

## Learning and Development Policy

Sible Hedingham Parish Council recognises the value of its employees and councillors and believes in developing their full potential. To this end it supports the learning and development of all its staff and members to deliver the Council's objectives.

The central aim is therefore to provide an environment where continuous development can take place and where staff and councillors are supported and enabled to meet the changing demands and priorities of Sible Hedingham Parish Council and its service users.

To achieve this aim, learning and development needs will be regularly reviewed and staff and councillors will be encouraged to play an active part in identifying their own learning needs, selecting appropriate learning methods and in assessing the outcomes and effectiveness of their learning.

### **Induction**

All new staff and councillors will take part in an induction programme, including an introduction to Sible Hedingham Parish Council.

Coaching in immediate work processes and tasks and induction of new staff will be the responsibility of the Chairman or the Clerk as appropriate.

Induction learning for new councillors will be the responsibility of the Clerk and will include an introduction to Parish Council procedures, the roles and responsibilities of councillors, the code of conduct, standing orders and financial regulations.

An appropriate induction and learning process will be identified and implemented for volunteers by Chairmen of appropriate Committees/Advisory Groups.

Options for further learning and development may include:

- On the job learning / learning from others in the organisation
- Internal workshops / learning for groups or teams
- Self-paced learning / open learning books, videos
- Courses run by central/local government, Local Council Associations or other providers
- Visits to other organisations
- Mentoring

### **Identifying and Assessing Learning Needs**

Sible Hedingham Parish Council believes that this should be an ongoing process for all staff, councillors and volunteers.

Individual staff members' learning needs will be identified with their line manager at an annual learning and development assessment process. Each line manager has the lead responsibility for the development of their staff, for assessing their learning and development needs and identifying suitable learning opportunities.

The Chairman will ensure that the learning needs of councillors are reviewed with them annually.

Learning needs of volunteers will be identified by Chairmen of appropriate Committees/Advisory Groups.

### **Evaluation and Recording of Learning Activities**

All those participating in learning activities will be expected to provide evaluation and feedback to the Council and a record of their completed learning activities will be recorded on their personnel files.

All staff will be encouraged to keep a record of their own learning in the form of a personal development portfolio.

### **Annual Learning Plan and Budget**

The development of an annual Learning Plan will be initiated by the Personnel Committee in consultation with line managers and councillors. The Plan will be developed prior to the annual budget process so that adequate resources for learning can be built into the Personnel Committee's annual budget request.

Time off for learning, reimbursement of travel costs and payment of fees will be at the discretion of the Personnel Committee. The Plan may be amended or added to during the year, to take account of new priorities, or in response to newly identified learning needs, subject to the agreement of the Finance and Funding Committee.

### **Learning Requests**

All learning requests will be considered sympathetically. However, the availability of learning resources will depend on factors such as budgetary constraints, work commitments and learning priorities necessary to fulfil the Council's objectives. A further budgetary consideration will be the extent to which skills acquired through learning can be applied within the organisation, within a reasonable time period.

Individual staff members may be interested in obtaining accreditation or a nationally recognised qualification. The Council will be sympathetic to requests of this sort, where the learning has a demonstrable relevance to Council objectives, and in co-operation with the staff/council member will seek to provide appropriate support and assistance.

The Clerk is available for advice, assistance and support to staff and councillors, and has knowledge and reference materials about available learning resources and opportunities.