



COUNCILLOR LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Adopted by Council 25th September 2015

Reviewed July 2022

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Leighton-Linslade Town Council is an organisation in which learning is valued. Members and staff will be supported to undertake the training and development which they need to help them achieve and maintain a high standard of performance and all will be given encouragement and support to achieve their full potential. This will allow them to provide a proper level of service to the people of Leighton Buzzard and Linslade.

2 Councillor Induction

- 2.1 The Town Council will offer induction information and training to all new town councillors after their election or co-option onto the council.

- 2.2 A new councillor information pack will be provided which will contain essential documentation such as:

- Contact details for staff
- Organisation structure
- Committee structure
- Calendar of meetings
- Code of Conduct and Dispensations procedure
- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations
- Budget for current financial year
- Relevant policies such as the Councillor/Officer Protocol

- 2.3 After each four-yearly local election, the new Council members will be offered induction training which is likely to include:

- An introduction to the legal framework governing parish councils (i.e. legal powers and duties)
- An introduction to Town Council operations, activities, objectives and services
- An introduction to Town Council finances
- An overview of staffing
- An introduction to standing committees and current year work plan
- An overview of how formal Council/committee meetings operate

- 2.4 Councillors who join at another time, for example after a by-election or co-option, will be offered one-to-one induction training and support as they commence their role.

2.5 All new councillors will receive training on the use of any appropriate Council software, for example meeting management software or Council email accounts.

2.6 Councillors using Town Council owned devices will receive training on the use and care of devices.

3. Specialist training

3.1 Where possible and practicable, specialist training will be provided to build councillor knowledge in specific areas. This could include for example:

- Code of conduct
- Planning
- Data protection
- Climate emergency
- Use of social media

3.2 Specialist training may be provided in several ways such as:

- In-house training by officers
- Training by third parties, in person or online
- Access to online training modules
- Access to online webinars
- Sector specific training, led by the Bedfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils or the National Association of Local Councils

3.3 Specialist training will include the provision of specific Chairmanship knowledge and skills training, available to all elected Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Council, its committees, sub-committees, Task and Finish Groups or working parties. Chairmanship training is optional but highly recommended as it requires a degree of familiarity with Standing Orders as well as other relevant policies and procedures. Chairmanship training will ordinarily be offered at the start of each municipal year (May/June).

3.4 Availability, format and provider of training may depend upon available budget. At present there is no specific budget line for councillor training but there may be scope to meet reasonable costs from other budget lines.

4 Ongoing councillor support

4.1 Individuals or groups of councillors may request repeated or additional training throughout their term of office, to meet individual or collective learning needs.

- 4.2 Should any changes to elected Chairmanships take place mid-year, training can be made available to any newly elected Chair or Vice-Chair upon request.
- 4.3 At any time, councillors may seek guidance from officers in respect of access to Council documents or other sources of advice/information to assist them in the performance of their role. Information will be provided subject to any caveats as set out in the Council's information management, data protection or other applicable policies.
- 4.4 Councillors may expect that when asked to make decisions at meetings of Council/committees, they will be provided with relevant background information, legal or policy context and budgetary considerations in order to fulfil their role fully.
- 4.5 Meeting papers will, whenever possible, be published/circulated with meeting agendas approximately 10 days in advance of a scheduled meeting, allowing sufficient time for careful consideration and to raise any questions or requests for additional information in advance of the meeting.
- 4.6 Officers will endeavour to provide councillors with regular updates on all operational activity by way of the weekly councillor e-newsletter. This will include any appropriate updates from sector bodies or the local authority (e.g. press releases/road closure information).