

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**02 February 2009**

**Report of the Central Services Director**

**Part 1- Public**

**Matters for Information**

**1 TRAINING REPORT 2007/8**

**This report advises Members of the nature of training and development activity and the level of expenditure on it during 2007/8. Members are also informed of the outcomes of evaluation studies of this training and development activity.**

**1.1 Breakdown of expenditure on training**

1.1.1 The tables below summarise training expenditure for the Council, other than the Leisure Services Business Unit in 2007/8. The budget was £156,700.

**1.1.2 Table 1 - Expenditure according to training category**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Expenditure (£)</b>
Member Training	4,636
Professional & Technical Development	105,649
Health & Safety Training	6,623
IT training	20,875
Management Development	11,029
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>148,812</b>

**Table 2 – Service by Service training expenditure**

<b>Service</b>	<b>Total (£)</b>	<b>Average per head</b>
Central Services	22,868	497

Chief Executives	20,807	547
Planning, Transportation and Leisure	34,947	357
Finance	26,136	421
IT	8,229	588
Environmental Health & Housing	20,485	379
Member	4,636	87
Corporate Issues (including the LSBU's Investor in People re-assessment)	10,704	18
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>148,812</b>	

1.1.3 Members will note that in comparison to previous years there have been percentage increases in the levels of expenditure on Health & Safety Training (reflecting the need to update staff on changes in legislation and to minimise the risk of physical and psychological harm to employees), IT training (reflecting the roll out of Customer Relationship Management and streamlining of the property database ) and Management Development (reflecting the need for the Authority to prepare junior staff for more senior positions given that many of our existing senior managers will be eligible for retirement within the next 10 years).

## 1.2 Professional and Technical Development

1.2.1 During the 2007/8 financial year the authority sponsored individual attendance on 307 externally provided short courses and seminars that fall within this category. As has been reported in previous years, the perceived benefits of such training and development activity to the organisation are monitored via the Training Management System. As Members may already be aware, the professional organisations to which certain key officers belong have mandatory Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements. Most of the seminars and short courses attended help those officers meet these CPD requirements. The results gathered last financial year indicate that the learning objectives set prior to attendance on such courses are being met.

### **1.3 Qualification Courses**

- 1.3.1 During the year under consideration 20 people were sponsored on various professional qualification courses. Of this number, 2 have left the Council's employment (the "new" employer of one having reimbursed all of the training expenses incurred, the other individual has personally repaid all of his fees and expenses). Of those still in the Council's employ, 3 are part way through their course, 2 have taken a year out of their studies for personal reasons (and are intending to recommence their courses) and 13 have successfully completed their studies. Last year's successful candidates were:

Duncan White – BSc in Building Engineering

Stuart Edwards – Post Graduate Diploma in Estate Management

Karla Etuate – member of the Institute of Internal Auditors

Nick Battell and Guy Pollack – Association of Accounting Technician Foundation

William Waight and Diane Lane – Institute of Revenues Ratings and Valuation Technician

Gemma Gilley – Institute of Ratings and Valuation Full Qualification

Tamsin Ritchie – Advanced Certificate in Public Health Practice

Paul Fowler – Certificate in Electoral Administration

Bill Parkinson – Certificate of Education in Post Compulsory Education & Training.

Two further exam successes have now been published:

Vicky Howells and Darren Lane have been awarded Distinctions in the Diploma in Management Studies.

### **1.4 Internally run courses**

- 1.4.1 The Authority provides internally run courses where there are collective needs. These courses are subject to a tailor made evaluation that may include testing, interviewing or surveys depending upon the subject of the course. During the year under consideration, in house courses were provided in :

Diversity Awareness

Mental Health Awareness

Corporate Manslaughter

Emergency First Aid (for Play Scheme Staff)

