

NEWENT TOWN COUNCIL TRAINING

POLICY/STATEMENT OF INTENT

(Adopted by Council on 12th December 2016)

(Reviewed and Re-adopted without change on 22 January 2018, 29th January 2019, 27 January 2020; 28th February 2022, 23rd January 2023)

Newent Town Council aims to ensure that:

- Councillors fully understand their roles, duties and responsibilities and are therefore able to conduct the business of the Council as effectively and as efficiently as possible.
- Council employees are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to enable them to fulfil their duties; gain job enrichment, job satisfaction and the potential for career progression; and maintain effective and flexible working practises.

Newent Town Council seeks to achieve this aim by identifying the training needs of Councillors and staff, finding the means of satisfying those needs and then allowing the necessary time and other resources for such training programmes. These reflect the framework set out in A National Training Strategy for Parish and Town Councils.

It is important to note that Newent Town Council acknowledge the need for training to be of a continuous nature and as such actively encourages both Council Members and employees to 'request' training they too believe to be appropriate in addition to waiting to be advertised.

Scope and Types of Training Councillors

The 'advisory' assistance offered by the Town Clerk in essence starts for individual members as soon as they are elected.

From the level of a new Councillor's previous experience, they and the Town Clerk can soon identify the need and scope for initial training.

All new Councillors are actively encouraged to attend the GAPTC course **How to be a Good Councillor**, in-house training and inductions are also arranged as necessary.

All Councillors receive a Councillor Pack, which includes Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Strategic Plan, Good Councillor Guide and Councillor contact details. Documents that may be subject to an annual review, such as Standing Orders will be reissued to all Councillors upon amendments and all Councillors will be responsible for keeping their folders up to date.

The Town Clerk is required to keep abreast of all changes in legislation, policies and practices affecting the Council and to advise the Council accordingly.

By continually monitoring available courses, run for example by GAPTC, SLCC, NALC etc, the Town Clerk is able to make recommendations; thereby ensuring Councillors remain competent to deal with the Town Council's affairs efficiently and effectively.

If a Councillor changes their role, for example by becoming a 'Chairman' of a committee for the first time, that Councillor is encouraged to attend an appropriate course, such as GAPTC's Chairmanship to assist in this transition.

The Appraisal System

The Council operates an appraisal system for all staff as outlined in their Contract of Employment. The formal staff appraisal interview is conducted by the Town Clerk and for the clerk by members of the Finance and Staffing Committee.

The aim of the appraisal is to assess the past performance of the individual, the extent to which the individual has achieved their objectives and the scope for personal development.

The individual also provides their own assessment of these areas.

The interview is then used to set objectives for the ensuing year, amend priorities if necessary and identify further training which will progress the employee's personal development and thereby maintain flexible, efficient and effective working practices. The formal appraisal interview for the Town Clerk is conducted by a minimum of two member of the Finance and Staffing Committee, with one being the Chairman of that committee, or a nominee.

During the year, the Town Clerk (line manager) will hold regular informal briefing sessions with individuals, discussing progress regarding their given objectives, performance levels and training.

At these points, training needs can be reassessed and updated in the light of changes which may have occurred since the last appraisal.

Resourcing Training Needs

Once training needs have been identified, the best ways of meeting those needs are then assessed.

This can take the form of 'in house coaching', 'training courses' (internal/external) and seminars.

For example, the Town Clerk regularly refers to the schedule of courses offered by GAPTC to test which ones might meet the needs of Councillors and staff.

The time commitments are estimated and the financial costs are calculated.

In the case of staff, training is programmed so that individuals can undertake training within working time without undue detriment to council services.

For Councillors, the Town Clerk monitors the timing and length of courses and seminars to ensure that the time commitment recognises other calls (e.g., council business and work patterns) on a Councillor's time.

Every year a training budget is considered/approved by the Council.

Measuring Impact of Training

When a Councillor/employee has attended a course, the Town Clerk seeks feedback on the content, standard, benefits and relevance of that course.

The Clerk then monitors the conduct of council business to test whether the benefit expected from such training is being delivered.

Likewise, employees are asked to comment as to the extent to which their expectations were met.

A personal folder is maintained, showing evidence of all training attended by staff members and a list of Councillor training is also kept.

At informal and formal appraisal interviews the Town Clerk (line manager) and team members assess the extent to which long term training and short courses have supported personal development plans and expected improvements in performance.