



Learning & Development Policy

Last Reviewed: January 2026

Next Review Date: January 2028

Purpose	This policy sets out Stalham Town Council's (STC) approach to employee and Councillor learning and development
Scope	This policy applies to all Stalham Town Council employees and Councillors. STC reserves the right to change or cancel the provisions of this policy, without notice and, in any event, the policy will be regularly reviewed to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in legislation and regulation, as required. This document is non-contractual and does not form part of the terms and conditions of employment.
Audience	All STC employees and Councillors should read and adhere to this policy.
Contact	If you have any questions or queries about this document and how it applies to you, please contact the Clerk or STC Employment Committee.

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1 Introduction

Stalham Town Council (STC) aim to create an environment in which our people are enabled to perform to the best of their abilities, in alignment with the Council's mission and values. This policy describes our approach to learning and development for staff and volunteers.

2 Objectives

The objectives of this strategy are to:

- Encourage employees and Councillors to undertake appropriate training.
- Ensure that all training is evaluated to assess its value to STC
- Allocate training in a fair manner

3 Onboarding

All new employees and volunteers will be supported through an onboarding process.

4 Commitment to Learning and Development

STC is committed to the ongoing training and development of all employees and Councillors to enable them to make the most effective contribution to the Council's aims and objectives in providing the highest quality representation and services for the people of the Town.

STC recognises that its most valuable resource is its employees and Councillors and is committed to encouraging all to enhance their knowledge and qualifications learning and development. In addition, training is necessary to ensure compliance with all legal and statutory requirements.

STC expects senior and specialist officers to undertake a programme of continuing professional development (CPD) in line with the requirements of their requisite professional bodies.

STC commits to ensuring that every new Councilor, whether elected or co-opted, will be trained to an adequate standard as set out by the Council and reflecting prevailing accepted standards within a year of taking office. In addition, skills audits will be acted upon to ensure specialist members receive additional training to take account of legislative changes and new initiatives.

STC commits to ensuring that its officers and employees will be trained to an adequate standard as set out in prevailing legislation, Local Authority standards and reflecting the aspirations of the Council as soon as possible upon appointment and on an on-going and rolling program supporting professional development.

5 Benefits of Learning and Development

The benefits of learning and development are:

- Improves the quality of the services and facilities that STC provides
- Enables the organisation to achieve its corporate aims and objectives
- Improves the skills base of the employees and Councillors
- Produces confident, highly qualified staff and Councillors working as part of an effective and efficient team
- Demonstrates that the employees and Councillors are valued.

6 Delivery of Learning and Development

Learning and development will be achieved by including a realistic and reasonable financial allocation for training and development in the annual budget, where possible, as well as taking advantage of any relevant partnership or in-house provision available. Training may be provided In-Person, Online or via self-led learning.

An essential condition for effective learning is to ensure that time is set aside to enable it. STC commits to ensuring that appropriate learning time is made available to employees. Since the role of Councillor is a volunteer role, this condition does not apply to Councillors.

7 Certifications and Examinations

Certifications provide a robust method of ensuring that STC has the required level of skills and expertise. Prior to commencing a program of learning targeted towards a certification, individuals should discuss their intent with the Employment Committee, who will be able to advise regarding the appropriate certifications and seek relevant approvals for cost and time.

In commencing a program of study towards a certification, employees must commit to self-directed study and preparation in personal time.

8 Recovery of Costs

Where employees leave the service of STC during a qualifying course of learning, or shortly afterwards, they will be liable to repay the cost of the training in line with a sliding scale, as below:

Timescale	Cost Repayable
During the course of learning	100%
Less than 24 months from the date of completion	75%
Between 24 and 36 months after completion	50%
After 36 months	0%

Employees will be asked to sign an agreement to this effect before the commencement of the training.

In instances where employees leave the employment of STC with monies owing, STC reserves the right to deduct any outstanding monies from their final pay. This clause will not apply in circumstances of redundancy.

