

MISTLEY PARISH COUNCIL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY FOR COUNCILLORS

Introduction - This document sets out Mistley Parish Council's Learning and Development Policy by detailing:

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

The objectives of this policy are to:

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

Commitment to Training and Development - Mistley Parish Council recognises that its Members are an important resource. The Council is committed to encouraging Members to enhance their skills, knowledge and qualifications through learning and development activities.

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

Learning and development:

- Improves the quality of the services and facilities provided by Mistley Parish Council;
- Helps enable the organisation to achieve its corporate aims and objectives;
- Improves the skill base of Councillors to produce a confident, effective and efficient team;
- Demonstrates that Councillors 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 training available. The learning and development process will:

- Identify learning needs by considering Mistley 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

Councillors will be asked to identify their development needs with advice from others, Members' and the Clerk. Learning needs may also be identified through:

- Following confirmation of election or co-option;
- 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 via the Clerk;
- Devolved services/ delivery of new services.

Training will be agreed at a Parish Council Meeting and those who wish to attend a learning course should consider this in relation to the Council's needs

New Councillors - All new Councillors 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. The Chairman of the Council (with the Clerk if required) will assist new Councillors.

Corporate Learning is necessary to ensure that Members are aware of their legal responsibilities and corporate standards e.g. Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities, Code of Conduct and GDPR. (The Clerk will be required to attend courses, workshops or seminars where suitable learning opportunities have been identified and then update Councillors).

Financial Assistance - It is important to note that all learning must be appropriate to the needs of the Council, relevant to the Councillor'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 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 can expect the following costs to be met by Council for approved learning and development activities. Each case will be considered on an individual basis:

- The course fee;
- Mileage at the current rate.

Members attending financially assisted courses are required to inform the Clerk.

Short Courses/ Workshops - Members attending approved short courses/ workshops can expect the following to be paid:

- The course fee;
- Travelling expenses in accordance with the current approved rate;
- Subsistence (all reasonable expenses).

Linking with other Council Strategies and Policies - Mistley Parish Council's learning and development policy links with other Council strategies, policies and activities; notably:

- Equality of opportunity in all aspects of Member 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.
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Progress Reports - The Clerk will report annually to the Council detailing learning and development activities over the year, attendance and evaluation.

Review Body; Full Parish Council.

Review Period; Annually each May.

Adopted 20/05/2019. Last Reviewed 22.05.23. Next Review Date 20.05.24.