



Councillor Training Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to clearly define Witney Town Council's position on the provision of training and development opportunities for its elected Councillors. The Council recognises the importance of equipping Councillors with the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies to effectively carry out their roles and represent the interests of their community.

Ongoing training is essential for ensuring that Councillors are kept up to date with legislative changes, emerging best practices, and evolving issues within the local government sector. Accordingly, the Council allocates an annual budget specifically for Councillor training and development.

Commitment to Learning and Development

The Council is committed to fostering a culture of continuous professional development among its Members. Participation in training and learning opportunities enables Councillors to develop a deeper understanding of governance, policymaking, and the complex matters affecting residents and stakeholders.

To support this commitment, the Council strongly encourages and endorses participation in the following forms of training and development:

- Attendance at conferences, seminars and short courses
- Online or external training
- In house training
- Shared in-house learning resources (books, journals)

These formats provide flexibility in how training is accessed and ensure a diverse range of topics and learning styles are catered to.

Partnership with Training Providers

The Town Council maintains subscriptions with, and works collaboratively alongside, several established public sector training and support organisations. These partnerships ensure that Councillors have access to high-quality, relevant training materials and opportunities.

The organisations the Council engages with include:

- Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils (National Association of Local Councils)
- Society of Local Council Clerks
- West Oxfordshire District Council
- Southeast Employers
- Breakthrough Communications

These bodies provide structured training programmes, informative resources, and professional advice designed to support effective local governance.

Training Categories

In order to facilitate clarity and consistency with training, all development opportunities are categorised according to their relevance and importance to the Councillor's role. These categories also assist in prioritising training within the available budget.

1. Mandatory Training

Mandatory training is a core requirement for all Councillors upon election to Witney Town Council. This training ensures that all Members are fully briefed on their statutory obligations, Council policies, and operational protocols.

If a Councillor has completed equivalent training with another organisation prior to their election to Witney Town Council, evidence of this training will be requested for review.

Examples of mandatory training include:

Generic training

- Councillor Induction (Witney Town Council specific)
- Code of Conduct
- Data Protection & Cyber Security

2. Desirable Training

Desirable training is strongly recommended and is tailored to enhance a Councillor's understanding of specific areas related to their roles and responsibilities within the Council. This training helps to build capacity and ensures effective and informed participation in decision-making.

Examples of desirable training include:

Role specific

- Roles & Responsibilities – Relevant to all Councillors
- Councillor Skills - Relevant to all Councillors
- Chair-ship - Relevant to those elected as Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chairs of Committees
- Planning - Relevant to those elected to serve on the Planning & Development Committee
- Finance including budgeting, audit and risk management - Relevant to those elected to serve on the Council's Policy, Governance & Finance Committee
- Human resources & Employment – Relevant to those elected to the Personnel Sub-Committee
- Climate, Environment & Biodiversity – Relevant to all Councillors and those elected to serve on the Climate & Biodiversity Committee.

Officers will circulate details of upcoming training opportunities throughout the year as they arise, to ensure that Councillors are kept informed of what is available.

Should you wish to discuss your individual training needs or would like support in identifying appropriate courses, please contact the Deputy Town Clerk.