

REPORT

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CORPORATE TRAINING PLAN 2005

Report Summary:

This report is intended to provide an overview of the main activities of the training function at Salisbury District Council during 2004, and a plan of key areas of work for 2005.

1. Background

Training and Development Services provides an internal service to equip the Council's employees and Members with the skills, knowledge and competencies necessary to achieve high quality service provision and community partnership working.

There is currently one full-time Training & Development Manager and one administrator that is shared with the main Personnel unit.

There is a corporate budget for Training and Development, which in the 2004-5 financial year was £70,000. Each unit also has its own training budget which is used for unit specific training.

- 2.** Two major themes dominated corporate training activity throughout 2004, these being preparing for the formation of the Customer Services Centre, and the surrounding impacts this and other major initiatives are having on the organisation in terms of managing change.
- 3.** Individual evaluations of training activities undertaken in 2004 have been carried out, for more information on these please contact the Training & Development Manager.
- 4.** The major themes of training activity for 2005 are:
 - Leadership Development
 - Member Training and Development
 - The Introduction of Workplace Counsellors
 - Improved Induction of New Starters

- Roll-out of mandatory training on the Freedom of Information Act and Health and Safety at Work
- Continued support of staff in Customer Services
- Support of Staff going through Job-role changes
- Implementation of an annual corporate training evaluation exercise

5. **Recommendations:**

That Cabinet approves the above priorities as key areas of activity for 2005, as well as allowing for flexibility to defer non-essential items in case of unforeseeable activities.

6. **Background Papers:**n/a

7. **Implications:**

- **Financial** : n/a
- **Legal** : n/a
- **Human Rights** : n/a
- **Personnel** : consulted
- **Community Safety** : n/a
- **Environmental Impact:** n/a
- **Council's Core Values** : Training plan aims to underpin Council's Core Values.
- **Ward(s) Affected** : n/a
- **Consultation Undertaken:** n/a



CORPORATE TRAINING PLAN

2005

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2.0 Summary

This report is intended to provide an overview of the main activities of the training function at SDC during 2004, and a plan of key areas of work for 2005.

Detail on the many training activities carried out within individual service areas is not provided, but rather a focus on the main corporate priorities. This is so agreement can be gained on key areas of activity for the allocation of resources.

The corporate training and development function sits within the Personnel and Training Services unit. The function has grown considerably over the last couple of years in terms of what has been provided to service units.

3.0 Introduction

Training and Development Services provides an internal service to equip the Council's employees and Members with the skills, knowledge and competencies necessary to achieve high quality service provision and community partnership working.

There is currently one full-time Training & Development Manager and one administrator that is shared with the main Personnel unit. There is a newly appointed Training Officer who job-shares her role as a recruitment officer, but due to the high volume of work in recruitment has not yet taken on responsibilities on the training side.

There is a corporate budget for Training and Development, which in the 2004-5 financial year was £70,000. Each unit also has a unit training budget.

4.0 Review of Training & Development Activity 2004

Two major themes dominated corporate training activity throughout 2004, these being preparing for the formation of the Customer services centre, and the surrounding impacts this and other major initiatives are having on the organisation in terms of managing change.

The following activities took place:

4.1 Customer Services

1. Customer First! Workshops were held for all staff, whether front or back office. Approximately 200 staff have attended, achieving the aim of having a critical mass of employees attending the sessions. The aim was to bring all staff up to date with the changes relating to the Customer Service centre and the impacts this would have within SDC.
2. Two training workshops were held for team leaders directly impacted by the introduction of the Customer Services Centre. These were facilitated by the IDeA.
3. A Corporate standard 'customer care' programme has been developed. This will soon be piloted on the Customer Services team. This programme consists of 5 half day modules, covering everything from the basics of good customer care on the telephone and face to face, up to dealing with difficult situations and championing improvements within the organisation for the customer.
4. A training session was held for the new Customer Services supervisors to assist them in managing their new teams during the start-up phase of the Customer Services Centre.
5. A team-building evening was hosted for the full Customer Services Team. This was important as many members of the new team do not work in the same location at any one time and these occasions are rare opportunity for them to get to know each other.
6. Customer Service NVQ's are in place for the new Customer Services team, with the appointment of a provider, TADS Training.
7. Training Folders for the newly appointed Customer Services Officers have been produced. This was done in conjunction with Carole Davis and Jo Mundy. These contain detailed documentation to support the training of staff in these new roles, including training plans, training records, learning logs and career grade summaries.