9 Learning and Development Process

- Identification of learning and development need
- Evaluation of the direct benefit of learning and development to STC
- Approval of learning and development need, including cost and time
- Planning and organising training
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of learning and development

9.1 The Identification of Learning and Development Needs

Employees will be asked to identify their development needs with advice from their line manager during their annual appraisal or regular meetings. There are number of additional ways that the training needs of staff may be identified:

- During the recruitment process
- Following confirmation of appointment
- Questionnaires
- During formal interview/review
- Formal and informal discussion

Councillors will be asked to identify their development needs with advice from the appropriate body or person. There are number of additional ways that the training needs of Councillors may be recognised:

- Following election/co-option
- During review
- Questionnaires
- Formal and informal discussion

Other circumstances may give rise to a learning or development need:

- Legislative requirements i.e. First Aid, Fire Safety, Manual Handling, including changes in legislation
- Changes in systems and services including new working methods and practices and/or the introduction of new equipment
- New or revised qualifications becoming available
- Accidents/Incidents/Near Misses or instances of professional error
- Following complaints
- A request from a member of staff

9.2 Evaluation of the direct benefit of learning and development

It is important to note that all supported learning and development must be appropriate to the needs of the Council, be relevant to the individual's role and subject to the availability of financial resources.

Each request will be considered on an individual basis and the benefits to the individual and the organisation will be identified.

To best ensure cost effectiveness, Councillors and employees will be required to attend the nearest college/venue offering the required course, unless an alternative is authorised by Full Council in the interest of operational effectiveness or best value.

9.2.1 Training required for Legal and/or Regulatory reasons

Training may be required to ensure that employees and Councillors are aware of their legal responsibilities in relation to Health and Safety, Risk Management, Employment Responsibilities and Equal Opportunities.

9.3 Approval of learning and development need, including cost and time

Once the cost benefit analysis of any training requests has been successfully completed, training will be put forward for approval by the Employment Committee and the employee/Councillor informed of the outcome of this process.

If approved, employees and Councillors can expect the following to be covered by STC:

- The Course fee
- Examination fees (if applicable)
- Associated membership fees (if applicable)
- One payment to re-take a failed examination (if applicable)

9.4 Planning and organising training

Once approved, training will then be planned and organised, with consideration given to minimising the impact of time spent away from employees' core functions for learning and development.

If an employee or Councillor is unable to attend approved learning and development opportunities, they should inform the Clerk as soon as possible, giving a reason for failure to attend.

Failure to sit an examination may result in STC withdrawing future course funding and/or requesting the refund of financial assistance. Each case will be considered on an individual basis.

9.5 Study Leave

Employees who have approval to undertake external qualifications are granted the following:

- Study time to attend day-release courses
- Time to sit examinations (including travel time)
- Study time of one day per examination (to be discussed and agreed by the Employment Committee in advance)

NB: Provision of study time must be agreed by the Employment Committee prior to any course being undertaken.

9.6 Short Courses/Workshops/Residential Weekends

Where attendance is required on a short course, paid leave will be granted to employees.

Employees and Councillors attending approved short courses/workshops/residential weekends can expect the following to be paid:

- The course fee (usually invoiced following the event)
- Travelling expenses in accordance with STC current policy
- Subsistence in accordance with STC current policy

9.7 Learning and Development Records

Records of all learning and development undertaken by employees will be maintained in their personnel files. Records of learning and development of Councillors will be maintained on a centralised list.

STC believe it is critical to the success of both the planning and delivery of learning and development activities that the resources invested are monitored and the outcomes achieved are measured.

Employees and Councillors are strongly encouraged to provide full and honest feedback regarding learning resources when asked, highlighting the key implications of new legislation, guidance and/or best practice for the ongoing efficiency and effectiveness of the authority.

The Clerk will provide a training report and an evaluation of the effectiveness of learning and development to STC annually.

10 Related Documents

- Risk Management Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- A comprehensive training record is required for the accreditation of the national Local Council Award Scheme.

Appendix 1:
Training Plan Template

Name	Course	Provider	Date	No. of hours	Budget Cost