



## STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL

### TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT POLICY 2026

#### VERSION 2

##### **POLICY STATEMENT**

Stotfold Town Council is committed to the ongoing training and development of all Members, employees and volunteers to ensure high standards of service delivery and good governance. Training will be delivered equitably and in line with the Council's strategic plans and service objectives.

The Council will commit to:

- Develop employees, volunteers and Members to achieve the objectives of the Council.
- Regularly review and plan for training and development of employees, volunteers and Members.
- Regularly evaluate the investment in training and against agreed budgets and outcomes.

##### **Aims and Objectives**

- To ensure all individuals have the knowledge and skills required for their roles.
- To support the achievement of the Council's objectives and service delivery plans.
- To promote a culture of continuous improvement and professional development
- To support resilience, wellbeing, and leadership succession planning across the organisation.

##### **Identification of Training Needs**

There are various circumstances in which training needs may arise such as:

- Induction processes for new staff, councillors, and volunteers.
- Appraisals and performance reviews.
- Legislative and regulatory changes.
- Requests from individuals or line managers.
- Council priorities and service delivery requirements.
- Changes in internal systems
- New or reviewed qualifications become available.
- Accidents or professional error
- Introduction of new equipment including new working methods or practices
- Complaints to the Council
- Devolved services/delivery of new services.
- Emerging skills needs, including digital transformation, data management and accessibility requirements.

## **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**

The Council will provide equal access to training and development opportunities for all, making reasonable adjustments for those with protected characteristics in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

### **Officers**

An employee who feels they have a training need should in the first instance, discuss this with their line manager. Similarly, if it is felt that an employee needs training, the line manager will discuss this with the employee. Training needs should not be left to be identified during the annual appraisal process as they may arise throughout the year.

The training need will be reviewed and assessed against the objectives of the Council, the responsibilities of the role and the development of the employee.

The current or any new Clerk is expected to hold CiLCA or equivalent and the Clerk must be a Member of the Society of Local Council Clerks with training provided no less than the minimum requirement of Continuous Professional Development (12 points).

### **New Councillors and Employees**

All new Councillors and employees will receive basic induction training on the workings of the Council, Council policies and governance. For staff this will include manual handling, cyber security and health and safety. For Councillors this will include Council finance, cyber security, assets and Code of Conduct Training.

### **Members**

A Members folder will be provided for all newly elected Members setting out the Council's policies and procedures including Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

If a Councillor feels they have a training need, they should discuss this in the first instance with the Clerk. They will be able to assess the request and ascertain whether this is something that all Councillors may be interested in/benefit from undertaking.

The Council will undertake a training needs analysis with Councillors soon after each Annual Meeting of the Council in May. This will encourage councillors to look at any personal development areas or knowledge gaps as a councillor that they wish to address and importantly, consider any training needs they feel they may have with regards to Committees they are member of following the Annual Meeting. This is particularly important with regards to committees who deal with human resources, finance and planning. On completing the training needs analysis, the results will be collated and reviewed by the Clerk, with training courses being identified by the Clerk.

Training should be prioritised to those Members who had not attended training previously. The Clerk will coordinate attendance to balance representation and share learning across the Council.

Member training will be approved by the Clerk in consultation with the Governance and Resources Committee Chair, to ensure consistency and transparency.

## **Volunteers**

Volunteers will receive training relevant to the activities that they are undertaking. This will include health and safety, safeguarding (where applicable), and role-specific training to ensure volunteers can contribute safely and effectively.

## **Training Methods**

Where possible, training will be offered in a variety of formats (e.g., online, in-person, blended) and at flexible times to accommodate diverse needs, including accessibility requirements and caring responsibilities.

There are different ways in which training, and development can be achieved:

- Internally - If training can be given utilising the in-house expertise and knowledge, this possibility will be explored. This often includes general IT training, training of specific work procedures or Council specific practices and legislation.
- Day Workshops/Seminars - When Council officers receive information on workshops and seminars, this is shared with employees and Councillors, where relevant
- Conferences - Details of conferences are shared with employees and Councillors, again where relevant.
- Professional Qualifications - Training towards a professional qualification will often be sourced from an external provider and completed at a local training establishment.
- External Training Providers - There are numerous trainers available. When sourcing training from an external provider, the Council will also seek to obtain the best price and where possible, from a nearby location. This may involve working with other local Councils to pool together to organise relevant training.

## **Financial Implications**

Each year, as part of the annual budget setting process, the Council will include a training budget for employees and Councillors. When calculating this, any training needs identified in the annual appraisal process and councillors training needs analysis will be taken into consideration.

All training will be subject to budget availability and prioritised in line with Council objectives.

For approved courses, the Council will cover the course fee, examination fees, associated membership fees and one payment to re-take a failed examination.

Employees or Councillors attending training outside of Stotfold, may submit an expense claim to cover travel costs to and from the venue. Where practical and possible, if there is more than one attendee from the Council, car-pooling or shared travel arrangements should be made.

## Recouping Costs

It is standard practice that where the Council is covering the costs of an employee's training course or qualification, (this being a course or qualification rather than a one-day course or workshop), a written agreement will be made where a repayment scale will apply (e.g., 100% if leaving within 6 months, 50% within 12 months, 25% within 18 months), unless otherwise agreed. Apprenticeships are excluded from this requirement.

## Time Off Work

The Council will grant paid time off work for one off training courses lasting one day or less, providing these are approved with the line manager. Where a training course or workshops falls on an employee's non-working day, time off in lieu (TOIL) may be accrued for hours in attendance at the training.

An employee undertaking a longer training course or qualification *may request study leave or use TOIL, depending on the nature of the course and agreement with the Clerk.*

Where an employee requires time off work for an exam or study leave prior to an exam, the Council will be flexible to ensure this time off can be granted using either TOIL or annual leave, providing adequate notice is given by the employee.

## Evaluation

Key performance indicators will be set annually (e.g., proportion of staff completing core training; councillors completing induction within 3 months; training budget spent vs allocated). These will be reported to the Governance and Resources Committee.

## Record Keeping

Each employee and Councillor have a Training Log which is held by the Clerk. This log should be updated with any training undertaken. Copies of any attendance or qualification certificates should also be given to the Clerk to be held with these records.

These records will be kept in accordance with the Council's Document Retention policy, after which they will be disposed of as confidential waste.

## Reporting and Monitoring

Governance and Resources Committee is responsible for oversight of this policy. The Town Clerk will report annually on training undertaken, needs identified, outcomes, and expenditure.

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### Revisions:

Version	Date	Comments
1	Adopted January 2024	N/A
2	Reviewed January 2026	Reviewed against NALC and SLCC training policies