

EAST PECKHAM PARISH COUNCIL - LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Background Information

KALC continues to evolve its **Learning and Development Programme**, with new topics being added to its already extensive list of over 50 modules. The L&D programme provides four themed annual Conferences: Clerks Conference, Councillors Conference, Finance Conference and Planning Conference, bi-annual conferences on Chairmanship and Resilience & Emergency Planning and modular courses.

With legislation continually changing and new powers being devolved down from central government to local government, the KALC Executive Committee strongly encourages all Councils to invest in learning and development for both their members and officers.

The KALC Executive Committee strongly encourages all Councils to introduce a Training Budget, Training Policy and Training Plan or to revise existing policies.

The Clerk and any members who have attended any of the KALC events and complete the courses already have an impressive portfolio of educational and professional achievement in Local Council law and practice. These half day modular training courses are demand led and work with smaller groups to assist personal development and the long term aims of the Parish Council. A full brochure of KALC courses is available on the KALC website, which allows members to select the courses more efficiently.

KALC has also included a Councillors Development Roadmap on the website to help navigate the courses on offer to Councillors to help them undertake their important role. At the same time KALC also offers established suites of training for the *Certificate in Local Council Administration* (CiLCA) and on the new General Power of Competency and will be looking at running other accredited Courses later this year.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document forms the Council's Training and L & D Policy. It sets out:
 - 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
- 1.2 The objectives of this strategy are to:
 - Encourage Members and the Clerk to undertake appropriate training/L&D
 - Allocate training in a fair manner
 - Ensure that all training is evaluated to assess its value

2. Commitment to Training

- 2.1 EPPC is committed to the ongoing training and development of all Councillors and the Parish Clerk 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 town/village.
- 2.2 According to the Chartered Institute of Personal and Development (2007), 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, ongoing efforts that are made within organizations to improve the performance and self-

fulfilment of their employees and in our case members (i.e. Councillors) through a variety of educational methods and programs. In the modern local government, these efforts have taken on a broad range of applications—from instruction in highly specific job skills to long-term professional development. In recent years, training 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 other aspects of training and development as a means of promoting employee growth and acquiring a highly skilled work force.

- 2.3 EPPC recognises that it's most important resource is its Members and its Parish Clerk and is committed to encouraging both Members and the Clerk enhance their knowledge and qualifications through further training. Some training is necessary to ensure compliance with all legal and statutory requirements.
- 2.4 The Council expects the Parish Clerk to undertake a programme of continuing Professional development (CPD) in line with the requirements of their requisite professional bodies.
- 2.5 Providing training yields a number of benefits:
 - Improves the quality of the services and facilities that EPPC provides;
 - Enables EPPC to achieve its corporate aims and objectives;
 - Improves the skills base of the Parish Clerk and members;
 - Produces a confident, highly qualified Parish Clerk working as part of an effective and efficient team; and
 - Demonstrates that the Parish Clerk is valued.
- 2.6 Training and development will be achieved by including a realistic financial allocation for training and development in the annual budget, as well as taking advantage of any relevant partnership or in-house provision available.
- 2.7 The process of development is as follows:
 - Training needs should be identified by considering the overall objectives of the organisation, as well as individual requirements.
 - Planning and organising training to meet those specific needs.
 - Evaluating the effectiveness of training.

3 The Identification of Training Needs

- 3.1 The Parish Clerk will be asked to identify his/her development needs during the annual appraisal. There are number of additional ways that the training needs of the Parish Clerk may be recognised:
 - Questionnaires
 - During formal interview/review
 - Following confirmation of appointment.
 - Formal and informal discussion
- 3.2 Members will be asked to identify their development needs with advice from the appropriate body or person: i.e. committee or nominated Learning & Development Officer during their periodic development review or regular meetings with the L & D officer. There are number of additional ways that the training needs of Members may be recognised:
 - Questionnaires
 - During review
 - Following election/co-option
 - Formal and informal discussion

- 3.3 Other circumstances may present the need for training:
- Legislative requirements i.e. First Aid, Fire Safety, Manual Handling.
 - 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
 - Devolved services / delivery of new services

3.4 The Parish Clerk might wish to be nominated for a training course and should discuss this in the first instance during their appraisal; where it will be determined whether the training is relevant to the authority's needs and/or service delivery.

