

MINERA COMMUNITY COUNCIL

TRAINING PLAN

Introduction

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires community councils to make and publish a plan to outline the training provision for its members and staff. The first training plan must be ready and published by 5 November 2022, six months after the duty comes into force. The training plan should reflect on, and address, whether the council collectively has the skills and knowledge it needs to deliver its plans effectively.

This is the first such plan published by Minera Community Council (the Council), and we commit to re-publishing our Training Plan whenever amendments to it are adopted, and in any event not less than once per annum within 5 business days of the Annual Meeting of the Council.

Objectives of the Training Plan

The Council recognises that community councillors are generally lay persons who seek and take office because they wish to serve their communities on a fundamentally pro bono basis. The Council also recognises that its staff are not full-time professionals in the roles which they perform on behalf of the Council. As such the Council is mindful that stipulated training and competence obligations attaching to councillors and staff should be as 'light touch' as can reasonably be made, while simultaneously ensuring that councillors are provided with such training and development as will ensure that the Council will operate within the law at all times.

The Training Plan will serve these objectives by selecting and encouraging participation in training courses and events which

- emphasise the need for integrity and probity in public life;
- give confidence and assurance in delivering the role of a community councillor;
- provide a reasonable grounding in the law relating to community councils and those who serve on or for them;
- provide specialised skills for those councils who need them, such as chairing or sitting on committees with specialist remits, and
- enable individuals to engage with residents and other stakeholders of the Council in an informed and constructive manner.

Required training

1. Code of Conduct

It is a legal requirement that, on appointment, all councillors sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office which includes a commitment to act and abide by the Code of Conduct of the Council.

The Council uses as its reference Code of Conduct the document published by Wrexham County Borough Council, a copy of which is provided by the Clerk to each new councillor on appointment.

The Council will expect each councillor to attend a session of familiarisation training relating to the Code of Conduct within one year of taking office. In years where an election of the whole council has taken place, all elected councillors should complete this familiarisation training before the first anniversary of the election date.

2. New Councillor Induction

Separately to training in the application of the Code of Conduct, the Council will expect each councillor within one year of first appointment to complete a session of induction training in the role of community councillor.

Other training

The Clerk shall be responsible for maintaining contact with training providers on a local and national basis on behalf of the Council, and will circulate to all councillors and employees in a timely manner details of all training courses received, which may be of interest to them.

The Council encourages all councillors and employees to undertake such training as they feel will contribute to their own personal development and effectiveness, taking particular cognisance of specialist skills. This may include, but not be confined to

- software and data management skills appertaining to the roles of Webmaster or Data Protection Registrar;
- chairing and meeting management skills appertaining to the Council's chair or chairs of constituted committees and
- professional training to support the roles of Clerk, Community Agent or other designated roles in order to ensure the legal and statutorily competent delivery of specialist professional services to the Council.

In all cases of discretionary training, the Council will not unreasonably withhold funding to enable training to be accessed and accreditations recognised.

Where 'off the shelf' training in a certain topic is not easily accessible and the Council deems that a training need exists that should be met, the Council will arrange for bespoke training to be provided if possible.

Training budget

The Training Plan of the Council shall be the subject of a dedicated budgetary cost heading. The estimated costs of training on an annual basis will be estimated, reviewed and ratified as part of the budgeting process of the Council, and will form part of the precept request made each year to Wrexham County Borough Council.

The Council will also consider, on a case by case basis, the use of reserve funds to meet the costs of training where an emergent training need is perceived beyond the remit of the budget set for the year in question. In this way the Council will not delay or refuse training so long as the financing of it does not prejudice the other statutory duties of the Council.