

# Pontarddulais Town Council – Training Programme



**Date of First Planned Review - September 2023**

*This training plan has been prepared in accordance with Section 67 of the 2021 Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act*

## **1. INTRODUCTION.**

Community and town councils and their staff should seek to equip themselves to be as effective and efficient as possible when exercising functions. Councils should regularly review whether there are opportunities to improve their administration and governance so that they are better able to perform their responsibilities and serve their communities.

In order to determine the training priorities for the town council, it is necessary to assess the essential skills needed by the council and whether the council feels there is sufficient coverage and depth across the council. The full list of essential skills will depend on the activities within the council. There are areas which all councils should ensure that they have sufficient skills and understanding.

These are:

- Basic induction for councillors,
- The Code of Conduct for members of local authorities in Wales; and

- Financial management and governance.

The first step in the process of developing the training plan is to undertake a training needs analysis of councillors, the Clerk/RFO, Assistant Clerk, as well as the caretaker and cleaner.

The next step is to determine what steps it will take to address relevant skills gaps and prioritise accordingly. The training plan should reflect the training needs of the council and its plan for addressing those needs. The plan will provide, as a minimum, information about the type of training, numbers participating; the timeframe over which the training is expected to be completed; and the overall cost of the training.

The plan will include details of the courses that will be considered for each of the roles. It is anticipated that the training needs of the Council will mostly be met by One Voice Wales and the Society of Local Council Clerks. However, for certain training needs, specifically those with a high technical component, it may be necessary to source courses from local providers. In the case of training in planning related matters the first port of call should be Planning Aid Wales who have a successful track record of providing training to community and town councils.

Training costs will be met by the Council. The Council should not need reminding that part of the costs of running an effective council includes ensuring that the members and staff have sufficient capability to carry out their functions effectively. It is vital therefore that the Council should take account of the training costs when setting its budget.

The Council will review its plan after every ordinary election of town councillors. The plan will also be revised following a council by-election or a new co-opted councillor joining; staff changes; or taking on new responsibilities such as new services or assets. Where a council revises or replaces its training plan, under section 67(5) of the 2021 Act, the council will publish the revised or new plan. The publication of the

council's training plan should be consistent with the wider approach to publication required by the 2021 Act and be published electronically.

Initially an analysis needs to be undertaken of the core competencies required of councillors and employees. The following is a schedule of core competencies associated with some of the roles common to the Council.

## 2. IDENTIFICATION OF TRAINING NEEDS.

### SCHEDULE OF COMPETENCIES - COUNCILLORS

Course title	Requirement	Knowledge and Skills	Effective Behaviours
<b>The Councillor</b>	<b>Understanding the Role of the Councillor</b>	The extent and limits of a councillor's individual responsibilities and the powers and responsibilities of the Council as a corporate body in law.	Undertakes the role effectively in the council, the community and with partners. Understands the difference between the role of an individual member and the Council as a whole and ensures that this understanding is reflected in their work.
<b>Understanding the Law</b>	<b>Understanding of the legal basis upon which the Council delivers services to the community</b>	Understanding of the services delivered and the associated governing law, policies, procedures, plans and strategies that are in place to guide the work of the Council.	Is able to describe the work of the Council to the public and contributes to the development of the Council's work.
<b>Code of Conduct</b>	<b>Conduct</b>	Understanding of the ethical framework governing the work of councillors, specifically the code of conduct. Appreciation of the importance of accountability, integrity and transparency and openness.	Abides by the code of conduct at all times, always declares interests when appropriate, seeks advice from the Proper Officer when needed, treats others with respect at all times, demonstrates integrity, values others and never bullies any other councillor or employee, listens and stays calm in difficult situations.
<b>Equality &amp; Diversity</b>	<b>Equality and Diversity</b>	Personal skills in demonstrating respect for others regardless of sex, race, religion, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity or sexual orientation. Understanding Equalities and Diversity law relating to the work of the Council and the role of the Councillor. Understanding of the need for and what constitutes respectful behaviour towards others.	Demonstrates equalities values in personal behaviour and council decisions, and applies appropriate equalities legislation. Treats everyone with respect at all times when acting as a councillor whether in the Council, community or political group.
<b>Local Government Finance</b>	<b>Financial Governance and Accountability</b>	An understanding of the internal and external audit process.	Engages effectively with the audit, inspection and regulatory process within the council, using this