Handling the Media

Customer Care

Telephone Debt Collection

Procurement

- 1:4:2 The Diversity Awareness Training and The Mental Health Awareness Training were both provided to support the Council's capacity to respond to diversity issues and to sustain the Level 3 rating of the national Equality Standard. Although it is difficult to prove a direct link between the Council's continuing commitment to such training and the very low level of complaints of discrimination from both staff and members of the public, best practice guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission emphasises the importance of training in developing appropriate levels of awareness within the workforce. Building on the success of the sessions run in 2007/8 which was attended mainly by staff from the Housing team, further Mental Health Awareness training will be run in 2008/9 for staff from other sections within the Council.
- 1:4:3 The Corporate Manslaughter and Emergency First Aid training were both significant items of proactive health and safety training. The Emergency First Aid training was compulsory for all of the temporary staff employed on the Summer Play Scheme. A scrutiny of the accident reports testifies that where there were accidents, staff dealt with them, and there has not been any subsequent civil action against the Council. The Corporate Manslaughter training was compulsory for all senior staff with responsibilities for ensuring compliance with health and safety legislation by Council employees and contractors and supports the Council's continuing commitment to best practice in such issues.
- 1:4:4 The Handling the Media, Customer Care and Telephone Debt Collection training, all aimed to enhance the Council's aspiration of being a customer focused, enabling provider of services to all sections of the community. All of these initiatives focused on developing appropriate skills. The staff who attended these sessions reported that the learning objectives set prior to the training were met. The results of surveys and "mystery shopper" exercises suggest that staff do utilise appropriate skills, although greater attention needs to be given to giving a standard initial acknowledgement to telephone callers. A poster campaign is currently underway to remind staff of the Council's Customer Care Standard for greeting telephone callers as the initial training on this clearly needs to be reinforced.
- 1:4:5 The Procurement Training was compulsory for all those involved in purchasing and letting Council contracts, and equipped them with the knowledge required to comply with recent changes in legislation. The training has been assimilated and the Council's conduct in procurement complies with legislative requirements.

## **1:5 The Leisure Services Business Unit (LSBU)**

1:5:1 The LSBU has a discrete training budget and in 2007/08 expenditure amounted to just below £30,000 across the three indoor leisure sites with an additional £20,200 spent on retained trainer/assessors to deliver the in house training related to the National Pool Lifeguard Qualification (NPLQ), Life Support and Defibrillation training.

The in-house training programme for recreational assistants/lifeguard staff requires monthly attendance to a training session covering water born rescue, safety and resuscitation techniques. Training is strictly monitored and the NPLQ contains foundation and site specific modules. In 2007/08 Larkfield Leisure Centre and Tonbridge Swimming Pool maintained their status as an Institute of Qualified Lifeguards accredited training centre, validating the quality of training and permitting both Centres to offer training to external bodies. The ability to offer training to external candidates is an important recruitment tool in an area where staff turnover is high and the NPLQ is a mandatory qualification.

1:5:2 The majority of external training was of a vocational nature and included many short courses in child protection, early years education and food hygiene and basic health and safety. In addition staff gained coaching qualifications from national bodies including swimming, gymnastics and trampolining awards and others attended first aid and pool plant operators courses.

1:5:3 The LSBU has core training matrix that includes fire awareness, customer care, manual handling and basic health and safety. This matrix was a focal point for training in 2007/08 and 204 staff attended core training in one or more of the above disciplines.

1:5:4 The LSBU training plan covered a number of new areas in 2007/08 including Disability Awareness for all supervisory staff, Retention software training for fitness staff and Sales Skills for Customer Advisors

1:5:5 Senior LSBU staff attended training related to e-rquisitioning, legionella awareness and Ivysoft. Two senior managers attended management training courses under the auspices of the ISRM and ILM respectively.

1:5:6 The LSBU achieved re-recognition to the liP standard in September 2007 and continued to commit to corporate and site specific training for all new employees. An annual training plan, linked to the LSBU Business Plan is prepared for each site as a consequence of performance appraisals and monitored through the training management system and quarterly service review process.

## **1:6 Member Training**

1:6:1 Last year Members attended training on a variety of ad hoc individual events as well as collective sessions on :

Standards Committees

Understanding Local Government Finance

Best Practice in Audit Committees.

1:6:2 All of the Members who attended these sessions felt that they had been worthwhile and that the training had achieved its defined objectives. The continuation of the Council's rating at Level 4 in the Use of Resources Key Lines of Enquiry is testament to the probity with which Members conduct themselves and the rigour with which the Council's finances are managed.

## **1:7 Legal Implications**

1:7:1 As Members are aware the legislative pace of change continues unabated and it is therefore imperative that the Council provides appropriate training to enable staff to comply with legal requirements. For this reason training is planned in 2008/9 to equip staff with the necessary skills to enable them to manage risk, and to comply with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act.

## **1:8 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

1:8:1 The Council actively seeks opportunities to obtain funding from external sources to support its training and development activities. During the year in question funding was obtained from the Modern Apprenticeship Scheme to finance training for one member of staff on the Association in Accounting Technician qualification course and from Business Link to pay for some basic training in the use of Excel spreadsheets for four staff.

## **1:9 Risk Assessment**

1:9:1 As Members will be aware it is anticipated that there will be a significant number of senior staff becoming eligible for retirement within the next 10 years. It is therefore important that the Council equips those who are being developed to replace them with the appropriate knowledge and skills.

Background papers:

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Nil

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