

# **POLICY STATEMENT AND GUIDELINES ON SUPPORT FOR THE TRAINING, LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF EMPLOYEES**

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 The Strategy Statement of the Scottish Borders Council recognises that employees are its most important and valuable resource. The Council, in seeking to provide high quality services, acknowledges that standards of service delivery are heavily dependent on the workforce and is committed to ensuring that all its employees are suitably trained and motivated to achieve the highest possible standards.

1.2 The Learning and Development Strategy restates this commitment to employee development and provides a framework within which to realise these aims.

1.3 This policy and procedural guide relates to the provision of learning and development opportunities including potential financial support.

## **2. Training, Learning and Development**

2.1 The Council supports employees in the acquisition of skills and knowledge, and the development of competencies for continuous improvement in performance and the effective delivery of services to meet the Council's objectives.

2.2 The learning and development of employees must be planned and focused on the strategic aims of the Council as articulated in Corporate, Finance, People, Business & Departmental Service/Action Plans and which will be identified on a training matrix, annually. Therefore the learning and development activities will relate directly to the employee's post or be designed to equip employees for a change of responsibilities or promotion.

2.3 However, the Council also recognises the benefits of non-vocational learning and encourages employees to develop themselves and to continue their development throughout their employment and 'lifelong' learning.

2.4 Learning and development opportunities will include courses, seminars, webinars, e-Learning and workshops but will also be offered in a number of other ways including special projects, on the job training, conferences, secondments etc. and will be provided both in-house, using a combination of internal expertise and external consultancy. In-house provision will also include on-the-job training, mentoring, coaching and directed reading.

2.5 The Council is fully committed to promoting equality and diversity and makes every effort to ensure that learning and development opportunities are available to all employees and recognises its duty to make reasonable adjustments for employees with a disability or those who have additional learning requirements.

2.6 Employees on maternity/paternity/adoption leave are advised to check the weekly training email or if they do not have access arrange for updates to be sent to them on a regular basis, to ensure they have the opportunity to take part in any relevant training activities taking place whilst they are off work.

## Identification of Training Needs

2.7 There are various circumstances in which training needs may arise, such as:

- Mandatory requirements of the post
- Restructures & Reviews – post changes
- Devolved services / delivery of new services
- New working methods and practices
- Legislative requirements e.g. first aid, fire safety, manual handling etc.
- Changes in legislation
- Changes in systems
- New or revised qualifications become available
- Accidents
- Professional error
- Introduction of new equipment
- Complaints to the Council
- A request from an employee or councillor

## 3. Resourcing Training

3.1 A budget will be provided for training, learning and development on an annual basis and all training will be prioritised, organised, designed and evaluated to ensure that it meets organisational requirements.

3.2 Any member of staff may apply to take qualification training – any sponsorship by the council will depend on corporate and service priorities and each application will be considered on this basis.

3.3 Prioritisation of Training, Learning and Development

Any training, learning and development will be prioritised on the following basis: -

- a) Corporate/service delivery
- b) Specialist needs
- c) Improving existing skills
- d) Personal development

Timetable for budget setting and new training programme:

Activities	Timescale
Appraisals Completed	April - October
Training needs analysis and training matrices to be completed and submitted	November
Training designed, developed and/or procured	December - February
Budget allocated	March
New training programme published	April

3.4 Training requests out with the above process will be considered on an individual basis taking into account of the Council's priorities, the budget constraints and the business case. If a Service wishes to pay for training when there is no more budget, the money will be transferred and the normal process followed for authorisation.

**All** training and conference applications will be verified, finalised and authorised by HR and should not be booked independently with a Service.

## 4 Training Methods

4.1 There are different ways in which training, learning and development can be achieved.

<b>Internally</b>	If training can be given utilising the in-house expertise and knowledge, this possibility will be explored first. This often includes mandatory training, training on specific work procedures or Council specific policies, practices and legislation.
<b>Partnership</b>	The Council has links with other partners where training can be sourced.
<b>Day Workshops/Seminars</b>	When Council Officers receive information on workshops and seminars this is shared with employees and councillors, where relevant.
<b>Conferences</b>	Details of conferences are shared with employees and councillors, again where relevant. Occasionally the Council has nominated a representative(s) that is invited to attend.
<b>Professional Qualifications</b>	Training towards a professional qualification will often be sourced through the professional body.
<b>External Training Providers</b>	There are numerous training providers available. When sourcing training from an external provider, the Council will always seek to obtain the best price and where possible, from a nearby location and within procurement guidelines.

