

## Woughton Community Council

# Councillor Training – Policy Statement 2024

## Introduction / Overarching aims

Woughton Community Council (WCC) recognises the importance of training and development across the organisation and prioritises this through policy, budget allowances and through provision of both external and in house provision.

The principles of the National Training Strategy for Town and Parish Councils are recognised as an excellent strategy from which to build this policy, whilst tailoring to specific WCC needs.

## Scope

This policy covers councillors, both elected and co-opted, sitting on Woughton Community Council. For officers of the council, please see the separate policy document.

The policy covers training in the widest sense, with formal courses and sessions, seminars and conferences, online opportunities and ad hoc development through advice, support and mentoring.

## Organisational Responsibilities –training opportunities

Woughton Community Council (WCC) aims to provide continuing professional development for all councillors, whilst acknowledging that there are challenges for some in terms of time constraints and external demands.

To support this approach, the following actions will be taken:

- Opportunities for external training will be researched and shared by the Council Manager.
- Internal training will be provided, in line with the annual training programme, utilising internal skills and bringing in external trainers / facilitators where appropriate.
- Online and remote sessions, conferences and shared learning events will also form part of the development approach.
- Specific training expectations around roles within the councillor team will be provided with acknowledgement that these should be prioritised.
  - o Training around the planning system for members of the Planning, Licensing and Development Committee.
  - o Training around council finances for members of the Operations and Resources Committee.
  - o Chairing Skills training for Chairs / Vice Chairs of Council and Committees.
- Councillors will also be encouraged to undertake ‘new councillor’ training when first elected / coopted, alongside an internal induction session and handbook.

## Budget and Resources

A realistic training budget will be allocated each year, as part of the annual budget setting process. This will reflect the commitment of WCC to training and development.

WCC will also pay the annual subscriptions for Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils (BMKALC), the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network (CCIN), all of whom provide opportunities for training.

Expenses are payable for any 'out of pocket' costs associated with attending training or development activities – see the 'Councillor Allowances and Expenses' policy for full details.

## **Annual training programme**

In addition to individual training approaches, WCC will also develop and deliver an annual training programme. This will be led by the Operations and Resources Committee. This will provide monthly sessions, provided in the Council Chambers, covering an agreed range of sessions. This will include both 'statutory' (essential) sessions, and targeted sessions, based upon feedback from councillors. The essential sessions are noted with an Asterix\*

For **2024/25** Council Year, the programme is:

- April - Domestic Abuse (MK Act) - Wednesday 10th April 6-8pm
- May - Charing Training (BMKALC) - Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> May 6 -8pm.
- June - Meetings, motions and debate – how to work within Standing Orders – Wednesday 12th June 6 – 8pm
- July — Standards in Public Life / Code of Conduct – Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> July 6 – 8pm
- August – no session
- September – Safeguarding\* – Wednesday 11th September 6 – 8pm
- October – Communications and Social Media – Wednesday 9th October 6 – 8pm
- November – Modern Slavery (45 mins) and PREVENT (1 hour) – Wednesday 13th November 6 – 8pm
- December – no session
- January – Bystander training – Wednesday 8th January 6 – 8pm
- February – Anti-sexual harassment\* – Wednesday 12th February – 6 -8pm.
- March — GDPR and Data Protection\* - Wednesday 12th March Page 2 of 2
- April – TBC

## **Assessment and Review**

Training will be reviewed and refreshed regularly. This will include an expectation that all sessions provided will have evaluation at the end, with feedback provided to the Operations and Resources Committee, ensuring suitability, effectiveness and value for money.

The annual training programme will be developed each year, focusing on the specific needs of the council. This process will be led by the Operations and Resources Committee, but aims to engage with councillors across the council, alongside officers and external agencies who can advise.

The annual review will also consider any legislative changes, best practice and sector demands.

## **Linked policies (i.e. to be read in conjunction with).**

- Councillor Allowances and Expenses policy
- Training and Development Policy

<b>Last review date:</b>	<b>May 2024</b>
<b>Next review date:</b>	<b>May 2025</b>
<b>Lead:</b>	<b>Operations Manager</b>
<b>Overseeing Committee:</b>	<b>Operations and Resources</b>
<b>Approved:</b>	<b>March 2024 - OC 106/24</b>
<b>Review cycle:</b>	<b>Annual</b>