

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY RESOURCES 17 JUNE 2009

ANNUAL LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2008/2009

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to summarise the Member and employee learning & development activities undertaken during 2008/9.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

- 2.1 The Council makes an ongoing resource commitment to learning & development of all employees and of Members. This report summarises the main activity and the impact this has on the opportunities for employees to improve their personal knowledge and skills.
- 2.2 As in previous years there has been a high level of learning & development activity during the year.
- 2.3 The average number of learning & development days per employee was 3.37 days. The percentage of new employees receiving the corporate induction learning & development programme within 12 weeks of joining the Council was 92.25% and the number of hours IT learning & development per person was 2.31 hours.
- 2.4 A significant amount of learning & development linked to IT development also took place directly in service areas and is not included in the corporate indicator of 2.31 hours.
- 2.5 The timing and variety of learning & development available ensures that both full and part time employees are able to attend learning & development. Part-time employees attending learning & development outside their normal hours are paid the same as a full time employee.
- 2.6 The number of employees covered by the Council's appraisal scheme who received an appraisal during the year was 97%.

3. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT COURSES

- 3.1 Learning & development courses were provided for a wide variety of subjects and can be categorised as follows:
- a) Corporate Learning & Development
 - b) Management Development
 - c) Member Development
 - d) Interpersonal skills Learning & Development
 - e) IT skills
 - f) Academic qualifications
 - g) CPD (Continuous Professional Development) seminars and short courses
 - h) NVQ's
- 3.2 Specific information on the number of courses is available on request.

4. CORPORATE LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

4.1 A number of corporate learning & development programmes are provided each year for new employees. These include the Induction programme, Appraisal, Customer Care, Diversity, Step-Away Policy and Health & Safety.

4.2 MRF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Each year new corporate initiatives are introduced and particular attention has been focussed this year on Literacy; Numeracy, English language for employees where English is their second language and British Sign Language.

- In particular, the MRF has received an employer's award from 'English@work in Devon' which is a part of the Learning and Skills Council for its continuing work in providing specialist learning & development to its staff.
- In 2007/08 the MRF supervisor completed the first level in Polish language learning & development and has this year commenced the next level.
- Learning & development courses on Health & Safety, Appraisals and Diversity have been provided using translators for Polish, Slovakian and Ukrainian speaking staff.
- Literacy and numeracy learning & development has again been provided to MRF staff this year in conjunction with Exeter College.

British Sign Language introductory taster courses were provided for 16 employees during the year.

.3 The Housing Benefits Customer Services Team have now completed a Customer Service Learning & Development Programme as a part of their integration into the Customer Services Team.

5. MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

5.1 The management development programme was reviewed during 2008 and a report on a proposed new management development scheme was approved by SMT. The new scheme is accredited and nationally recognised by the Institute of Leadership and Management.

5.2 The ILM scheme has a number of levels corresponding to the management levels in the organisation.

5.3 During 2008/09 :

- 10 managers undertook ILM Level 2 (Team Leaders and Supervisors)
- 9 managers undertook ILM Level 3 (Middle Managers)
- 7 managers undertook ILM Level 4 (Development Level for Middle Managers)

The programme has been well received by all managers on the programme.

6. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Progress has continued on the Council's application to IDeA for the Member Development Charter Mark for Councils. The Council wide self assessment that is a requirement of the application has now been completed and this will inform the Action Plan

- 6.2 Following some initial work on personal development plans for Councillors, it is now proposed to roll them out to other Councillors with a view to constructing a comprehensive learning & development plan during the next two years.
- 6.3 Councillors have been invited to attend a wide range of learning events this year, including e-learning, IT and Soft skills and 90 minute power training sessions. A number of Councillors attended 18 of these special learning & development events that were organised primarily for officers.
- 6.4 Councillors were invited to a range of external training events funded by the Regional Improvement and Efficiencies Programme.
- 6.5 Councillors also attended sixteen briefings on a variety of subjects this year. The average attendance of Councillors at each briefing was 13.

7. INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

- 7.1 The Council's Learning & Development Brochure can be found on the Council's intranet site. This lists up to sixty courses including interpersonal skills and IT learning & development courses that are available. Each year a variety of interpersonal skills courses are scheduled and these cover a wide variety of subjects.
- 7.2 Each year new subjects are identified and courses introduced. This year a new set of short learning & development sessions called '90 minute power sessions' have been launched.
- 7.3 The initial programme schedule covered:
- Coping with change
 - Myers Briggs (how personality type profiling can help you communicate and work better)
 - Effective Meetings
 - Personal Stress Management
 - Motivation Skills

A further range of topics are planned throughout 2009.

8. IT SKILLS

- 8.1 IT learning & development is provided on a flexible basis. Full one and two-day courses are offered but shorter two-hour courses are also provided. This method allows the current IT learning & development provider, to target specific subject such as mail merge and Excel tables on shorter sessions. Solutions for IT learning & development problems are also available by email, phone and desk-side visits. Feedback from staff has been very good.
- 8.2 This year new courses have also been provided on specialist software such as Keypoint software updates and CMS software

9. ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

- 9.1 The Council supports a number of employees each year in gaining academic qualifications. These cover a wide range of subjects and details. The subjects include degree-level courses and craft subjects.
- 9.2 Four employees are enrolled on the Modern Apprenticeship Scheme for electricians, carpenters and plumbers. A further Modern Apprenticeship has also been provided in the HR Service Unit. There are 50 other employees undertaking academic qualification courses.

10. CPD SEMINARS AND SHORT COURSES

- 10.1 All professional staff are required or encouraged by their professional institute to keep up to date with changes in legislation and updates to their particular discipline.
- 10.2 Continuous Professional Development (or CPD) is generally obtained by attending short seminars and workshops. Staff attended thirty-two events and activities this year. These events are vital in keeping staff aware of important changes to enhance their skills in delivering the Council's services.

11. NVQ LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

- 11.1 This year a number of employees throughout the Council have been able to take advantage of Government funding that supports NVQ's in the workplace.
- 11.2. The Housing Benefits Manager has completed a project this year to set up an NVQ assessment centre registered with the IRRV for the provision of a NVQ level 3 qualification in Revenue and Benefits Assessment.
- 11.2 Funding for the project has been accessed from Government NVQ funding through Exeter College.
- 11.3 Six Parks and Open Spaces staff have completed an NVQ Level 2 in Amenity Horticulture via the Train to Gain programme.
- 11.4 Ten staff at the Materials Reclamation Facility have completed an NVQ in Waste Management Operations through Train to Gain.
- 11.5 Four Customer service Staff are taking an NVQ level 3 in Customer Service.

12. Work Experience Placements

- 12.1 27 work experience placements have taken place during the year for a range of people. These include overseas students as a part of the Leonardo Da Vinci scheme run in conjunction with our twin town of Rennes; people with disabilities; unemployed people trying to get back into the workplace; young people from both school and university.

13. Young Apprentice Scheme

- 13.1 The Council has set up a Young Apprentice Scheme in partnership with the Education Training & Skills organisation and St. James' School in Exeter. It is designed to help young people develop business skills whilst they are still at school.
- 13.2 The scheme allows young people to study for a vocational qualification by splitting their time between the school classroom, College and the workplace.
- 13.3 This year there have been three placements. One in the Environmental Health Services Business Support unit, one in Corporate Customer Services and one in Licensing Services.

14. DEVELOPMENTS FOR 2008/09

- 14.1 The coming year will present a number of challenges for the learning & development service that will include:
- further briefings on the Local Government Review
 - ongoing development of the management competency framework

- Member competency self assessment programme
- re-design of the staff induction programme into an e-learning package
- Continued commitment to the new young apprentice scheme for 14 to 16 year olds.

15 RECOMMENDATION

- 15.1 That Scrutiny Resources notes the learning & development and development activities undertaken throughout the year.

HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

CORPORATE SERVICES DIRECTORATE

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)
Background papers used in compiling this report:

1. None