4.2 Upon identifying a training need, the employee and their line manager should consider the most effective way in which the training can be sourced and whether or not others may benefit from the training.

4.3 Consideration of “train the trainer” should be taken into account, if this is training that will be required on an ongoing basis.

## 5. The Policy

5.1 This policy aims to emphasise the Council’s approach to systematic assessment, learning and development and particularly to:

- ensure the development of a training needs matrix for their service/department/team which is evidence based and costed;
- assist all line managers to meet their responsibilities for the learning and development of employees;
- emphasise the role of the Appraisal process in ensuring that the learning and development needs of each employee are assessed and reviewed at regular intervals;
- ensure that the training needs of the Council are met in the most effective way in terms of quality and cost;
- ensure that the training needs of each post within the Council have been identified;
- ensure that all records of learning and development are kept centrally across the Council, within its digital record-keeping system.

## **6. Responsibilities**

6.1 The development of employees is a line management responsibility. Individual employees also have a personal responsibility for their own development, but managers are responsible for discussing with individual employees their learning and development needs.

6.2 These will take into account the role profile/job remit, person specification and competency behaviours for the post, and the objectives agreed with the employee. These objectives will be agreed in discussion through the Appraisal process and will be derived from the Corporate, Finance, People, Business & Departmental Service/Action Plans. Anything identified as fundamental for a post that is not already included on the training matrix needs to be added as part of the essential training programme for that post to be carried out effectively.

6.3 The responsibility for the identification and development of training matrices for all posts within a service/department rests with the Service Director/Manager(s), advised as required by the HR Business Partner. Head Teachers are responsible for identifying training needs within their school.

6.4 Council-wide training needs, or training needs across more than one department, that have been identified through the service training matrices, shall be discussed with the Service Director Human Resources (HR) who will be responsible for the authorisation of appropriate central training.

These training matrices will contribute to the training programme for future years and the allocation of budget.

6.5 Within the framework of the Corporate, Finance, People, Business & Departmental Service/Action Plans, line managers will identify and discuss learning and development needs and opportunities with their direct reports. These will be reflected in the Appraisal process.

6.6 All employees will be expected to undertake mandatory training courses and any outstanding mandatory training not undertaken will be reported to Service Management Teams on a regular basis.

6.7 Non-qualification courses paid for by the Council

6.8 Attendance at all non-qualification training courses will be actioned through Business World or by completion of the relevant application form and approved by the line manager.

6.9 Learning and development activities are much wider than courses only, and line managers and individual employees are encouraged to be creative and to consider alternative methods of meeting training needs. Line managers have a responsibility to encourage and support development opportunities which are not immediately obvious or available as a traditional course.

6.9.1 Non-qualification courses which are funded through grant schemes or other sources.

6.10 Individuals wishing to attend these courses will need to obtain approval from their line managers. Individuals are responsible for applying for the funding themselves. The Corporate Learning & Development Team may be able to offer advice and guidance to assist in that process.

6.11 Qualification training paid for by the Council

6.11.1 This relates to courses which lead to recognised qualifications (recognition to be agreed by the Service Director and the Service Director HR) including:

6.11.2 The Service Director or nominated officer must approve all applications, and be satisfied that:

- (a) the qualification sought is relevant to the work or career development of the employee
- (b) the course/examination or other form of study is justified by the needs of the services provided by the council, and
- (c) that the proposed learning and development is within the Departmental People, Finance and Business Plans.

6.11.3 Employees granted study facilities must be prepared to carry out appropriate private study in their own time including attendance at evening or at weekend classes where appropriate.

6.12 All training places attract a cost to the Council. For that reason, employees should always attend training sessions they have been booked on to. If an employee cannot attend a training session that has been booked for any reason, they have a responsibility to inform the Corporate Learning & Development team so that the place can be offered to another employee. Non-attendance at training sessions will be reported on regularly to Service Management Teams and costs incurred may be charged to your department/Service.

## **7 Monitoring of Progress**

7.1 Line Managers will conduct regular monitoring of individual progress on further and higher education courses. In the case of Distance Learning courses, an assessment of tutorial work shall be obtained from the course provider. Where appropriate, advice, guidance and support should be provided for employees who experience difficulties associated with their approved course of studies.

7.2 Should progress be unsatisfactory due to irregular attendance or insufficient application to the work of the course, and there are no extenuating circumstances, support will be withdrawn and the employee will be required to repay such a proportion of the financial assistance as may be determined by the Service Director after consultation with the Service Director HR.

