

TRAINING, LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

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Author:	Human Resources
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Assessed by:	Erick Ullrich, Organisational Development Manager (HR) Andrew Frost, Corporate Learning & Development Officer (HR) Simone Doyle Equality & Diversity Advisor (HR)
Contact details:	Scottish Borders Council Head Quarters Old School Building Newton St Boswells Melrose TD6 0SA ☎ Tel 01835 825052/3 (HR reception) ✉ askhr@scotborders.gov.uk
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TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

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1. **Introduction**

- 1.1 The realisation of the goals set out in the Council's Strategy Statement for the delivery of quality services can only be achieved through a partnership of Elected Members and employees. This requires that all employees at every level of the authority are aware of the critical role they play in service delivery. Training is a strategic, corporate tool with immense value for implementing policy decisions and assisting in the delivery of better and more efficient services.
- 1.2 In the Strategy Statement the Scottish Borders Council recognises that employees are its most important and valuable resource. The Council, 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, motivated and respected. The Council will therefore train and motivate all its employees to achieve the highest possible standards.
- 1.3 A strategy for training and development will ensure that training secures the highest benefits for the Council including:
- value for money; training will be targeted on organisational needs
 - training and development will be considered corporately to identify the common standards required to implement change successfully
 - service and departmental training and qualification matrices will be developed and assessed against Council objectives, budget considerations and the ability and knowledge of the employees to carry them out
 - managers will have the clear responsibility of identifying the particular development needs of employees through the appraisal process and ensuring that a high level of performance is achieved
 - training and development matrices will be used proactively to target and plan an appropriate training response. On-the-job development such as coaching and mentoring, where learning is directly relevant to work, will be encouraged
 - behavioural and training competencies for all employees will be used, so they are better able to understand their part in achieving the Council's objectives and appreciate that they are being equipped with the appropriate skills to carry out their work.
- 1.5 The Council recognises that training is an investment not a cost and that to maximise this investment it is essential that training is effective – which means that it is well targeted and that learning is transferred to the workplace. The strategy will ensure that the policies and objectives of the Council are met through the development of employees, processes and systems within a learning organisation which constantly reviews and adapts.

2. **Aims of training and development**

- 2.1 The aims are:

- to provide qualified, skilled and experienced employees to meet the Council's requirements
 - to encourage employees to develop their potential for the mutual benefit of the Council and the employee
 - to increase job satisfaction and morale
 - to secure informed decision making by Elected Members and employees
- 2.2 The aims will be met through a continuous process of employee development which will commence on recruitment and continue throughout employment.
- 2.3 All employees will have the opportunity to gain the skills, knowledge, aptitude and qualifications necessary to carry out their duties effectively and where appropriate to prepare them for different responsibilities or employment at a more senior level.
- 2.4 All employees will be measured against the expected Council behavioural and training competencies

3. The Appraisal

- 3.1 Each employee will have an appraisal which will identify their training needs.
- 3.1.1 Appraisals will address not only immediate responsibilities but also development of employees for the future benefit of the Council.
- 3.1.2 At least once a year, each employee will have a meeting, integrated into an appraisal process, with their line manager, or such other officer as the Service Director approves, at which the development plan will be discussed, and targets and objectives identified and agreed.
- 3.1.3 The line manager or other approved officer will meet each new employee, within six weeks of their employment commencing, to discuss and initiate the new employee's development plan.
- 3.2 Key competencies will be defined for each post and the employee's performance will be assessed against these requirements when deciding on priorities within the development plan.
- 3.3 All employees will be enabled to take approved job-related training which is relevant to the employee's current post or which, as part of a development programme, will prepare the employee for different responsibilities or employment at a more senior level.
- 3.4 A Record of Training will be kept for each employee centrally on the Council's HR system.

4. Service & Departmental Training & Qualification Matrices

- 4.1 Each Service, Department and section will have an annual People Plan, training and qualification matrix which will indicate the training and development priorities for the service and which will reflect the priorities shown in the Service and department's service plan.

