



## **Councillor Training Policy**

*Adopted 11 January 2024 – Full Council – Minute 2030*

### **1.0 Purpose and scope**

Folkestone Town Council (FTC) is committed to ongoing training and development for its' Councillors to enable them to understand what is expected of them and to help in them demonstrating to the electorate that they carry out their duties to a high standard and to the best of their ability.

This Policy applies to all Councillors. All Councillors are elected officers of the Council and represent the whole electorate. Councillors actively take part in Council meetings and make Council decisions.

Providing Councillors with the appropriate training will:

- Enhance the performance of both staff and Members
- Widen skills and experience
- Provide opportunities to network
- Provide the skills to confront challenges
- Encourage innovation
- Raise the standards of the Town Council

This policy outlines the responsibilities of the Council towards its Councillors and the training and development that will be provided, as well as the responsibilities of Councillors to undertake training and development. Individual circumstances may vary, and it is possible that not all training needs will be met by this policy.

The Council maintains records of all training undertaken, including training provided by the Council (in whole or in part) and, wherever possible, training undertaken independently. This helps the Council to identify all the skills available within the Council, and when a training update may be required.

### **2.0 Why is Training Required?**

There are a number of reasons why training is important to the Council;

- Gain a better understanding of Council meeting procedures and decision making
- Gain a clear understanding of the role of a Council, Councillors, and duties of the Council
- Understand the legal duties and responsibilities of Town Councillors.
- Keep abreast of changes in legislation
- Avoid professional error/mistake
- Ensure familiarity with new equipment, processes and working methods.
- Reduce accidents and injuries
- Improve communication
- Improve and refresh essential skills to take advantage of new and revised qualifications that may have been launched

### 3.0 Types of Training

FTC will demonstrate a commitment to on-going training and development through the use of a variety of training solutions, depending on what is available and where possible accommodating needs of Councillors.

The types of training offered may include;

- In-house training events or briefings delivered by officers with specialist knowledge
- Training events or briefings by Councillors who have specialist knowledge
- External courses offered by County Associations of Local Councils
- Courses run by the Society of Local Council Clerks
- E-learning solutions
- Remote/virtual training sessions delivered via Teams or Zoom platforms.
- Conferences and seminars
- Training packs from Government Department and other organisations which the Council is a member of
- Information sharing meetings with other Town Councils, local authorities, partners, and stakeholders
- The Good Councillors Guide
- Manuals and training guides
- Training offered by other professional bodies

#### 3.1 Training for all New Councillors

All new Councillors will be issued with a Councillor Information Pack and invited to complete an in-house induction training session.

The induction programme aims to develop knowledge with an understanding of:

- The Council and the general day-to-day systems that are in place
- Procedures specific to the role of the Councillor
- The Code of Conduct for Councillors
- Essential health and safety requirements, including the procedures for foreseeable emergencies
- The confidentiality of company information
- Other formal policies.

The induction programme is reviewed regularly and updated in line with current requirements.

#### 3.2 Chairs

All Members appointed as a Chair or Deputy Chair of a Council committee will be invited to attend a chairs training course if they have not previously completed the training.

#### 3.3 Committee Members

There may be specific training courses, conferences/seminars, or briefings that become available in helping members of a committee in undertaking their work and achieving the objectives of that committee.

#### 3.4 Additional Training Needs

Individual Councillors may identify training needs and opportunities which would benefit themselves and the Council as a whole.

Where training is identified by the Councillor, but is not regarded by the Council as essential to the requirements of the Councillor's role, the Council may, at its discretion, contribute towards fees but is under no obligation to do so. Each request will be considered on its merits. Such needs should be identified to the Clerk who will endeavour to source appropriate training. Where this exceeds the Councillor training budget it will need to be considered by the Council.

#### **4.0 Training Fees and Equipment**

At the annual budget meeting, provision will be made to ensure that there is sufficient funds budgeted to meet Councillor training requirements.

In-house training provided by other members of the Council or professional bodies may not incur any costs to the Council.

The Council will cover the cost of Councillor training if a request is approved.

The amount paid by the Council may be recovered from the Councillor if the Councillor fails to complete the training course.

———— **POLICY ENDS HERE** ————