



NARBERTH TOWN COUNCIL
CYNGOR TREF ARBERTH

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Training and Development Policy

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Classification	Public Governance Document

1. Purpose and status

- 1.1** This Policy establishes Narberth Town Council's continuing approach to training and development for councillors and staff. Its purpose is to help the Council govern lawfully, make sound decisions, support its employees and deliver effective services to the community.
- 1.2** The Policy complements the Council's published Member and Staff Training Plan. The Policy sets the enduring framework; the Training Plan records the Council's assessed priorities, proposed provision, participant numbers, timescales and costs for the relevant period.
- 1.3** This Policy is a governance and employment-support document. It does not replace legislation, the Members' Code of Conduct, employment contracts, the Council's disciplinary or capability procedures, or any requirement for specialist instruction arising from health and safety law.

2. Scope and objectives

2.1 This Policy applies to all councillors and employees, including the Clerk/Proper Officer, Responsible Financial Officer and any employee holding operational, supervisory or specialist responsibilities.

2.2 The Council's objectives are to:

- maintain sufficient collective knowledge and capability across the Council;
- provide timely induction and role-specific development;
- support professional competence and continuing development for employees;
- respond to changes in legislation, guidance, services, assets, systems and identified risk;
- allocate public resources proportionately and obtain value for money;
- maintain reliable evidence of learning undertaken and evaluate its usefulness; and
- promote an inclusive learning culture in which prior experience is recognised and knowledge is shared.

2.3 Training and development may include courses, webinars, briefings, conferences, qualifications, mentoring, professional membership, supervised practical learning, guided reading, internally delivered sessions and other suitable methods.

3. Legal and governance framework

3.1 Section 67 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires the Council to make and publish a plan setting out its proposals for training councillors and staff. The Council must have regard to Welsh Ministers' guidance when exercising those functions.

3.2 Full Council must determine the content of the statutory Training Plan and review it from time to time; those functions cannot be delegated. A new plan must be made within three months after each ordinary election of community councillors, and every revised or replacement plan must be published.

3.3 The Clerk may administer the adopted Policy and Training Plan, arrange agreed provision and maintain records within the approved budget and Financial Regulations. Administrative authority does not extend to determining or revising the statutory plan on behalf of Full Council.

4. Principles

4.1 The Council will apply the following principles:

- training will be based on evidenced corporate, role and individual need;
- essential legal, ethical, financial and safety needs will take priority;
- provision will be proportionate to the Council's functions, responsibilities and risks;
- relevant prior learning may be recognised, but only where its content and completion are evidenced;
- councillors and staff will have fair access to suitable opportunities, subject to role and available resources;

- reasonable adjustments and accessible formats will be sought where required;
- free places, bursaries, shared provision and competent in-house delivery will be used where appropriate;
- personal information will be handled lawfully and public reporting will normally be aggregated; and
- learning will be reviewed for relevance, effectiveness and application in Council work.

5. Identifying and prioritising needs

5.1 The Council will undertake a role-based training-needs assessment to inform each statutory Training Plan. Individual assessments may be held internally, while the published plan will normally describe needs and provision by role or cohort.

5.2 Needs may be identified through:

- councillor induction, self-assessment and discussion with the Mayor, committee chair or Clerk;
- employee recruitment, induction, job descriptions, supervision and annual appraisal;
- changes in legislation, official guidance, Council policies or professional practice;
- new services, assets, projects, systems or partnerships;
- internal or external audit findings, risk assessments, complaints or governance reviews; and
- learning reported by professional bodies, the Monitoring Officer, regulators and sector advisers.

5.3 The Council may use a four-point assessment scale - awareness, working knowledge, competent, and able to support others - or another proportionate method approved by Full Council. The purpose is to identify collective coverage and priority gaps, not to publish personal rankings.

5.4 Priorities will normally be ordered as follows:

- mandatory or safety-critical employee instruction;
- councillor induction, Code of Conduct, and financial management and governance;
- training required for lawful discharge of a role or imminent Council decision;
- professional and operational development for employees; and
- desirable development supporting future Council objectives.

6. Councillor training and development

6.1 Every new councillor will be offered local induction and the core learning pathway specified in the current Training Plan. Induction will include the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, committee and delegation arrangements, member/officer roles, interests, information security and key policies.

6.2 The Council will maintain sufficient collective understanding of councillor responsibilities, the Members' Code of Conduct, meetings, financial governance, legal powers and duties, equality, information governance, health and safety, and the Council's service responsibilities.

- 6.3** The Mayor, Deputy Mayor, chairs, vice-chairs and councillors undertaking specialist responsibilities will be supported to complete relevant role-based learning before appointment where practicable, or within the period stated in the Training Plan.
- 6.4** Any councillor intending to seek appointment as Mayor, Deputy Mayor, chair or vice-chair is expected to complete OVW Module 10 – Chairing Skills, or equivalent approved training, before appointment where practicable. Where that is not practicable, it should be completed within six months of appointment. At adoption, any councillor already serving as Mayor, Deputy Mayor, chair or vice-chair who has not completed OVW Module 10 – Chairing Skills, or evidenced equivalent approved training, within the preceding 12 months is expected to complete it within two calendar months of adoption.
- 6.5** Councillors are expected to engage constructively with the needs assessment, respond to training offers, attend agreed learning and provide evidence of equivalent external or prior completion. A councillor who cannot attend an offered date should identify a practicable alternative where possible.
- 6.6** This Policy does not suspend an elected councillor, remove a statutory right to attend or vote, or replace the Code of Conduct process. Full Council may nevertheless take relevant competence, completed learning and willingness to develop into account when making discretionary appointments, provided it acts consistently and for a proper governance purpose.