7.3 Services Directors will be responsible for ensuring that line managers monitor the progress of employees and offer appropriate advice and guidance where necessary. Where appropriate a senior member of staff may be appointed to oversee training programmes or act as a mentor.

## **8. Appraisal & Review**

8.1 Within the Appraisal process, if learning and development objectives have been agreed and identified as core requirements of an employee's role this will be reflected in the service/departmental People Plan and the training matrix and should be included in the employee's appraisal.

8.2 Employees may be required to attend learning and development activities either to meet changing needs or in support of the objectives of the Council. Certain training is designated as mandatory, and can be found on the Scottish Borders Council intranet via SBLearn.

8.3 Training records will be maintained within the digital record-keeping system for both non-qualification and qualification training. All learning and development activities should be

recorded within the system. It is the responsibility of individuals and their line managers to ensure that training records on Business World are up to date and accurate.

## 9 Training Matrix

A training matrix is an easy to read document that shows what training and qualifications are relevant to each job role. The matrix will include training that is mandatory, desirable, and developmental. In addition to showing you what training individuals in each role should have completed, it will help you to identify what developmental training can be undertaken in order to equip an employee, or a team member, to move into another role (for example, a more senior role).

The training matrix can be completed through reference to:

- Corporate, Finance, People, Business & Departmental Service/Action Plans
- Appraisals
- Job Remit/Role Profile
- Behavioural Competencies

## 10. Authorisation for attendance

10.1 Line Managers will discuss the learning and development activity with their direct reports before any employee attends training.

10.2 The employee must obtain prior approval from their line manager through discussion and application for the course through the digital record-keeping system or completion of the appropriate application forms or process.

10.3 The Service Director(s) or nominated officer must authorise attendance at courses involving direct expenditure.

### Types of Training, Learning & Development

#### **Mandatory Training**

For the purposes of this policy mandatory training is any statutory training or compulsory training that the Council requires its employees to undertake:

- to comply with the law and requirements of regulatory bodies
- to carry out duties safely and efficiently
- to reduce/address areas of risk
- to maintain competence to the required standards identified by external bodies

Managers are responsible for ensuring that their team members have completed mandatory e-learning training courses. Human Resources (HR) will ensure that a robust process is in place for following up of non-completion by informing the individual's manager of their non-completion and the requirement to do so. Should a member of staff persistently fail to complete mandatory training, it is the responsibility of the employee's manager to escalate non-compliance through the disciplinary procedure for an employee's failure to comply with their terms and conditions of employment.

#### **SBC Internal Training Courses**

E-learning

The Council may develop further courses via the e-learning portal as and when new information/skills are required.

#### **Leadership Development**

Leadership development is essential to the success of the Council in developing the capability of managers and focuses on developing the key skills required to be effective in the organisation and to support the delivery of high performing services.

#### **Short courses**

Where internal training is not possible managers may require staff to attend short term specific training, learning and development interventions provided externally.

#### **Longer term**

All employees of the Council may be eligible for assistance subject to the following criteria:

- the qualification sought is relevant to the work or career development of the employee
- the course/examination or other form of study is justified by the needs of the services provided by the council, and
- that the proposed learning and development is within the Departmental People, Finance and Business Plans.

#### **Informal Development Opportunities**

In addition to the types of training referred to above, less formal types of training and development can be considered by managers, these may include:

- Coaching
- Mentoring
- Job rotation
- Secondments
- Action learning sets
- Shadowing

The Organisational Development (OD) team can support managers in developing programmes for individuals or teams including the facilitation of action learning sets.

#### **Trainee/Modern Apprenticeship**

An apprenticeship is a system of training a new generation of practitioners of a trade or profession with on-the-job training alongside study (classroom work and reading). Apprenticeships can also enable practitioners to gain a license to practice in a regulated profession.

Apprenticeships are designed to help employees gain hands-on experience within an industry and learn new practical skills while earning a qualification. They take one to five years to complete and are open to anyone over the age of 16, who is not enrolled in full-time education.

## **11. Financial Assistance and Time Off**

### **Financial Implications**

11.1 Each year as part of the annual budget setting process, the Council will include a training budget for all Services. When calculating this, any training needs identified as part of the annual service training matrix, appraisal process and Corporate, Finance, People, Business & Departmental Service/Action Plans will be taken in to consideration.

