



PETERLEE TOWN COUNCIL

LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT POLICY

VERSION 2: JULY 2020

SUMMARY

This document sets out Peterlee Town Council's Learning & Development Policy. It sets out the Council's approach to promoting learning and development for Members and Officers that includes training, appraisal and other forms of personal and professional development.

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July 2020

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INTRODUCTION

This document sets out Peterlee Town Council's Learning & Development Policy. It sets out the Council's approach to promoting learning and development for Members and Officers that includes training, appraisal and other forms of personal and professional development and also:

- The Council's commitment to training
- The identification of training needs
- Corporate training
- Financial assistance
- Study leave
- Short courses/workshops
- Evaluation of training
- Links with other policies
- Reporting on progress

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Encourage Members and staff to undertake appropriate training, learning and personal and professional development to enable them to make the best possible contribution to the Council and to the people of Peterlee
- Set strategic objectives against which to consider and evaluate training needs to assist in budget allocation
- Help to provide managers with a framework that enables the fair allocation of training and training budgets
- Ensure that all training is evaluated to assess its value and maximise the opportunity for learning

COMMITMENT TO TRAINING

Peterlee Town Council is committed to the ongoing training and development of all Councillors and employees to enable them to make the most effective contribution to the Council's aims and objectives in providing the highest quality representation and services for the people of the Peterlee.

According to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), training can be defined as: *"A planned process to develop the abilities of the individual and to satisfy current and future needs of the organisation."*

Learning and development describes the formal and informal efforts to improve the performance and self-fulfilment of its employees and elected members through a variety of educational methods and programs. We want people who are happy and successful in their roles and will make all reasonable effort to achieve this. In modern local government, these efforts can take on a broad range of applications—from instruction in highly specific job or personal skills to long-term professional development. In recent years, learning and development has emerged as a formal business function, an integral element of strategy, and a recognised profession with distinct theories and methodologies. More and more companies of all sizes have embraced 'continual learning and professional development' and other aspects of training and development as a means of promoting employee growth and acquiring a highly skilled work force.

The Town Council recognises that in past years this is an area that has been neglected and has resulted in a significant risk to the Council, as recognised in the strategic risk register.

Peterlee Town Council recognises that its most important resource is its Members and officers and is committed to encouraging both Members and officers to enhance their knowledge and qualifications through further training.

Some training is necessary to ensure compliance with legal and statutory requirements – including standards of public office, health & safety, equality & diversity, data protection, etc. The Council expects senior and specialist officers to undertake a programme of continuing professional development (CPD) in line with the requirements of their roles.

Circumstances that may present the need for training include:

- Legislative requirements i.e. First Aid, Fire Safety, Manual Handling, Food Safety, Data Protection, Equality, etc.
- Changes in legislation
- Changes in systems
- New or revised qualifications become available

- Accidents
- Professional error
- Introduction of new equipment
- New working methods and practices
- Complaints to the Council
- A request from a member of staff or something highlighted as part of the Council's appraisal process
- Devolved services / delivery of new services

Employees who wish to be considered for a training course should discuss this in the first instance during their appraisal process where it will be determined whether the training is relevant to the Council's needs and/or service delivery. Any employee who is not satisfied with the conclusion of this assessment by their line manager may request a review with the Town Clerk, whose decision on the matter shall be final.

CORPORATE TRAINING

Corporate training is necessary to ensure that employees are aware of their legal responsibilities or corporate standards e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management and Equal Opportunities. Employees will be required to attend training courses, workshops or seminars where suitable training is identified, as per their written statement of particulars of employment.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

It is important to note that all supported training must be appropriate to the needs of the Council, be relevant to the individual's role and is subject to the availability of financial resources.

Each request will be considered on an individual basis and the benefits to the individual and the organisation will be identified.

In order to best ensure cost effectiveness, Members and employees will be required to attend the nearest college/venue offering the required course, unless an alternative is authorised by the Town Clerk in the interest of operational effectiveness or other value considerations including:

- Implication of employee release for training course(s) on the operational capability of the council

- The most economic and effective means of training
- Provision and availability of training budget.

For approved courses Members and employees can expect the following to be sponsored:

- The course fee
- Examination fees
- Associated membership fees
- One payment for a re-take a failed examination (subject to approval by the Town Clerk)

Members and officers attending courses assisted by the Council 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.

Peterlee Town Council operates a 'Return of Service' policy for any additional external training (i.e training that is above and beyond the direct training required for an employee to do their job, or as required in legislation (eg Health & Safety, etc). Any employee undertaking additional training funded by the Council must be aware that should they leave the Council's employment within one year of completion of the qualification they will be required to repay a proportion of the costs associated with the undertaking of such training.

The employee will be asked to sign an agreement to this effect before the commencement of the training (see Appendix 2).

The Council's total budget for Member and Officer training in 2018/19 is £17,000.

STUDY LEAVE

Employees who are given approval to undertake external qualifications will generally be granted the following:

- Study time to attend day-release courses
- Time to sit examinations

- Study time of one day per examination (to be discussed and agreed by line manager in advance). Provision of study time must be agreed with the line manager prior to the course being undertaken.

SHORT COURSES/WORKSHOPS/RESIDENTIAL WEEKENDS

Where attendance is required at a short course, paid leave will be granted to employees. Members and staff attending approved short courses/workshops/residential weekends can expect the following to be paid:

- The course fee (usually invoiced following the event)
- Travelling expenses in accordance with the Council's current policy
- Subsistence in accordance with the Council's current policy

EVALUATION OF TRAINING

Records of all training undertaken by employees will be kept in the personnel files of each member of staff.

