



AUDLEM PARISH COUNCIL

Audlem Parish Council Staff and Member Learning and Development Policy

This document sets out our Learning and Development Policy by detailing:

- The Council's commitment to learning and development.
- The identification of learning needs.
- Corporate learning.
- Financial assistance.
- Study leave.
- Short courses and workshops.
- Evaluation of learning.
- Links with other policies.
- Reporting progress.

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Encourage Councillors and employees to undertake appropriate learning and development activities.
- Allocate learning in a fair manner.
- Ensure all learning is evaluated.

Commitment to Training and Development

Audlem Parish Council recognises that its Members and employees are its most important resource. The Council is committed to encouraging both Members and employees to enhance their skills, knowledge and qualifications through learning and development activities. Some learning is also necessary to ensure compliance with all legal and statutory requirements.

Audlem Parish Council is committed to continuous learning and development to enable Councillors and employees to effectively contribute to achieving the Council's aims and objectives by providing the highest quality representation and services.

The Council expects senior and specialist officers to undertake a programme of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in line with the requirements of their requisite professional bodies.

Learning and development:

- Improves the quality of the services and facilities provided by Audlem Parish Council.
- Helps enable the organisation to achieve its aims and objectives.
- Improves the skill base of employees to produce confident, highly qualified staff working as an effective and efficient team.
- Demonstrates that employees are valued.

Learning and development will be achieved by including a realistic financial allocation for learning activities in the annual budget as well as by taking advantage of any relevant partnership or in-house provision available. The learning and development process will:

- Identify learning needs by considering Audlem Parish Council's objectives as well as individual requirements.
- Plan and organise learning and development activities to meet those specific needs.

- Ensure the appropriate activity is delivered.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the learning and development activity.

Identification of learning and development needs

Employees will be asked to identify their development needs with advice from others. Members' and employees' learning needs may also be identified through

- Questionnaires.
- During interview.
- Following confirmation of appointment/ election.
- Formal and informal discussion.

Learning and development needs may also be identified due to:

- Legislative requirements.
- Changes in legislation.
- Changes in systems.
- New or revised qualifications becoming available.
- Accidents.
- Professional error.
- New working methods and practices.
- Complaints to the Council.
- A request from a member of staff.
- Devolved services/ delivery of new services.

Employees who wish to attend a learning course should discuss this with their line manager/Council; all requests will be considered in relation to the Council's needs

New Councillors and Employees

All new Councillors and employees will receive basic induction in the workings of the Council, Council policies and governance. This will also include Council finance, assets, health, safety and welfare. Specific mandatory learning (such as an understanding of the Code of Conduct for Councillors) will be included as well as an assessment of any essential learning needed to effectively carry out the role. Any need identified in the assessment will be met in accordance with the Council's commitment to learning and development.

Corporate Learning

This is necessary to ensure that Members and employees are aware of their legal responsibilities and corporate standards e.g. Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities, Code of Conduct. Employees will be required to attend courses, workshops or seminars where suitable learning opportunities have been identified.

Financial Assistance

It is important to note that all learning must be appropriate to the needs of the Council, 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 Council will be identified. Members and employees will be required to attend the nearest venue offering the required development course or event unless an alternative is authorised by Council in the interest of operational effectiveness or ensuring value for money.

The Council will also consider:

- The impact on operational capability.
- The most economic and effective means of providing the learning.
- Provision and availability of the learning budget.

Members and employees can expect the following costs to be met by Council for approved learning and development activities:

- The course fee.
- Examination fees.
- Associated membership fees.
- One payment to re-take a failed examination.
- Travel expenses.

Members and employees attending financially assisted courses are required to inform the Clerk immediately of any absences, giving reasons. Failure to sit an examination may result in the Council withdrawing future course funding and/or requesting the refunding of financial assistance.

Each case will be considered on an individual basis.

Audlem Parish Council operates a Return of Service agreement. Any employee undertaking post entry qualifications funded by the Council must be aware that, should they voluntarily leave Audlem Parish Council's employment within two years of completing the qualification, they will be required to repay costs associated with obtaining that qualification. If they leave within 6 months they will need to repay 100% of the fee, 75% if they leave within 7 and 12 months, 50% if they leave within 13 and 18 months and 25% if they leave within 19 and 24 months of obtaining the qualification.

Study Leave

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

- Study time to attend day release courses.
- Time to sit examinations.
- Study time and provision of study time must be agreed with the line manager/Chairman prior to the course being undertaken.

Short Courses/ Workshops/ Residential Weekends

Where attendance is required out of normal working hours at a short course, an attendance allowance will be granted. Members and staff attending approved short courses/ workshops/ residential weekends can expect the following to be paid:

- The course fee.
- Travelling expenses in accordance with the Council's current policy.
- Subsistence in accordance with the Council's current policy.

Linking with other Council Strategies and Policies

Audlem Parish Council's learning and development policy links with other Council strategies, policies and activities; notably

- Equality of opportunity in all aspects of Member and employee development.
- Risk Management Policy: a commitment to Learning and Development greatly assists in achieving good governance and an effective system of risk management.
- Health and Safety Policy: ongoing learning and development is critical to ensuring a positive approach to Health and Safety is embedded throughout the Council.
- Continuing Professional Development.
- Continuous improvement.
- Services devolved from Cheshire East Council.

Progress Reports

The Clerk will report annually to the Council detailing learning and development activities over the year, attendance and evaluation.

This Staff and Member Learning and Development Policy was reviewed and adopted at the Audlem Parish Council Meeting held on:

Date: 3rd February 2020

Signed: Steve Boyes (Chairman/Vice-Chairman)

Signed: Belen Lopez Bloor (Proper Officer)

DATE: 3rd February 2020 Original signed copies held on file by the Parish Clerk.