- 4.2 The Service Director will ensure that this plan is produced and taken into account when drafting the annual budget proposals.
- 4.3 The annual training and qualification matrices will include Mandatory & Core Training Modules, essential qualifications and will take account of corporate and departmental objectives, role and remit.
- 4.4 Each employee's appraisal will link directly to the Service/Departmental training and qualifications matrix which, linked to the Service Plan and to the overall strategy of the Council, will ensure that training meets identified needs.

5. Mandatory & Core Training Provision

- 5.1 The mandatory and core modules apply across all Services/Departments of the Council to specific/specialised categories of employee to reflect the role and remit of post.
- 5.2 Each appraisal will assess if corporate mandatory and core training modules, that have been identified for the post, have been undertaken and if not, scheduled to be completed. Any new training identified should be added to the training matrix for the post.
- 5.3 Some elements of training will be mandatory and completed through eLearning, webinars and/or classroom based. These will change based on Council objectives and the Service /Departmental People Plans, at any given time and which will provide guidelines for a common approach throughout the Council.

6. Recognised Qualifications

- 6.1 The Council considers it in the interests of both the employee and of the Council for employees to gain suitable qualifications and experience to assist them to perform their duties effectively and to prepare them for possible different responsibilities.
- 6.2 Recognised qualifications include both Academic and Vocational Qualifications. Further and Higher Education courses may be followed by day or block release, distance/supported learning or by correspondence courses. Support to achieve Vocational Qualifications may also be provided through short courses, distance/ supported learning or other appropriate methods.
- 6.3 The qualifications sought must meet both the needs of the department and the needs of the individual, as shown in the Service/Departmental People Plans, Training & Qualification Matrices and appraisals.

7. Meeting the Needs

- 7.1 Training and Development needs will be met by in-house or externally provided courses, seminars, conferences etc., work experience, secondments, project work, on-the-job training, talks, informal visits and in any other appropriate way which will develop the skills, knowledge and abilities of the employee concerned.
- 7.2 Training will be accessible to all employees in a form (which may not be a formal course) which best enables them to learn.

- 7.3 A Programme of In-House Training Courses will be offered to meet some corporate training needs. However the basis for the annual training programme will be - the Training Matrices provided by each Service which have been created with reference to Council objectives, legislative requirements and budget constraints. As this strategy is implemented it is anticipated that training will be provided more timeously and effectively in response to the needs identified in Service/Departmental People Plans, Training & Qualification Matrices and appraisals.

8. Competency, Assessment and Evaluation

- 8.1 Evaluation begins with the analysis of training needs through the training and qualification matrices and within the appraisal process. A training and qualification needs analysis meeting will take place to develop a training matrix, on an annual basis with the service, ensuring that the training is correctly targeted, effective and that the learning transfers to the work place within budgetary constraints.
- 8.2 This analysis will be assisted through the use of behavioural and training competencies.
- 8.2.1 A behavioural and training competency framework includes elements such as knowledge, skill set, teamwork, leadership skills and technical know-how. It will provide the direction required for employees to grow and be aligned with the business development needs. A competency framework provides for the translation of strategy into behaviours and job-related skills enabling clarity, transparency and progression paths.
- 8.2.2 It also provides a consistent and transparent approach for employees and managers at all levels of the Council, to the management of people by performance management and development activities aligned with the requirements of the Council.
- 8.3 This can only be achieved when line managers assume the critical role of identifying training needs and are involved in specifying how these needs will be met.
- 8.4 Effective evaluation procedures will ensure that the training is targeted, meets identified needs, contributes to the continual improvement of the effectiveness and efficiency of the Council and at the same time offers value for money.
- 8.5 Evaluation also requires line managers/section heads (or other approved officers) to discuss both formal and informal training provision with each employee both before and after training.
- 8.6 Pre-course questionnaires and post-course validation and assessment - both immediately after the course and at a later date - will also be used to ensure the effectiveness of the training.
- 8.7 All employees will contribute to the assessment and evaluation procedures.

9. Responsibilities

9.1 Service Directors

The Service Director is responsible for the training and development of employees in their department and the necessary resource allocation. The Service Director will ensure that the training needs of all departmental employees have been ascertained and taken into account by use of a training and qualification matrix that identifies training and qualification

requirements for each role and for each individual, when making the annual budget proposals.

