

Witham Town Council: Training Policy

Policy Overview

Witham Town Council (WTC) is committed to providing appropriate training opportunities for its employees and members, to enable them to undertake their duties more effectively.

Training is a planned process to develop the abilities of an individual, to satisfy the current and future needs of the organisation.

WTC recognises that training and development are essential to meeting legal duties in areas such as health and safety, fire safety and data protection, and to embedding equality, diversity and inclusion across all activities.

The Training Process

To achieve this, WTC is committed to:

Identifying training needs, in the light of the overall objectives of the organisation and the requirements of the individual by:

- Providing a New Councillor Pack to all new councillors, including outline and workings of the Council and Councillor Roles and Responsibilities
- Enrolling new Clerks on ILCA
- Circulating details of training courses which are available primarily from the Essex Association of Local Council (EALC) to all Councillors and Clerks
- Maintaining an up-to-date training and development plan and individual training records for all staff and councillors, to ensure mandatory and role-specific training is current and can be evidenced.
- Identifying needs from appraisals, feedback, formal and informal discussions. It is the responsibility of both members and employees to identify both their own training needs, and to make suggestions for the training needs of others.
- Options for training include:
 - Subject related training, e.g., planning, law, budgets
 - Personal Qualities e.g., time organisation, managing staff, giving presentations, chairmanship
 - Technical, e.g., web design and maintenance, new software
 - Health and Safety and Risk Management
 - Other, as identified
- Utilising a mix of delivery methods (including in-person, virtual, e-learning and self-directed study) to support different learning styles and operational needs.
- Training can take the form of courses, workshops, presentations, one to one training or the provision of training materials e.g., books and software.

Planning, organising and funding training to meet those needs by:

- Allocating an annual Training Budget
- Investigating and suggesting appropriate training to meet identified needs. It is likely that training would be sourced outside the Council.
- Undertaking the administration for training, i.e., booking, providing information, paying expenses.
- Prioritising training that is mandatory in law or regulation, including (where relevant to role): health and safety, fire safety, display screen equipment (DSE), manual handling, data protection and UK GDPR, and safeguarding.
- Ensuring that mandatory training is refreshed at appropriate intervals (for example, health and safety and fire safety typically annually, and data protection every 12–24 months, or more frequently where risk assessment requires).
- Ensuring that equality, diversity and inclusion awareness is incorporated into induction and ongoing development to support the Public Sector Equality Duty and good employment practice.

Evaluating the effectiveness of the training by:

- Seeking feedback from the attendee on the impact the training has had, either in improved understanding or output, resulting in better service provision and whether they would recommend the training as worthwhile.
- Reviewing annually what training has been undertaken, the cost and the impact and identify improvements for the following year.
- Monitoring completion rates for mandatory training and reporting any significant gaps or risks to the Policy and Resources Committee.
- Considering whether learning from external courses can be cascaded to colleagues or councillors (for example, through short briefings or sharing materials), to maximise value for money.

Training the Council

If the whole Council requires training on a particular subject, the clerk will source the appropriate qualified person to attend.

Where possible, WTC will work with sector bodies (e.g. EALC, NALC, SLCC) and neighbouring councils to commission or share cost-effective, high-quality training for members and officers.

Core areas where collective councillor training may be required include: governance and decision-making, code of conduct and standards, financial management, planning, risk management, and equality, diversity and inclusion.

Keeping the Council Up-to-Date

The Clerk (or delegated officer) will monitor relevant changes in legislation, statutory guidance and sector best practice, including updates from Government, the Health and Safety Executive, the Information Commissioner's Office, and the Local Government Association, and will recommend any necessary training in response.

The following sources will also be used to keep abreast of potential training needs:

- Clerks and Councils Direct which is published by National Association of Local Councils (NALC).
- EALC and the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) communications

- The Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) website.
- Subject specific websites as necessary.

Records and Data Protection

Accurate records of training undertaken by staff and councillors will be kept securely for appropriate periods and may be used as evidence of compliance in audits, inspections or proceedings.

Training records will be managed in line with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, ensuring that only necessary information is retained and that individuals' rights are respected.

Support from the Council

WTC is supported by the EALC. WTC will continue to support the Clerk as a member of the SLCC.

WTC will support senior and specialist staff to undertake continuing professional development (CPD) in line with the expectations of their professional bodies and role requirements.

Adopted: Minute 58(a) of Policy and Resources Committee held 29.3.2022

Reviewed: Policy and Resources Committee held 23rd March 2026

Next review date: March 2029

POLICY NO: WTC/008 - POLICY & RESOURCES