4 Corporate Training: Necessary to ensure that the Parish Clerk is aware of his/her legal responsibilities or corporate standards e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management and Equal Opportunities. The Parish Clerk will be required to attend training courses, workshops or seminars where suitable training is identified.

5 Financial Assistance

5.1 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 the Parish Clerk will be required to attend the nearest college/venue offering the required course, unless an alternative is authorised by the Council in the interest of operational effectiveness or Best Value.

5.2 Other considerations include the following:

- 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

5.3 For approved courses Members and the Parish Clerk can expect the following to be sponsored:

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

5.4 Members and the Parish Clerk attending assisted courses are required to inform the Council 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.

5.5 EPPC operates a Return of Service agreement. Any employee undertaking post-entry qualifications funded by the Council must be aware that should they leave the employment of EPPC within two years of completion of the qualification they will be required to repay all costs associated with the undertaking of such training. If the employee takes up employment with another Local Authority an exemption to this clause may be granted.

6 Study Leave

- 6.1 The Parish Clerk if given approval to undertake external qualifications is to 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.

7 Short Courses/Workshops/Residential Weekends

- 7.1 Where attendance is required at a short course, paid leave will be granted to employees.
- 7.2 Members and the Parish Clerk 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

8 Evaluation of Training

- 8.1 Records of all training undertaken will be kept in the personnel files.
- 8.2 As part of EPPC's continuing commitment to training and development, those who have received training are asked 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.

9. **Reporting on Progress** – The Clerk will report annually to the Council detailing attendance at training over the year, as well as the inclusion of the Member and Parish Clerk evaluation of courses attended.

10. Linking with other Council Policies - Relationship with other Council policies:

- Equality of opportunity in all aspects of Member and officer development;
- A 'Statement of Intent' on training for both Members and staff is a requirement for the Re-accreditation of any national recognised charter marks.
- 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.

11. Conclusion

- 11.1 The adoption of a training or learning and development policy should achieve many benefits for the Council. It will assist in demonstrating that the Council is committed to continuing professional development and enhancing the skills of both Elected Members and the Parish Clerk.
- 11.2 The adoption of a training or learning and development policy has a practical implication for East Peckham Parish Council's budget and ensures that the Council is aware of the implication of its commitments and allocates adequate and appropriate funding in a long term and sustainable platform that supports these aspirations and commitments.

12. **Alternative Formats** : *Equality Act 2010*: EPPC as a committed and compliant Local Authority to all aspects of Equality Legislation will make every effort to ensure that access to material including this policy is available in alternative formats: please contact the Parish Office for further information.

13. **Freedom of Information:** In accordance with the *Freedom of Information Act 2000*, this document will be posted on the Council's Website www.eastpeckham-pc.gov.uk and copies of this document will be available for inspection on deposit in the Council Office.

Appendix 1:

14. **Commitment to Officers and Members**

- 14.1 EPPC has a fully integrated policy in the field of training, Learning and Development based in this document and the commitment to funding in its regular budget. EPPC supports the concept of investing in life long Learning and Development for members and Clerk and will commit an appropriate amount of its budget on a regular sustainable basis. The Council will work closely with the *Kent Association of Local Councils* and avail itself of the resources of the *SLCC* and other bodies as appropriate to ensure high quality Learning and Development programmes.
- 14.2 EPPC makes the following commitment to its members: that every new Member of the Council whether elected or co-opted will be trained or offered training to an adequate standard as set out by the Council and reflecting prevailing accepted standards within in a year of taking office. In addition skills audits will be acted upon to ensure specialist members receive additional training along with the bulk of the Council to take account of legislative changes and new initiatives.
- 14.3 EPPC 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 professional development.