9.2 **Line Managers**

All line managers/section heads/supervisors are responsible for the identification of the individual training and development needs of those reporting to them by use of a training and qualification matrix that identifies training requirements for each role and for each individual. These will normally be identified through the employee's appraisal and through normal day to day supervision and discussion.

9.3 **Individual Employees**

Each employee will have the opportunity to articulate development needs through their appraisal which will be discussed with their line manager, and has a personal responsibility to contribute to their own development. Employees must understand that training and development resources are limited and have to be prioritised. Personal development needs, even when agreed, may be met only as and when resources become available as part of a long term programme.

9.4 **Service Director of HR**

The Service Director of HR is responsible for meeting corporate training needs and for ensuring that a uniform approach to training is adopted throughout the council in accordance with the strategy and with Council policies.

9.4.1 The central training function within HR will assist in identifying, co-ordinating and meeting training needs on a Council wide basis, and will provide an advisory service to all departments of the Council.

10. **Constraints**

10.1 The Council is committed to achieving the aims set out in paragraph 2. These are only achievable with the active co-operation of all employees. However, all resources are limited and have to be prioritised. Resources for training will be allocated to meeting identified needs as part of the long term strategy, but employees must understand that priorities will change, as will their development needs and as a result these may not always be met in the short term.

10.2 Subject to the needs of the service, employees will be encouraged to take advantage of training opportunities. Employees will be released for approved training or permitted time to follow work-based training programmes except where acute operational difficulties would occur and therefore subject to managers discretion.

10.3 Training and personal development will normally be discussed and mutually agreed between the individual and line manager. However, it is the responsibility of the Service Directors & Senior Managers to ensure the appropriate training of all employees within the Service/department and employees may be required to follow a programme of training when this is necessary to achieve corporate or departmental objectives.

11. **Implementation**

11.1 Training Needs Analysis is the essential pre-requisite for cost effective, targeted and relevant training. Training Needs Analyses focusing on the skills, knowledge and attitudes

required must form the basis for both Personal Development and Service/Departmental People Plans, Training & Qualification Matrices.

- 11.2 Competencies will be developed to assist analysis and these will complement national frameworks, such as the Management Charter Initiative, and vocational qualifications.
- 11.2.1 A competency based approach can be integrated with the recruitment and selection process. Employees can be recruited with reference to the competency framework, with person specifications setting out the key competencies required. Key competencies for existing employees will be defined through the appraisal process and reflected in the People Plans, Training & Qualification Matrices.
- 11.3 The primary responsibility for implementation of the strategy lies with line management. An immediate priority will be to support line managers and give them the skills - including appraisal, coaching, mentoring - to carry out this role.
- 11.4 The Council's Strategy Statement indicates other priority areas. These include a commitment to delegation and team working; the completion of a training and qualification needs analysis/matrices for all front line employees and the development of a training programme to underpin the commitment to customer responsiveness. Each of these and other objectives require support through training.
- 11.5 Training implies much more than formal courses. Other learning methods must be developed to provide a range of cost effective options, including eLearning, webinars, open and personal/management development through secondments, special projects, and community involvement or volunteering.

12. Training for Elected Members

- 12.1 This strategy primarily addresses the training and development of employees. However it is also recognised that to be effective the Council must also invest in training and developing Elected Members to equip them with the knowledge, skills and awareness that will assist them to carry out their duties and responsibilities.
- 12.2 A programme of training opportunities will be developed for Elected Members to meet their needs.

13. Summary

- 13.1 The Council is committed to providing high quality services, and recognises that employees are its most important and valuable resource and that standards of service are highly dependent on the workforce. The Council is therefore committed to training and motivating all its employees to achieve the highest possible standards.
- 13.2 This aim will be achieved through the **continual development of all employees** and by focused training, using:
- **Appraisal**
 - **Service & Departmental Training and Qualification Matrices**

- **People Plans**
- **Competencies**
- **Core Training Modules**
- **Effective Evaluation and Assessment Procedures**