7. Staff training and professional development

- 7.1** Employee needs will be considered at recruitment and induction, through regular supervision and annual appraisal, and whenever duties, legislation, systems, services or identified risks change. Agreed development should relate to the job description, Council objectives and the employee's professional development.
- 7.2** Approved staff development may include:
- role induction and mandatory operational or safety instruction;
 - sector qualifications including FiLCA, ILCA and CiLCA where relevant;
 - law, governance, finance, procurement, employment, data protection and digital skills;
 - specialist instruction connected with services, assets, equipment or events;
 - attendance at relevant professional meetings, conferences and briefings;
 - subscriptions to relevant publications and advice services; and
 - Council-funded professional membership where it provides demonstrable organisational benefit.
- 7.3** The Council will provide reasonable paid time, resources and workload arrangements for approved learning. Any study leave, examination support or qualification commitment will be agreed in advance, having regard to the employee's contract, operational capacity, cost and the anticipated benefit to the Council.
- 7.4** Training may support improvement but will not be used as a substitute for fair supervision, appraisal, capability or disciplinary procedures where those procedures are required.

8. Delivery, approval and resourcing

- 8.1** Full Council will approve a training budget through the annual budget-setting process and will identify the overall proposed cost in the statutory Training Plan. Costs may include course and qualification fees, examination or registration fees, necessary travel and subsistence, learning materials, professional subscriptions and reasonable employee time.
- 8.2** Provision may be obtained from One Voice Wales, the Society of Local Council Clerks, the principal council and Monitoring Officer, Planning Aid Wales, professional or regulatory bodies, competent specialist providers, neighbouring councils or appropriately skilled internal facilitators.
- 8.3** The Clerk may arrange provision identified in the adopted Training Plan within the approved budget and Financial Regulations. Material expenditure or provision outside the adopted plan, or any increase beyond the approved budget, must be referred to Full Council unless covered by an existing lawful delegation.
- 8.4** The Council will use free or subsidised provision where suitable and will avoid unnecessary duplication. Cost will be considered alongside relevance, quality, accessibility, timing and the operational consequences of delay.

9. Booking, attendance and accessibility

- 9.1** The Clerk will circulate suitable opportunities and make approved bookings. Participants should respond within the stated period, notify the Clerk promptly if unable to attend, and assist with cancellation or transfer where the provider permits.
- 9.2** Where a relevant need is identified but offered dates are impracticable, the Council will seek reasonable alternative dates, formats or providers. Reasonable adjustments and accessible learning materials will be sought where required. Welsh-language provision will be used or requested where appropriate and reasonably available.
- 9.3** Repeated non-attendance, non-response or cancellation will be recorded factually. Any conduct or employment concern arising from the circumstances will be addressed through the appropriate governance or employment procedure rather than through an informal training sanction.

10. Records, privacy and publication

- 10.1** The Clerk will maintain an internal training and competency register showing, as appropriate, training offered, booked or completed; dates; provider; cost; evidence of completion; qualifications; prior learning awaiting verification; and identified follow-up.
- 10.2** Councillors and staff who wish equivalent external or prior learning to be recognised must provide a certificate, provider record or other reasonable evidence of its content, relevance and completion. Until suitable evidence is received, the register will show “Prior completion – evidence requested” or “Verification pending”; the learning will not be recorded as completed.
- 10.3** Individual records will be held and used only for lawful governance, employment, audit, insurance or regulatory purposes and retained in accordance with the Council’s data-protection and records-management arrangements.

10.4 The published Training Plan and public progress reports will normally use roles, cohorts and aggregate numbers. Individuals will not be named without consent unless publication is otherwise lawfully required.

11. Evaluation, reporting and knowledge sharing

11.1 Participants may be asked to provide proportionate feedback on relevance, quality and expected application. Where useful, learning will be shared with Full Council, a committee or relevant employees without reproducing copyright-protected course materials.

11.2 The Clerk will report progress to Full Council at the intervals stated in the Training Plan, including aggregate completion, bookings, outstanding priorities, expenditure, barriers and any proposed revision.

11.3 Where a needs assessment or material change indicates that the statutory Training Plan should be revised, Full Council will determine the revision and the revised plan will be published.

12. Responsibilities

12.1 Full Council - approves this Policy, determines and reviews the statutory Training Plan, provides appropriate resources, considers aggregate progress and approves any material change to priorities or budget.

12.2 Mayor and committee chairs - promote participation, model role-appropriate development, identify emerging needs and ensure that members undertaking specialist responsibilities receive suitable support.

12.3 Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer - administers this Policy and the adopted Training Plan, circulates opportunities, arranges approved provision, maintains evidence, monitors expenditure and advises Full Council on emerging needs and required revisions.

12.4 Councillors and staff - engage with assessment, respond to offers, attend agreed learning, apply it in practice and provide reasonable evidence of relevant external or prior completion.

13. Review and commencement

13.1 This Policy takes effect upon adoption and will normally be reviewed every two years. An earlier review will be undertaken where legislation or statutory guidance changes, Council arrangements materially change, audit or governance findings identify a weakness, or Full Council otherwise considers review necessary.

13.2 The policy-review cycle does not replace the separate duty to review, revise and republish the statutory Training Plan from time to time and to make a new plan after each ordinary election.