
CORPORATE STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

1 SUMMARY

1.1 This report aims to update Members on:

- The corporate staff development and training programme that has been in place over the past year
- The priorities for staff development and training for the coming year.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 On 1 March 2005 Rochford District Council became an Investor in People. This is a recognised Standard of best practice and demonstrates that the organisation embraces a commitment to training and development in order to achieve its aims and objectives.

2.2 We have used the Investors in People planning process to address our needs and have implemented a training and development programme over the past year. We consistently evaluate this to ensure our workforce has the most up to date skills in order to build on this success.

3 DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS

Investors in People

3.1 Recognition as an Investor in People is not the end – but a beginning. By achieving the Standard we have proved that we have the right foundations in place. We now need to build on this and grow by continuing to review and improve what we are doing in line with our organisational priorities and objectives. We will be reassessed under the Standard within 3 years.

Corporate Development and Training Programme for 2004-2005

3.2 The programme commenced in January 2004 and will run until March 2005. Fifty-two workshops have been organised to date. The workshops reflect staff and managers' needs and requests for development and training opportunities in Rochford District Council.

The programme provides training and development opportunities to meet both Departmental and Corporate aims and objectives. The following courses and staff briefings have taken place:

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- Sickness Management briefings on the new policy and procedure were provided for all managers.
 - Job Evaluation briefings were provided for all staff on the scheme to be introduced and the process to be followed.
 - Freedom of Information Act briefings/awareness sessions on the new legal requirements and the Council's obligations were held for all staff. Departmental Champions were identified and trained to a level that enabled them to carry out the staff awareness sessions. Guidance booklets, including a Knowledge test, were issued.
 - Investors in People briefing sessions were held to inform staff what the award is and why the organisation is committed to it. The sessions also provided staff with an opportunity to identify areas for improvement in relation to communication and development and training. We are continuing to raise awareness with new staff at corporate induction. Feedback on staff views from these sessions was provided to the Operational Management Team who used this to inform the development of the Investors in People action plan and the Workforce Development plan.
 - Performance Development Review (PDR) refresher sessions were held in the autumn for new managers who needed to carry out performance reviews. This was an interim measure as PDR training commenced from February 2005. The training introduces the new paperwork that will be used from April 2005 but focuses more on the skills required to undertake a performance review, as this was a need identified through the IIP awareness sessions.
 - Corporate Induction was introduced in July 2004, as there had been a gap in provision for 18 months. 35 staff that had commenced within that period attended the first 2 sessions to ensure they received a corporate overview. Induction sessions are now run every six weeks. The Chief Executive attends every session to talk to staff and answer any questions. The afternoon session covers health and safety.
 - Other courses that have run include:
 - Recruitment and Selection for Managers
 - Time Management
 - Managing Stress in Times of Change
 - People Management (for all managers)
 - European Computer Driving Licence
 - Basic IT skills course for Scheme Managers to enable them to use the PCs placed in their workplaces.
 - Report Writing
 - Managing Discipline and Capability Issues

- 6 staff are completing NVQs in either Customer Care or Team Leading.
- 2 managers have commenced the Essex Leadership Centre of Excellence in January 2005. This is a one-year programme to include taught modules, coaching, action learning sets and capacity building events. The Leadership programme is a joint project set up between Essex authorities through the Essex Human Resources Strategic Partnership of which Rochford is a member.

Evaluation of Programme

- 3.3 Training programmes are evaluated through evaluation questionnaires immediately after a course has run and also through a post evaluation questionnaire, which goes to the individual staff member 6-8 weeks after an event. These forms enable a discussion between the individual and their line manager to assess the impact the learning has had on performance and to identify and further development needs. The forms also assist the Human Resources section with continually improving the provision of development activities. We have received excellent feedback from staff for the courses provided and examples of where skills, knowledge or attitudes have improved as a result.
- 3.4 Evaluation happens at an organisational level through the annual training needs analysis. The benefits from our investment in development and training over the past year are now becoming apparent. For example we have achieved a 5% quartile increase on Performance Indicators for 2003/2004 and the levels of sickness absence, due to stress have reduced. Our investment in People Management training for all managers that emphasised the managers' role in respect of staff development and training and communication was key to us gaining Investors in People accreditation.
- 3.5 The corporate programme cost £39,000 for 2004-2005. The evaluation with management teams demonstrated the following outcomes as a result of the training provided:
- Basic IT training for Scheme Managers has enabled those staff to use the computers that were installed in their workplaces. This has improved communication and increased confidence.
 - The European Computer Driving Licence – an IT skills qualification - has increased IT skills within departments and provided a source of knowledge for other staff to use when necessary.
 - Induction training had assisted staff in carrying out their new job effectively.
 - Increased opportunities for staff to meet others from across the Council and share experience and ideas.

- The Time Management course had empowered staff to manage themselves more effectively and manage workloads better.
- Staff gave examples of where they had made some changes to their lifestyle or attitudes as a result of the Managing Stress in Times of Change course.

3.6 In addition to corporate provision, £24,500 has been spent on professional training within departments for example on ensuring staff are up to date with current legislation so that the organisation is aware of and meets its duties in respect of the increasing responsibilities placed upon us. Also 15 staff are currently being sponsored to undertake post entry training, which enables us to develop highly skilled staff and also acts as a retention tool enabling us to promote internally where appropriate. The main outcomes from departmental training provision were:

- Building of networks
- Refreshing skills
- Greater awareness of issues
- Increased knowledge and skills leading to greater capability and capacity
- Improved recruitment and retention in some areas

Future Training Needs

3.7 A comprehensive training needs analysis has been undertaken with all departmental management teams and the Corporate Management Board to assess future corporate training needs and evaluate the impact of training undertaken to date. Individual needs have been picked up through the Performance Development Review process centrally.

3.8 For 2005 we will be continuing with the programme that ran over the past year. In addition Equalities training will be a priority to ensure the Council is meeting its legal duties, in particular with relation to the Race Relations Amendment Act. We will also be running training in partnership with the Police on Conflict Management for various groups of front line staff. We will also be building on our management/leadership development provision.

3.9 Over the next year we will be focussing on developing different types of learning interventions other than courses. For example mentoring, work shadowing and coaching. Also opportunities to learn from one another and existing best practice.

4 RISK IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Strategic Risk

The training and development programme must be continuously evaluated to ensure it meets the organisations needs and improves service delivery.

4.2 Resource Risk

Some additional funding may be sought from the Capacity Building Fund to enable all needs to be met.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES** to endorse the Staff Training and Development programme

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