<b>Advanced Local Government Finance</b>			information to constructively challenge and support the financial management of the council.
<b>Information Management</b>	<b>Information Management</b>	Understanding and interpreting information and data. Ability to handle data in the format provided by the council. Understanding of the definition of confidentiality and how to handle confidential information - Understanding of the legal requirements of Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation.	Receives information and data from a variety of sources and is able to store, share and use it effectively and where possible electronically. Does not keep records about people without seeking their agreement. Responds promptly and appropriately to FOI requests. Does not distribute or share confidential or restricted information.
<b>Use of IT, Websites and Social Media</b>	<b>Using ICT and social media</b>	Seeks to develop Skills in all 'Office' applications such as word processing, presentation and spreadsheets and conducts council business electronically. Understands the social media policy of the council.	Communicates with the Clerk and other members electronically and through social media where appropriate.
<b>Effective Staff Management</b>	<b>Working with the Clerk and other employees</b>	Understanding the role of the Clerk and other employees generally and the 'rules' they need to abide by. Skills in acting as a corporate employer. Understanding of the appointments process and interviewing skills.	Maintains professional relationships with employees recognising appropriate boundaries and abiding by the Member Officer Protocol (if adopted). Acts as an effective member of an appointment panel, applying sound HR and equality and diversity principles to secure the best candidate.
<b>Health &amp; Safety</b>	<b>Health and Safety</b>	Understanding of Health and Safety legislation in the work of the Council. Understand how to assess risks and ensure personal safety and that of others.	Promotes and ensures the health and safety of everyone in the council. Ensures personal safety when working in the Council and when in groups or alone in the community.
<b>Chairing Skills</b>	<b>Chairing</b>	Understanding of meeting protocols and the rules of debate. Ability to manage the agenda, contributions and time. Chairs clearly and authoritatively, enforcing the rules and encouraging fair participation.	Ensures that the public feel welcome, understand the meeting purpose and how they can contribute. Commitment to enabling all committee members to develop skills and participate effectively in meetings. Builds

		<p>Manages the agenda by introducing items, summarising debate, focussing on outcomes and limiting contributions which do not contribute to the outcomes.</p>	<p>relationships with the Clerk to ensure that the work of the council/committee is relevant, well informed and provides the outcomes needed. Work programme development and management. Understanding of the subjects within the scope of a committee and how these interact with council policies generally and the roles of other committees. Ability to develop a balanced work programme for the committee and clear terms of reference and outcomes for any subgroups. Works with the Clerk and committee members to develop the work plan taking account of the work of other committees. Ensures that the work programme takes account of national, regional and local plans, policies and the expressed needs of the community for services. Makes sure that the committee also takes account of inspections or reports from audit, inspection and regulation bodies.</p>
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<b>Training Topic</b>	<b>Required</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Code of Conduct	All Councillors/Clerk	Within 12 months of being elected
Understanding the Law	All Councillors/Clerk	Within 12 months of being elected
Chairing Skills	All Chairs/Vice Chairs/ Clerk	Within 12 months of being elected
The Council Meeting	All Councillors/Clerk	Within 12 months of being elected
Local Government Finance	All Finance Committee Members/Clerk	Within 12 months of being elected
The Council	All Councillors/Clerk	Once in the Council Term
The Councillor	All Councillors/Clerk	Once in the Council Term
Effective Staff Management	All Members of Personnel Committee	Within 12 months of being elected
The Council as an Employer	All Members of Personnel Committee	Within 12 months of being elected
Advanced Local Government Finance	All Finance Committee Members/Clerk	Before the end of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year of Council Term
Introduction to Community Engagement	Two Councillors	Once during the Council Term
Community Engagement Part Two	Two Councillors	Once during the Council Term
Health & Safety	Clerk/Two Councillors	Once during the Council Term

Creating a Community Plan	Two Councillors	Once during the Council Term
Information Management	Clerk/Two Councillors	Once during the Council Term
Equality & Diversity	Two Councillors	Once during the Council Term
Mediation & Conciliation	Clerk/Two Councillors	Once during the Council Term
Planning	Two Councillors	Once during the Council Term