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee periodically.

			1	2	3	4
Governance and Leadership						
1.	I understand Standing Orders					
2.	I understand Financial Regulations					
3.	I am confident that I can chair meetings effectively					
4.	I have a knowledge of the health and safety compliance activity we undertake to effectively manage our assets					
5.	I can manage risk effectively					
6.	I understand the requirements of data protection legislation					
7.	I understand the role of officers within the Town Council					
8.	I am clear about the Council's strategic priorities and direction of travel					
9.	I abide by the Code of Conduct and Civility and Respect agenda					
10.	I know where the main policies and procedures are on the Town Council website.					
People						
11.	I can manage conflict appropriately					
12.	I understand Human Resource requirements for staff management					
13.	I am comfortable liaising with stakeholders					
14.	I engage well with residents					
15.	I make myself available for residents					
16.	I have a good knowledge of equality legislation					
17.	I understand safeguarding requirements in relation to vulnerable residents					
Finance and Performance						
18.	I can prepare and monitor a budget					
19.	I understand the audit requirements for Town and Parish Councils					
20.	I understand the grants process					
21.	I am able to analyse performance data (e.g. access to reception services)					
22.	I have a good knowledge of how different council and partner budgets and funding opportunities work					
23.	I feel comfortable managing a project					

Digital and Marketing				
24. I am confident using IT				
25. I understand about how I should protect my data				
26. I am comfortable with a range of social media platforms				
27. I can navigate round the Town Council (and other) websites				
Personal skills				
28. I like to analyse information				
29. I am confident to take risks				
30. I am comfortable challenging ideas that don't seem right to me				
31. I can manage my own personal safety well				
32. I am organised and have good time management				
33. I regularly access training opportunities				

APPENDIX 2

Councillor – Schedule of Competencies

Requirement	Knowledge and Skills	Effective Behaviours
Understanding the Role of the Councillor	Understands a councillor’s individual role, responsibilities and limitations and the legal powers and responsibilities of the council as a corporate body.	Performs the role of councillor effectively in the council, our community and with partners. Clearly distinguishes between individual and collective council responsibilities and acts accordingly.
Understanding the Legal Basis of Council Services	Understands council services and the legal, policy, procedures and strategic frameworks that govern them.	Explains the council’s work clearly to the public and contributes constructively to the development of council services.
Understanding the Planning System	Understands planning law, the development control process and the importance of the local government plan and recognises the role of place and community plans.	Assesses planning applications against material considerations and relevant guidance and understands developer contributions, including Section 106 and community infrastructure levy contributions.
Conduct	Understands the ethical framework and code of conduct and appreciates the importance of integrity, accountability, transparency and openness.	Complies with the code of conduct at all times. Declares interests appropriately and seeks advice when required. Treats others with respect, acts with integrity, listens actively and remains calm in difficult situations.
Equality and Diversity	Understands equality and diversity legislation relevant to the role of a councillor and what constitutes respectful and inclusive behaviour.	Applies equality principles in decision-making and personal conduct and treats everyone with dignity and respect in all councillor activities.

Financial Governance and Accountability	Understands internal and external audit processes.	Engages constructively with audit processes and uses findings information to challenge and support effective financial management.
Attendance and Preparation	Understands the importance of regular attendance and preparation for meetings.	Attends meetings and events regularly and gives them appropriate priority. Reads and prepares for agenda papers in advance.
Information Management	Understands how to interpret and manage information and data. Understands confidentiality, data protection and freedom of information requirements.	Handles information securely and appropriately, respects confidentiality and responds appropriately to freedom of information requests.
Use of ICT and Social Media	Uses standard office applications and conducts council business electronically. Understands and complies with the council's social media policy.	Communicates effectively with officers and members using electronic systems.
Working with the Chief Officer and Employees	Understands the role of the Chief Officer and council employees. Understands employment, recruitment and appointment processes.	Maintains professional relationships and appropriate boundaries. Contributes effectively to appointment panels using fair HR and equality principles.
Health and Safety	Understands health and safety legislation and risk assessment.	Promotes a safe working environment and takes reasonable steps to ensure personal and others safety.
Continuing Professional and Personal Development	Identifies personal learning and development needs.	Takes responsibility for ongoing development and applies learning in the role.

Financial Capability	Understands how councils are funded and how budgets are set. Demonstrates personal numeracy skills.	Participates effectively in budget setting and makes informed, evidence-based financial decisions.
Sustainable Development	Understands long-term issues affecting future generations.	Considers long-term environmental, social and financial impacts in decision making.
Local Leadership	Understands community structures, issues and priorities.	Represents and advocates for local communities. Communicates effectively between the council and the public.
Chairing	Understand meeting procedures, rules of debate and agenda management.	Chairs meetings confidently and fairly, ensuring effective participation. Manages agendas, debate and outcomes efficiently. Works closely with the Chief Officer to deliver effective committee work programmes.
Civic Leadership	Understands standing orders and council procedures. Possesses strong public speaking, relationship management and representational skills.	Represents the council professionally at civic events. Demonstrates strong leadership, communication and interpersonal skills.