8. Training Skills Workshops have been held to assist staff from the 'back-office' taking over responsibilities in training the new Customer Service Officers.
9. Special arrangements have been made with the ECDL provider, Salisbury College, for them to attend Penny-farthing House two mornings a month to help the Customer Service Officers there progress through their ECDL qualification.
10. Interview skills & career development workshops have been organised for staff in the opportunity pool that may be looking for an alternative position.

4.2 Change Management

1. A Management Away-day event was held for the Extended Management Team
2. 'Who Moved My Cheese?' sessions on understanding the impact of change were held for all staff to attend. Some units opted to hold facilitated sessions within their own units.
3. We have hosted Away-days for Service Units, including a half day for MEDT and a full day for IT Services
4. The 'Who Moved My Cheese?' book and principles are still being utilised.

4.3 Other

1. 2003-2004 saw the introduction of the Progressive Supervisor Programme, a modular development programme aimed at existing and potential supervisory staff. An evaluation of the first programme showed that the programme had been exceptionally well received, and had achieved real benefits for those that took part. A few minor modifications and enhancements to the programme have been made, and it will be running again 2004-2005.
2. 24 staff attended a course entitled 'Leadership for Managing Projects and Change' which was a follow on from the previous years Project Management Training.
3. 90 staff attended an 'Email Master Class' aimed at showing staff how to use email more effectively.
4. A 'short' supervisory programme, consisting of four half-day sessions, was run for five of the gardener supervisors. This was specially put together for these members of staff, and it was designed to be as practical as possible.

5. 360 degree appraisal was piloted with the extended Management Team as part of this year's appraisal round. Pre-appraisal training was offered for any new members of staff, as well as preparation workshops for appraising managers, however, only 8 took advantage of this. This is important as it was the second year following the implementation of the new appraisal scheme, and the competency framework still needs further embedding. It is felt that more managers would have benefited from attending these pre-appraisal workshops, as feedback indicates that some line managers are still struggling to use the competency framework as part of the appraisal effectively.
6. Addressing Stress at Work workshops have been held to support the implementation of SDC's new Stress at Work policy, which underpins the new Health and Safety Executive's Standards.
7. A programme was put together and run for I.T. support staff around customer service.
8. The Rewarding Relationships material is still being utilised throughout SDC. One open course was held, with several in the pipe-line for individual service units. Many teams made use of the RR materials in team meetings or half-day team events.
9. A Community Planning workshop was held for staff and councilors in September with another planned for January.
10. European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL). This still continues to be the major route for training on the Microsoft Office applications. There are currently 76 staff undertaking this qualification, 25 have completed to date, and another 20 more than half-way through. This qualification is not suitable for all staff, however, and some prefer instead to use the online training modules.
11. E-learning – We are still making in-roads into using e-learning as a cost-effective method of delivering some training. Currently we have training material available on the SDC intranet on the following: All of the Microsoft office applications, Health & Safety, Typing Skills, and Freedom of Information. During 2004, 66 hours were spent by 33 users working through the IT training modules online. In addition we have access via the internet to training modules covering an extensive range of subjects.
12. With the taking over of the managing of the 5 Rivers Leisure Centre, a condensed version of the full-day induction has been offered. 5 Rivers staff have also been able to access the full range of training that SDC has to offer.
13. A new course, entitled 'Mental Health Awareness' was run for staff throughout the past year. This compliments some of the existing equalities training that is

offered, and was particularly well received as it was delivered by an internal member of staff.