11.2 A Service may apply for training to be considered out with the timescales but authorisation will depend on corporate and service priorities. All training must be appropriate to the needs of the Council and is subject to the availability of financial resources. Each application will be considered on this basis and can only be authorised by Service Director HR and/or their representative.

11.3 If the reasons relate to lack of financial resources, the employee will be given an opportunity to attend the course/obtain the qualification as soon as resources permit and if

the business case is still viable. Alternative learning and development activities will also be discussed with the employee. Managers should plan ahead to ensure that any training that could not be funded is programmed in and the employee advised.

11.4 Centralised Corporate Training Budget (except for Teachers) - this is the responsibility of the Service Director HR and is determined annually, for the purposes of funding and business priorities, in whole or in part.

11.5 Employees pursuing a course of study for a qualification which is required by the Council for their existing duties, or for promotion purposes, will be eligible for support for open learning, day or block release, correspondence or sandwich courses, subject to the method of study being compatible with the needs of the service.

11.6 In exceptional circumstances employees may be considered for release for full-time courses of three consecutive months or more leading to a qualification. The Service Director or nominated officer must approve all such applications.

11.7 Applicants for financial assistance must show:

- evidence of previous examination success or the ability to complete the course of study successfully
- that the qualification/course to be studied is relevant to the work of the Council and to the individual in his/her present or likely future post with the Council
- that the release will be in the best interests of the individual and the Council and of mutual benefit to both.

**NOTE:** The Council will not pay membership fees of any institute or professional body.





## 11.9 Subsistence/Lodging Accommodation

Where you are away from your normal work location and have to spend more money than you normally would on meals, you will be reimbursed the amount you spend, subject to the amount being reasonable and you providing appropriate receipts. Where you normally bring sandwiches or a packed lunch to work you would only be entitled to claim additional expenses if you have to make different arrangements because of the circumstances.

11.10 Authorisation for accommodation will need to be agreed by your Line Manager in advance. Where you need to stay overnight you may reclaim the cost of staying in a Bed and Breakfast or Hotel. It is recognised that the cost of accommodation will vary depending on availability and location.

- Daily travel instead of an overnight stay is permitted at the discretion of the Service Director depending on the circumstances. Maximum payment will be limited to the cheaper of the two.
- Out of Pocket Allowances apply to all residential training activities whether arranged in-house or externally and whether qualification or non-qualification training. Where an employee has to arrive on a Sunday at a training establishment for a course of training lasting a week or more, an additional daily out of pocket allowance shall be paid for that day out with the weekly limit.
- Employees who regularly receive additional contractual payments will continue to receive these payments, based on an average of the previous 3 months, during the training.
- Employees should not be 'out of pocket' on actual expenditure incurred in attending a training course required by the Service/Department. The Council will consider variations to the rates stated in cases of hardship.
- Travel will normally be by the most economical method and utilise any available discount scheme, including short term car hire where appropriate. In certain circumstances air fares will be paid when this method of transport can be shown to be more convenient/economical in terms of time.
- Training mileage where a leased car is used, the leased car mileage rate will be paid. Cars should be shared as far as possible. For journeys beyond the nearest rail station, cars should only be used if public transport is not available or the use of a car is more economical in cost/time for the Council.

## 12. Agreements

12.1 Where the Council provides financial assistance towards training, appropriate agreements will be drawn up by HR specifying the extent of reimbursement and/or continuation of employment period.

12.2 The Service Director will notify the Service Director HR of all employees pursuing qualification training. Notification must be given at least 4 weeks prior to the commencement of the training programme in order to allow sufficient time for the agreement to be concluded. This does not apply to Teaching employees.

## **13 Training Agreement**

13.1 It is standard practice of the Council that where the Council is covering the costs of an employee's training course or qualification (this being a course or qualification, rather than one day course or workshop) a written agreement will be made that if the employee leaves the Council's employ during or having completed the course, the employee will be expected to reimburse the Council as per the agreement.

This does not apply to employees in modern apprenticeship positions.

13.2 All employees who have been granted facilities for further/higher education and or training courses of study will require to sign a Training Agreement prior to commencing their studies.

13.3 The employee should carefully read the training agreement before signing. A copy of the signed training agreement shall be provided to the employee and the original sent to Corporate Learning & Development team to be filed in their personal record.

13.4 This agreement will require employees to agree to continue in the service of the Council for a period of 2 years following the completion of the course and to repay to the Council any financial assistance given, as outlined in the letter, should the employee leave before the end of the 2 year period:

- voluntarily leave the service of the Council.
- voluntarily terminate the studies before completing the course.
- voluntarily take any action which compels the Council to dismiss the employee from their service.
- be dismissed from the service of the Council for reason of indiscipline or misconduct
- fail to make a satisfactory number of attendances while on the course.
- not attempt to complete the work of the course to a satisfactory standard.
- fail to make satisfactory progress in the course.

