

Streethay Parish Council

Councillor & Staff Training Policy

1. Councillor and Staff Training

Staff and Councillor training policy:

This Councillor and Staff Training Policy outlines the training and development (or continuous professional development) that councillors and staff can expect to receive. As the first tier of local government, Parish Councils are uniquely placed to make a major contribution to localism. If Parish Councils are to play a significant part in democracy, it is essential that councillors and staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities. Engaging in learning, training and development is essential in gaining experience and enabling both councillors and staff to understand their role and contribute fully to the democratic process.

There is a wide range of training available to Parish Councils. Sector-specific training is delivered through a number of different mechanisms and organisations at both national and local (county) level.

Councillors

On expressing an interest in joining the council:

Prospective councillors should first contact the Clerk to the council confirming that they are interested in joining the Council or filling the vacancy. The Clerk will ask the prospective Councillor to answer some eligibility questions or will ask the candidate to complete an application form.

On joining the council by election or co-option:

All new councillors will be given an induction pack approved by the Parish Council. Copies of the below information will either be emailed to Councillors as required or Councillors will be directed to the documents on the Parish Council website.

1. Good councillor guide
2. Streethay Parish Council's Code of Conduct for Parish Councillors
3. Streethay Parish Council's current Standing Orders and Financial Regulations
4. A timetable of all the scheduled council meetings for the year to 31st March

Background

Councillors are from a range of diverse backgrounds and bring different and valuable skills to the role. Despite this, few new councillors have extensive knowledge of the system of local government, how a council works or the full range of their roles and responsibilities. From their first council meeting councillors will be required to make important decisions on behalf of their communities and take responsibility for those decisions. Those decisions often involve significant use of public money, assets or natural resources. It is important that councillors have, or may quickly attain, a clear understanding of the system of local government, how the council works and the full range of their roles and responsibilities.

It is equally important that all councillors have ongoing opportunities to undertake appropriate skills development and training in areas needed to assist them to carry out their role effectively.

Staff

Training and Development

The council recognises that its employees are its principal asset. To ensure that the council can deliver the appropriate services to the community, it is essential that all employees are fully trained to perform their roles to the highest level. The responsibility for growth and development is shared between employees and the council. The council will support employees to develop the skills and experience needed for their roles and will work with employees to develop their abilities; and will identify time and budgets to enable this to happen.

Performance Management

The Council will undertake an annual appraisal with employees to review the past year's performance, identify training or development needs if required, and to plan for the coming year. The Clerk's appraisal will be undertaken by the Chair. The Clerk will undertake the appraisals of all other Council Staff.

Employees will be encouraged to discuss in an open and honest manner any ideas or issues they have concerning their employment. Appraisal forms can be obtained from the Parish Clerk.

Further training and refresher courses will be arranged where there is an identified need.

Training courses:

Many of the recommended training courses are run by the Staffordshire Parish Council Association (SPCA) or by Lichfield District Council (LDC). The Parish Council will pay for any training involved/required.

The following training is required for new councillors:

1. Essential Councillor Training – This must be completed within 6 months of attaining office or as soon as a course becomes available.
2. Any Councillor training, such as provided by SPCA for example on Finance or HR should be completed as required or agreed by the Council.

Further development:

1. Chairmanship Training
2. Refresher courses for all councillors where appropriate.

Other sources of support:

1. Working closely with another councillor acting as a mentor for at least the first three to six months of office where possible.
2. To complete Essential Councillor training within the first six months of office where possible.
3. Reading through council agendas and minutes of meetings and asking members of staff for an explanation or clarification of the various terms used.

4. Reading the various council sector publications that the council subscribes to for example SPCA .

Notification of Training Opportunities to Councillors

Any training or educational opportunities for councillors will be notified to councillors by email or via the SPCA bulletin from the Parish Clerk. If you wish to attend a certain training course, you must let the Clerk know as soon as possible for a place to be booked. If you are booked onto training that the Council are paying for, you must make sure that you attend that training.

Reviewed: May 2023

Next Review: July 2026