



Ilminster Town Council
TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY
Staff & Councillors

Adopted: March 2026
Review: March 2028

Purpose and scope

The purpose of this policy is to set out the Council's position on the provision of training and development opportunities for staff and councillors. It applies to all staff whether full or part time, temporary or fixed term. Training for volunteers is covered in the Volunteer Policy.

STAFF

Identifying, Meeting and Evaluating Training and Development Needs

Training and development needs will be identified from a variety of sources:

- Induction and probationary periods
- One-to-ones
- Appraisal
- Workforce planning
- Team meetings
- Change processes

In addition, the council will encourage staff to identify their own learning styles and will seek to provide a wide variety of learning and training methods, including:

- Attendance at conferences, seminars and short courses
- Online training
- Internal coaching
- Shared in-house learning resources (books, journals, DVDs etc.)
- In house training
- Work shadowing
- Time for self-directed research and learning

Consideration

A number of factors will be taken into account when assessing a request from an individual. This policy provides one element of the decision-making process. Other factors will include availability of finance and the individual's employment record.

In order to ensure that the council is able to consistently evaluate requests, training and development opportunities have been organised into three categories according to the degree of importance each intervention has for different roles.

Categorising training and personal development

The three categories are as follows:

1. Mandatory

Mandatory training is legally required for the post-holder, or a qualification deemed to be so fundamental to the role, that the council makes it a mandatory requirement. Any mandatory training or qualifications are to be stated on the job description. They should also be stated in the contract for new starters, along with whom is responsible for the costs of the training/qualifications. For mandatory qualifications, it is unlikely that an applicant would be recruited without having previously attained the qualification. Where a qualification becomes mandatory for the role, the council will provide reasonable assistance for the employee to attain the qualification (see the section on Guidance for Support below).

Some mandatory training may be specific to a particular job role whilst other training may be a generic requirement. Mandatory generic training includes:

- Health and Safety (Manual handling, Display Screen equipment, Fire Safety)
- Equality & Diversity
- GDPR

2. Desirable

Desirable training is not legally required for the post, but it is directly relevant to the individual's job. Any desirable training or qualifications are to be stated on the job description.

For desirable qualifications or training, an individual may be recruited without having previously attained the qualification or undergone the training but may be expected to attain the qualification within a defined period of time. The need for training may also be identified through one-to-one meetings or annual appraisals. A desirable qualification is likely to enhance the skills and reputation of the council. Examples may include:

Job specific

- Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA)
- Cemetery Legal Compliance
- Microsoft Excel

3. Optional

An optional qualification or optional training may not be directly linked to the individual's current job. Optional training or development is generally more beneficial to the individual's career than it is for the council.

Personal development aimed at developing the skills or knowledge of an individual in order to provide a successor for an existing job is deemed to be optional. However, depending on the circumstances, training for succession may be 'desirable'.

Job specific

- Community Governance
- Town Planning Technical Support - Level 3 Diploma

Guidance for support

Support for qualifications, training and personal development can include the cost of tuition, examinations and resource material in addition to time off to attend the training and any examinations. Any financial and non-financial support to training and development will be decided on a case by case basis.

Any financial support in excess of £750, will always be conditional upon the employee's agreement to either a full or partial repayment of the financial support provided. The council reserves the right to reclaim financial support where the employee;

- Leaves the council during the duration of the course, or up-to 1 year following completion of the course.
- Fails to complete the training
- Fails to attend training without good reason

Study leave

Where an individual requires study leave to undertake mandatory training, they will be able to take all the leave within normal working hours.

Where individuals require study leave to undertake study which is not mandatory but part of the individual's formal continuous professional development, the council will contribute up to 50% of study leave time, to a maximum of 3 days per annum.

Where individuals require study leave to undertake training which is not mandatory but part of the individual's desire for career development, the council will contribute up to 3 days study leave per annum for courses which are directly related to the individual's role.

Time off for study leave must be approved in advance. To make a request the individual is asked to write to the Town Clerk (or HR & Personnel Committee if it relates to the Town Clerk), setting out the details of the course of study, how it relates to their work, and the time being requested.

No study leave will be granted where individuals undertake study which is not required for their role or not directly related to their role. However, the Town Clerk (or HR & Personnel Committee if it relates to the Town Clerk) will consider requests for flexible working to allow the study to take place, as long as the needs of the council can be met.

This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed.

COUNCILLORS

Identifying, Meeting and Evaluating Training and Development Needs

The Council is committed to fostering a culture of continuous professional development among its Members. Participation in training and learning opportunities enables Councillors to develop a deeper understanding of governance, policymaking, and the complex matters affecting residents and stakeholders. As well as their role as an employer.

To support this commitment, the Council strongly encourages and endorses participation in the following forms of training and development:

- Attendance at conferences, seminars and short courses
- Online or external training
- In house training
- Shared in-house learning resources (books, journals)

These formats provide flexibility in how training is accessed and ensure a diverse range of topics and learning styles are catered to.

Training Categories

In order to facilitate clarity and consistency with training, all development opportunities are categorised according to their relevance and importance to the Councillor's role. These categories also assist in prioritising training within the available budget.

1. Mandatory Training

Mandatory training is a core requirement for all Councillors upon election to Ilminster Town Council. This training ensures that all Members are fully briefed on their statutory obligations, Council policies, and operational protocols. If a Councillor has completed equivalent training with another organisation prior to their election to Ilminster Town Council, evidence of this training will be requested for review.

Mandatory training includes:

- Councillor Induction sheet
- The Code of Conduct – Councillors Interest
- Councillor Essentials Part 1 - Roles & Responsibilities
- Councillor Essentials Part 2 - Governance & Finance
- Council as an Employer – Relevant to all Councillors
- Data Protection for Councillors

2. Desirable Training

Desirable training is strongly recommended and is tailored to enhance a Councillor's understanding of specific areas related to their roles and responsibilities within the Council. This training helps to build capacity and ensures effective and informed participation in decision-making.

Examples of desirable training include:

Role specific

- Chairpersonship - Relevant to those elected as Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chairs/Vice Chairs of Committees
- Responding to Planning Applications - Relevant to those on the Planning Committee
- Internal and External Audit - Relevant to all Councillors

Officers will circulate details of upcoming training opportunities throughout the year as they arise, to ensure that Councillors are kept informed of what is available.

Should you wish to discuss your individual training needs or would like support in identifying appropriate courses, please contact the Town Clerk.

A record will be kept of all training undertaken by staff and Members.