Training agreement letters

## **14. Liability for Refund of Assistance**

14.1 The employee will be required to refund 100% of the financial assistance received if the employee:

- does not satisfactorily complete the course
- withdraws from the course without reasonable cause, or
- (except for Teaching employees) leaves the Council's employment before completing the course.

In exceptional circumstances the Service Director, in consultation with the Service Director HR, may waive the refund in whole or in part.

### **14.2. Continuation of Employment after Training**

14.2.1 Where an employee has been granted financial assistance and/or release, unless the employee is employed under a trainee/modern apprentice scheme, they will be required to continue in the employment of the Council for a minimum period of 2 years after the completion of the course/achievement of the qualification. This does not apply to Teaching employees.

14.3 If an employee, having satisfactorily completed the course, leaves before the end of a 2 year period (which begins on the date of the Council being notified of successful completion of the qualification or training) they will be required to refund 100% of the financial assistance received. However, this refund will be reduced by 1/24<sup>th</sup> for each month of service completed during the 2 year period and is reflecting in the training agreement which employees will be asked to sign.

14.4 If the employee has received assistance in the form of funding obtained directly by the Council, or funding received because they are employed by the Council (for example, through the Apprenticeship Levy), the employee will be required to refund 100% of the financial assistance received for time to attend i.e. salary paid to the employee when attending the place of study during normal working hours.

For example, if an employee had every Friday off to attend a course they would be liable to payback the salary costs for the number of Fridays, if they leave the Council before the end of a 2 year period. However, this refund will be reduced by 1/24<sup>th</sup> for each month of service completed during the 2 year period and is reflecting in the training agreement which employees will be asked to sign.

## **15. Attendance for Examinations/Study Leave**

15.1 All employees receiving release and/or financial assistance for approved courses will be granted paid leave as follows:

- For attendance at examinations - 1 day's leave on the day of the examination(s)
- Study leave for examinations - 1 day's leave per exam normally immediately prior to the final examinations of any study year or the final series of examinations.

15.2 Where certification is achieved by non-examination routes e.g. workplace assessment and the submission of dissertations, special leave entitlement of ½ day per unit of competence will be granted to use as study time.

15.3 Employees supported in Open Learning and similar distance based courses, or who are seeking workplace based vocational qualifications at Level 3 or above - normally SVQs - will be allowed study time of ½ day every 4 weeks.

## **16. Resits**

16.1 Financial assistance will normally be granted for a second attempt at any stage of a course of study. In exceptional circumstances consideration may be given to providing assistance for a third attempt subject to the approval of the Service Director and the Service Director HR. The employee will bear the cost of any examination fee required for a third attempt.

16.2 Where an employee is required to repeat a course of study this should be at evening classes, by correspondence course, distance learning or otherwise out with the working day. Where this is not practicable, the employee shall be granted time off with pay to attend classes but will not be paid any travelling or subsistence allowances.

16.3 The continuation of facilities will depend on the satisfactory progress of the employee concerned. The employee's line manager will monitor and discuss progress with the employee and advise the Service Director of any concerns at an early date.

16.4 Employees in designated trainee posts failing to make satisfactory progress will be allowed up to 6 months to find alternative employment.

## **17. Recognition of Achievement of Qualification**

17.1 Line managers will notify the Service Director and Corporate Learning & Development team of all employees who gain qualifications. The Service Director will make arrangements to acknowledge and recognise the employee's success, and the part that success plays in achieving the department's objectives. This may take the initial form of a letter followed by an award ceremony which may be on an individual, or a group, basis.

### **NOTE**

Teaching employees are exempt from some of the provisions of this policy because of explicit requirements contained in the National Conditions of Service for Teaching employees.

## **18 Supporting Documentation**

All supporting documentation below can be found on the SBC Council's intranet at these addresses:

Your Job – learning and development

- Employee Development Application (EDA)

Your Job – human resources

- Training and Development Strategy
- Policy Statement and Guidelines on support for the training, learning and development of employees
- Training Authorisation flowchart
- Training Agreement
- Training Agreement (funded)
- Training Matrix – Template
- Training Matrix - Example
- Appraisal
- Competency Behaviours
- Employee Travel & Mileage Policy