14. Regular on-going training programmes continued to run throughout 2004, including Full-day inductions for new starters, Train the Trainer, Fairness & Equality at Work, Assertiveness, Presentation Skills, Leading Your Team.
15. Use of the materials in the Open Learning Centre has picked up, mainly due to staff in the Opportunity Pool wanting to update their skills. It is hoped that the roll-out of the Freedom of Information and Health & safety training programmes will assist in promoting what is available, both in the open learning centre and on-line.
16. This year SDC has contributed £23,899 in fees for professional qualifications for 14 employees. Two of these courses are general business/management programmes, with the rest being specific professional qualifications. In most instances this has been funded out of the relevant Service Unit budget.

5.0 Training & Development Projects for 2005:

Outlined below are the planned key areas of activity for 2005:

5.1 Leadership Development

The main priority for 2005 is to set out a clear development strategy and programme for all managers. This strategy needs to encompass several elements, including the following:

- A framework to be developed relating to training of managers at all levels, which sets out 'mandatory' training requirements that need to be completed before they can undertake certain activities e.g. recruitment and selection. This framework also to incorporate a six monthly event which consists of an overview of key areas of information for managers.
- The introduction of internal coaching and/or a mentoring programme. This could be as simple as promoting the idea of manager as coach, or could consist of a more formal intervention. The aim being to support leadership development at SDC. A working group from PPT are to take this forward.
- Continued delivery of workshops to support new internal policies relating to the management of staff.
- A programme for young professionals/graduates that are new into local government – as a minimum just to run an annual Development Centre.
- Recommendations to build on the Progressive Manager Programme, that have already been discussed and agreed with Management Team, include the following:
 1. Research to be undertaken into how manager's development needs are met in other local authorities, what examples there are of best practice, and what tools/programmes are available from other agencies.
 2. The actions from the staff survey relating to manager's development should be broadened to include solutions that fit into an overall strategy.

Some of these actions will require the input of others from within PPT, and may also involve working groups of other staff at times.

5.2 Training needs arising from Appraisals

There is scope to utilise further the appraisal process in terms of managing performance and driving through the key behaviours required to achieve the aims of the organisation. Pre-appraisal workshops should form part of the mandatory training that line managers are required to undertake. Managers can be supplied with more information in advance, for example the training attended by their staff. This can be linked with the outcomes expected of such training. This will be a powerful tool in enforcing the practical outcomes that are expected from corporate training interventions, such as project management. Also, the 360 appraisal that was piloted for EMT last year could be made more widely available.

The list below takes the top 4 needs arising as detailed in the training plans from this year's appraisal round.

Customer Service Skills

To date SDC has not had it's own internal training programme for Customer Service Training. This has now been rectified and a modular programme consisting of five half-day workshops has been put together. This programme covers customer care from the basics of telephone techniques and face to face questioning and listening skills right up to dealing with difficult customer situations. The modules are suitable equally for internal or external customers. These will be piloted over the coming weeks with the new Customer Services Officers, but it is hoped that these modules will form part of the 'mandatory' framework of training that all staff will require. The aim is to roll-out this programme to all staff once the Customer Services staff have been through it.

Fairness and Equality training

This has now been running at SDC for 2 years, with 224 staff to date having attended. These run every couple of months for those that have not yet attended.

IT Training

It is hoped that further promotion of the IT training modules on the intranet will increase the number of users. Only 50 staff have accessed these modules, with 33 of those actually working through some of the content.

The ECDL is still available where this is appropriate for staff. Staff are generally progressing quicker through this qualification, due to a better all round awareness of the commitment that is involved. All of the Customer Service Officers are enrolled on the ECDL and it will signify a major achievement if these are able to progress through to completion. The challenge lies in the fact that as the staff in these roles are all customer facing, time away from their job to study or to take the exams needs careful co-ordination. Special arrangements have been made for the ECDL tutor to visit Penny-farthing House on a fortnightly basis to assist staff with this, and close support is being given by their team leaders and by the Training Manager.

Dealing with Difficult People

This is a very popular request. We anticipate that the new Customer Service Modules will meet the need that staff have for wanting to know how to deal with difficult situations.

