

HARPENDEN TOWN COUNCIL

CLOSER TO THE COMMUNITY

TOWN COUNCILLOR DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING STRATEGY

A National Training Strategy for Parish and Town Councils

In November 2000, in response to The Rural White Paper The Countryside Agencies and National Association of Local Councils (NALC) were tasked with developing a National Training Strategy to provide training and support for Parish and Town Councils. The purpose of the Strategy is to enable Councils to make the most of their role and to be able to carry out their duties more easily.

The Strategy commented that, "There is the all too common feeling that because people have worked [in the Council] for years that they 'don't need training' or 'know all they need to know'. The reality is that Councils must take responsibility for the continuous development of their staff and members. Being up to date with changes in policy and legislation and advances in technology is essential if Council's are to work more efficiently." *A National Training Strategy for Parish and Town Councils, November 2001.*

The Strategy advocates:

- An emphasis on measurable performance and quality initiatives
- A continued focus on competence and lifelong learning
- A need for a flexible approach towards continuing professional development

The Town Council fully embraces this Strategy.

Harpenden Town Council

It is the Town Council's aim to create a culture of learning and to ensure Officers (staff) and Town Councillors are offered every opportunity for personal development and learning. This Town Council values all types of learning, fully supporting and positively encouraging lifelong learning.

The Town Council is committed to providing Town Councillors with development, training and educational opportunities to acquire the skills and competencies that are needed by the Town Council.

A general principle of the Town Council's development and training provision is that it should, as far as possible, be open to all, not only those who need it for their current roles but also to those who wish to acquire new skills in order to fulfil other roles within the Town Council.

Town Councillor development is relevant to all Town Councillors and the whole person, it is embedded in all working practice, throughout an individual's term of office with the Town Council. Reflection, review, feedback and opportunities for learning should form an integral part of everyone's experience.

Purpose of Town Councillor development

Town Councillor development related activities include on and off the job learning, using an appropriate balance of in-house and external facilitators, and providing as much flexibility as possible in terms of location and times, to allow for individual needs. It must however, be acknowledged that resources may limit the options available, and individual needs must always be balanced with those of the Town Council.

- To ensure that Town Councillors are trained to levels appropriate to their roles in order to perform legally and effectively in the best interest of themselves, of others and of the Town Council.
- To ensure provision of development and training which extends knowledge, competence and capability to meet on-going service delivery needs.
- To facilitate the implementation of Town Council procedures and policies.
- To assist in the development of Good Practice.
- To develop improvement of performance, both the individual and the Town Council.
- Personal development of the individual.

Programme of development and training

The Town Council provides a comprehensive raft of development and training opportunities for *all* Town Councillors. Whilst the opportunities are non-compulsory, Town Councillors are positively encouraged to participate.

Induction Evening - presentation by the Town Clerk to all elected Town Councillors on an overview of Harpenden Town Council, roles and responsibilities, procedures, finance and Quality Status, to include projects and issues.

Professional Development – ongoing courses to develop and train Town Councillors in their role and responsibilities including:

Making good decisions - duties, responsibilities and Best Practice in meetings. The role of Town Councillor, Chairman and Town Clerk. Achieving policy objectives through productive meetings. The cycle of meetings, committees, delegation and policy making. The importance of the Agenda, Minutes and Standing Orders.

Achieving the Town Council's vision for the future - how best to achieve the Town Council's objectives, Five Year Financial Strategic Plan. Prioritising, policy, budget and Precept. Working in partnership with other bodies.

Other Issues - including delivering more services locally, partnership working with principal authorities, Design Statements and the local planning framework, legislation and law etc.

Hertfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils training courses

- Chairmanship
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Finances
- Law
- Planning
- Community Activities etc

Councillor Code of Conduct - regular training sessions provided by St Albans District Council Monitoring Officer and team.

Individual training - Identification of development and training requirements to enable each Town Councillor to succeed in their job, sourced as required.

Publications

- The Good Councillor Guide
- Code of Conduct

Training providers

Training provision for Town Councillors is available via:

- Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)
- Hertfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils (HAPTC)
- University of Gloucester
- Further and higher education establishments
- Rural Community Councils
- Local Government Employers' Organisation
- Principal Authorities

Measurement

Town Councillor development and training opportunities are required to be discussed on an annual basis. It is now necessary for records and monitoring to be undertaken to log Town Councillor training opportunities and participation. This is undertaken by completing the Town Councillor Development/Training Plan and Record.

APPENDIX A

The Town Councillor Development/Training Plan and Record to be reviewed on an annual basis.

A full report of training undertaken by Town Councillors to be presented to the Human Resources Committee on an annual basis by the Town Clerk.

Responsibilities

The Town Council and the Town Councillors themselves both share in the responsibility for development and training. These responsibilities are:

Town Council:

- To make clear that it values the learning and roles of all Town Councillors.
- To provide the necessary resources and support for Town Councillors development and training.

Town Clerk:

- To provide on-going encouragement to Town Councillors to undertake personal development and training.
- To provide relevant advice and support Town Councillors in their endeavour to develop and enhance relevant skills.
- To monitor Town Councillor development and training cyclically, with review and revision on a regular basis.

Town Councillors:

- To value and take responsibility for their own learning, development and careers.

- To have regard for their role in the successful operation of the Town Council.

Responsibilities to be accepted on signing the Town Councillor Development Charter by each Member upon the acceptance of office.

APPENDIX B

Timings

- 1: This Strategy to be approved by Full Council on 11th December 2006.
- 2: The Town Councillor Development/Training Plan and Record, and the Town Councillor Development Charter was introduced in May 2007.

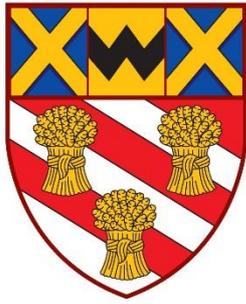
**HARPENDEN TOWN COUNCILLOR
DEVELOPMENT/TRAINING PLAN AND RECORD**

Town Councillor name:

Appraise name and position:

Date of appraisal:

<i>Development and training identified</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Review date</i>	<i>Completed date</i>



HARPENDEN TOWN COUNCIL

CLOSER TO THE COMMUNITY

TOWN COUNCILLOR DEVELOPMENT CHARTER

Name of Town Councillor: _____

As a member of Harpenden Town Council, I will be working for an organisation in which learning is valued. I will be supported to undertake training and development which I need to help me achieve and maintain a high standard of performance and will be given encouragement and support to achieve my full potential.

I am entitled to:

- Equality of opportunity in all aspects of my development
- An induction programme in my own role as well as to the workings of Harpenden Town Council
- An understanding of the direction and objectives of the Town Council
- An understanding of the contribution that is expected of me
- A Personal Development Plan which addresses my development needs
- A Chairman who is committed to member development

I will be encouraged to undertake:

- Continuous learning and development throughout term with the Town Council

I recognise that learning is a personal responsibility and I will therefore:

- Share responsibility with Harpenden Town Council for identifying my development needs
- Take advantage of development opportunities
- Take the initiative when I recognise opportunities for learning
- Share my knowledge with others

Signed by Town Councillor

Signed by Town Mayor

Signed by Town Clerk

Date