As part of Peterlee Town Council's continuing commitment to learning and development, employees will be required to provide feedback on the value and effectiveness of the training they undertake highlighting in particular the key implications of new legislation, guidance and/or best practice for the ongoing efficiency and effectiveness of the authority.

A template evaluation form is attached as Appendix 3.

LINKING WITH OTHER COUNCIL POLICIES

Relationship with other Council policies:

- Equality of opportunity in all aspects of Member and officer development, as per the Council's Equality & Diversity Policy;
- A training policy and training record for both Members and staff is a requirement for the accreditation of the national Local Council Award Scheme;

- Risk Management Policy – a commitment to Training and Development greatly assists in achieving good governance and an effective system of Risk Management;
- Health and Safety Policy – ongoing training and development is key to ensuring a positive approach to Health and Safety is embedded throughout the authority;
- Undertaking training is a clear indication of Continuing Professional Development for those employees with professional qualifications.

REPORTING ON PROGRESS

The Clerk will report annually to the Resources Committee and/or Council, detailing attendance at training over the year and a summary of feedback from the evaluation forms completed. This information will be collated by the Corporate Services Manager.

CONCLUSION

The adoption of this learning and development policy is intended to achieve a number of objectives for the Council. It is a demonstration of the Council's commitment to continuing professional development and enhancing the skills of both Elected Members and staff.

The adoption of a training or learning and development policy has a practical implication for the Council's budget and ensures that the Council is aware of the implication of its commitments and allocates adequate and appropriate funding to support these aspirations and commitments.

Appendix 1: COMMITMENT TO OFFICERS AND MEMBERS

1. Peterlee Town Council has a policy for Learning and Development based in this document and a commitment to funding in its regular budget.
2. Peterlee Town Council supports the concept of investing in life-long Learning and Development for members and officers and will commit an appropriate proportion of its budget on an annual basis.
3. Peterlee Town Council will work closely with the County Durham Association of Local Councils (CDALC) and avail itself of the resources of NALC/SLCC and other bodies as appropriate to ensure high quality Learning and Development programmes.
4. Peterlee Town Council makes the following commitment to its members: that every new Member of the Council whether elected or co-opted will be offered training to an adequate standard within a year of taking office. In addition, the Town Clerk will make best efforts to ensure that all Members receive additional training to take account of legislative changes and new initiatives.
5. Peterlee Town Council makes the following commitment to its officers and employees of the Council: that they will be trained to an adequate standard as set out in prevailing legislation, Local Authority standards and reflecting the aspirations of the Council as soon as possible upon appointment and on an on-going and rolling programme reinforcing a commitment to professional development and the requirements of the appraisal and development process.

Appendix 2: Learning Agreement Template

UNDERTAKING TO REPAY COSTS INCURRED DURING ADDITIONAL TRAINING COURSES

This Agreement is dated **** and is made between:

(“the Employee”)

And

Peterlee Town Council (“the Employer”)

Whereas:

- A. The Employee is employed by the Employer as a *****
- B. The Employee has obtained a place in relation to a course of study *****

Please note:

Additional Training is defined as any training outside of the direct training an employee is required to have in allowing them to perform their job as determined by the company and or by the Health and Safety Executive.

It is hereby agreed and declared that:

- 1) In consideration of the Employer agreeing to meet the costs of the Course which are set out in the Schedule to this Agreement ***** the Employee undertakes to reimburse to the Employer the costs if:
 - i) he/she voluntarily withdraws from or terminates the Course early without the Employer’s prior written consent;
 - ii) he/she is dismissed or otherwise compulsorily discharged from the Course, unless the dismissal or discharge arises out of the discontinuance generally of the Course;
 - iii) his/her employment is terminated by the Employer for any reason prior to completion of the Course; or
 - iv) he/she resigns from the employment of the Employer either prior to completion of the Course or within (12 months) after the end of the Course, except that, in the latter case, the amount which would otherwise be due to the Employer shall be reduced by [1/12th] part for each complete calendar month after the end of the Course during which the Employee remains employed by the Employer.

2) To the extent permitted by law, the Employee agrees that the Employer may deduct a sum equal to the whole or part of the Costs due under the terms of this Agreement from his/her wages (as defined in section 27 of the Employment Rights Act 1996) or from any other allowances, expenses or other payments due to the Employee.

3) The amount due to the Employer under the terms of this Agreement is a genuine attempt by the Employer to assess its loss as a result of the termination of the Employee's employment and takes into account the derived benefit to the Employer. This Agreement is not intended to act as a penalty on the Employee upon termination of his/her employment.

SIGNED:

.....

Employee

SIGNED:

.....

[Town Clerk / Manager]

Ian Morris

NB. This Agreement should be signed by both parties prior to the commencement of the Course.

Appendix 3: Learning Evaluation Form

Learning & Development Policy External Event Evaluation & Progress Report Form

The completion of a course evaluation form is a mandatory requirement for all external course permission. Please complete and return this form within one calendar month of the end of your event or course. Thank You.

Personal Details

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Job Title: _____ Email (if relevant): _____

Event Details

Title of Event: _____

Event Organiser: _____

Event Location: _____

Start & End Date: _____

Event Evaluation

1) Did the event meet your expectations?

Fully Mainly Partly Hardly Not at all

2) Do you consider this event to be good value for money?

Definitely Somewhat Not at all

3) Please rate the quality of:

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Tutor(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Event content	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Event Materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information from the event organisers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4) Which parts of the event will be most useful to you?

5) Which parts of the event will be least useful to you?

6) In what ways will you be able to benefit your workplace as a result of having attended this event?

7) Would you recommend this course to other Town Council Members or staff? Please give your reasons:

7) Other Comments

Thank you for taking the time to complete this evaluation.

Please return by email to clerk@peterlee.gov.uk or in hard copy to the
Town Clerk at Shotton Hall.