5.3 Member Training and Development

The Policy Directors report to Cabinet on 24 November 2004 indicated that further work on councillor training (which featured in the CPA Improvement Plan) was overdue. In response to this the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Deputy met with the Head of Democratic Services, Training Manager and Policy Director to discuss a way forward. The discussion started with a review of work to date. This can be summarised as:

- A Knowledge and Skills Framework has been developed and open learning resources provided to underpin training and development needs identified.
- A training needs questionnaire was sent to all Councillors and personal development interviews offered arising from the questionnaires (although take-up on this offer was minimal).

The group considered the various approaches taken by other councils and agreed that SDC's approach could be enhanced. It was however recognised that many members were acutely short of time and that any enhanced approach would need to be sufficiently flexible. The following action was agreed:

- All political groups to be offered a presentation/discussion on councillor training and development
- The IDeA and a councillor training specialist to be approached about facilitating personal development interviews with councillors to enable councillors to create their own development plans
- Development of a Councillors Training Strategy based on national best practice
- Further promotion of learning materials to support councillors available in the Resource Centre).

5.4 Workplace Counsellors

Inconsistent management in certain situations was identified in the outcomes of the Staff Survey, and training for managers will be provided early in 2005 to underpin staff policies aimed at managing this. In addition to this it is proposed that we set up a scheme whereby staff act as workplace counsellors in instances where there has been alleged bullying or harassment. This will involve some initial research into an appropriate scheme, then selecting and training the suitable staff, and then running

the scheme on an ongoing basis. It is suggested that PPT staff themselves are trained in this kind of mediation role.

5.5 Induction of New Starters

More work is needed into helping service units effectively induct new starters. Different solutions may be appropriate in different service areas, and particular areas of concern are in the professional areas, where graduates are recruited.

5.6 Roll-out of mandatory training on the Freedom of Information Act and Health and Safety at Work

E-learning solutions that sit on the SDC intranet have been put in place to assist with training on the above subjects. These solutions will have to be promoted, and a unit by unit approach taken to ensure that all relevant staff undertake this training.

5.7 Continued Support of Staff in Customer Services

Ongoing support will be required for the following:

- Supporting Customer Services staff undertaking the Customer Services NVQ and ECDL qualification.
- Running the Customer Services Bronze, Silver and Gold training programme. It is hoped that this can be run internally in the long term.
- Working with the service units to achieve a co-ordinated approach to the delivery of service area training/updates to the Customer Services Team
- Assisting with the ongoing development of the team

5.8 Support of Staff going through Job-role changes

With large-scale organisational changes underfoot, including Business Process Re-engineering, as well as staff already in the opportunity pool, training has a key role to play in assisting staff that want to update their skills and explore alternative job opportunities. Already many of these staff have made use of materials in the open learning centre. Career development and Interview Skills workshops are planned for 2005. The demand for support and extra training may well intensify as time goes on and it will be helpful to pre-empt this by promoting the resources that are already available to staff.

5.9 Improved evaluation

With the multitude of ongoing programmes and initiatives in place, it is important that the effectiveness of any interventions are fully measured. It is proposed that in 2005,

and every year thereafter, one annual corporate training evaluation is undertaken that cuts across all of the corporate training for the previous year. It is proposed that this is undertaken prior to the annual appraisal round that begins in May.

This couple with better use of existing mechanisms such as the Performance Management System should help with linking training outcomes with organizational objectives.

6.0 Conclusions

Organisational needs for 2005 in summary are to further support the organisation during this period of transitional change – embedding in of the customer services operation, plus gearing up of restructuring and changes as a result of the impending office centralisation, as well as focusing on specific items identified in CPA judgements and staff survey action plan.

The setting out of a management development framework will go a long way to assisting with some of these needs. Many elements are already in place, but some additional interventions and clarity around what is available and what is required will help managers at all levels. This will go a long way towards addressing some of the issues raised in the staff survey around consistency of management, as well as providing a clear progression of development for those starting out in leadership roles.

7.0 Recommendations

That Cabinet approves the above priorities as key areas of activity for 2005, as well as allowing for flexibility to defer non-essential items in case of unforeseeable activities.