

## **COUNCIL POST ELECTION TRAINING AND TEAM BUILDING**

### **Course Outline**

#### **Background**

It is well known that properly trained local councils are far more successful in working for their communities and more satisfying to work in and with for their Councillors, Partner Organisations and Staff, than those who do not invest in training.

New Councillors who do not receive training often spend their first year or more learning the ropes and making mistakes in the process. Experienced councillors who do not receive training easily get out of date. Doing things because “they have always been done like that” can lead to poor practice and out-dated approaches. Clerks find it difficult to work with councillors who do not understand their role. Untrained councils can often be inefficient, ineffective and appear chaotic to those who try to work with them.

#### **Course Description**

LGRC have developed a course for all councillors in a council to take together, to assist them in understanding their roles, the roles of their council staff and to facilitate some shared thinking about what the council wants to achieve during its term of office. The course is interactive and focuses on the essential knowledge that Councils need to be successful while encouraging the development of shared goals and aspirations. The course can be taken at any time, but is especially useful if taken within a few months of the councils coming into office after an election, as it will help the council to gel and act together with knowledge and a clear view of what is possible.

The Course, the core of which is between three and four hours long depending on the size of council, can be delivered in a morning, an afternoon or an evening. It can for instance take the place of a regular council meeting when all councillors and the Clerk are present. Additional modules can extend the course to a whole day or to consecutive sessions. It is important that all councillors, whether new or not, and the Clerk participate, but it may be beneficial for other staff members (if present) or invited members of specific partner organisations also to attend.

The Course has a number of elements delivered in short modules to ensure that participants are able to absorb the information provided and participate in the interactive sessions so that they are able to build their knowledge and influence the collective discussion. Teaching methods used will include a pre course questionnaire, a comprehensive course pack, formal presentations, group work, interactive sessions and a collective brainstorm. The course stands alone but it will also facilitate further subsequent work by the council either with LGRC support or by the council working on its own initiative.

#### **Course Structure**

**Pre -Course Preparation** - Councillor and Clerk Participants will be asked to complete a questionnaire that examines their level of experience and understanding of Local Council work, their motivation for being on the council and their view of the Council’s

priorities going forward. It will also ask for their view on how effective their council is at present. These questionnaires will be used as the basis for some of the discussion during the course.

#### **Course Materials – Provided in Folder**

- Copy of Good Councillors Guide
- Copy of Good Employers Guide
- Course Handouts Pack
- Copy of Questionnaire Feedback
- Copy of Brainstorm Results

#### **Introduction and Scene Setting (15 Minutes)**

Introduction of trainers and individual participants, housekeeping, objectives of the course.

#### **Icebreaker- What makes a Good Council/Councillor/Chairman/Clerk?**

**(35 minutes- 10 minutes group discussion, 15 minutes plenary, 10 minutes feedback)**

Course divides into 4 groups and discusses one topic each. Groups feed back in Plenary. Trainer presents one slide on each area.

#### **Local Council Fundamentals Presentation and Discussion**

**(60 minutes with break after first 30 minutes)**

- History of Parish/Town/Community Councils
- Where they fit in Local Government
- Current Trends - Localism etc.
- Legal Framework
- Powers/Duties, Power of General Competence
- Financial Regulations, Budget and Precept, Audit
- Freedom of Information, Data Protection
- Insurance and Risk Assessment

Break

- **Meetings**

- Statutory Requirements
- Declarations of Interests
- Agenda
- Standing Orders
- Conduct of Meetings
- Admitting the Press and Public
- Minutes

#### **Employment and the Role of the Clerk and Other Staff Members (25 minutes.**

**Plenary discussion with slides and input from the Clerk)**

- Role of the Clerk
- Corporate Body, Member /Clerk relations
- Employment requirement

- Contract
- Appraisals
- Pay and Conditions
- Workload management

Break

### **Planning (20 minutes Presentation and Discussion)**

- Planning Framework
- Parish Council Role as Consultee
- Neighbourhood plan
- Community Rights

### **(Council Strategy and Tactical Plans – Serving the Community. 35 minutes consider questionnaire findings and brainstorm)**

- Review and discuss questionnaire findings
- Brainstorm – What does this council wish to achieve in the next 4 years?
- Discussion
  - Priorities for action
  - Further work

### **Summary and close (10 minutes)**

- Summarise the learning points
- Introduce further reading
- Introduce sector support
  - NALC/CALC
  - SLCC

### **Additional Elements**

The Course can be tailored to a Council's specific needs and could include additional optional elements such as:

- Nolan Principles
- Governance in depth
- Community Engagement
- Data Protection
- Chairmanship
- PR, Marketing and Media relations
- Operating with Political Groups
- Partnership Working
- Committee Structures
- Strategic Planning and Target Setting
- Sources of Finance

### **Further Information**

For further Information please contact Nick Randle on 07783 888943

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