

## Resources Scrutiny Committee

1 April 2008

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#### Briefing on IT Training Programme

#### 1 Purpose of the Briefing

To describe an IT Training Programme that will aim to provide all staff with basic IT skills in:

- Operating Systems
- Word Processing
- Spreadsheets
- Databases
- Presentations
- E-Mail
- Intranet/Internet use

#### 2 Consultation

2.1 In preparing this report, I have consulted with the Management Team, Heads of Service, including the Head of Personnel

#### 3 Background

3.1 Over the last few years we have seen a significant increase in the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) across the council, in particular as a result of E-Government Systems and the introduction of new technology. Typical examples of this include:

- The new telephone switchboard
- Increased use of blackberry's
- Increased use of Microsoft Outlook – E-Mail system
- Further development of the intranet
- On-going development of the Council website
- Online planning system

- Online benefits calculator
- CRM
- Electronic procurement system

3.2 Whilst specific training has been delivered for each of the new technologies, this has been based on the assumption that all staff are familiar with the use of the basic underlying systems:

- Microsoft Windows (Operating System)
- Windows Explorer (File and Folder Management)
- Internet Explorer (Website Browsing)
- Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint etc)

3.3 Based on the number and types of requests for support received by the IT Helpdesk, from members of staff, this assumption has been found to be inaccurate.

3.4 Whilst the majority of staff do have some knowledge and skills in the above areas, the span of that knowledge has been found to be patchy

3.5 As new technology becomes more and more business critical to this organisation we must ensure that our staff are fully trained and able to get the best use from this developing technology

#### **4 Position Statement and Option Appraisal**

4.1 In delivering an IT Training Programme to all members of staff, there are a number of issues to be addressed, these include:

- The content of the course modules
- Providing the staff with the time to carry out the learning
- The impact any such training delivery will have on each departments resources
- Should we provide staff with in-house training or take the line of a more formal accredited training and certification
- Should the training be made compulsory for all staff

4.2 In order to provide a more informed view of the above issues the Head of IT and the IT Training Officer have implemented two pilot training schemes

4.3 The first pilot comprised of 12 members of staff enrolling on the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) course, delivered via the LearnDirect, on-line route.

- 4.4 The second pilot comprised of in-house training delivered by the IT Training Officer to East Durham Homes staff.
- 4.5 The ECDL training course was supplied by LearnDirect, through a partnership between the council and East Durham and Houghall Community College. This course was government funded, under the then prevailing educational policy. This has since changed and funding for this particular course is no longer available.
- 4.6 The course provided training and assessment in the following modules:
- Basic concepts of IT
  - Using the computer and managing files
  - Word Processing
  - Spreadsheets
  - Databases
  - Presentations
  - Information and Communication
- 4.7 Learners accessed the training on-line by a direct user name and password issued by LearnDirect
- 4.8 The assessment, of the learning, was provided externally by the college and also by LearnDirect, through electronic multi-choice papers
- 4.9 The overall time spent by an average member of staff on the training and assessment was 2 hours/week averaging 3 months to complete each of the seven modules.
- 4.10 During this period a meeting was held with the staff undertaking the ECDL, as a measure of its progress. The following issues were identified:
- The course content was too wide ranging and contained some training elements that were of little value to the council and its business
  - The amount of time required to complete each module and the overall training course was significant. In the main this was a direct result of the above
  - Provision of a quiet location in which to go through the training elements
- 4.11 The in-house training was provided by the IT Training Officer and delivered through a series of one day workshops, each concentrating on a specific subject area. This was carried out in the IT Training Suite at the Seaside Lane offices.
- 4.12 The course work level was determined by carrying out a skills analysis and each member of staff was assigned an overall score. This determined which training group

they were to be placed in. Consultation with the Board and Management of EDH also helped provide an indication on the Company's' needs in respect of IT Training for their staff.

4.13 A schedule of learning was then produced and agreed with the staff concerned, as well as their line manager, and the Management Board.

4.14 Training was then delivered to the relevant staff, the first phase being delivered, prioritised by those who had identified that they had little or no IT skills. This commenced in August 2006 and the same module was delivered to each consecutive group over the first four days of every other week. This alternate week system gave the staff concerned the chance to complete and return any examination/assignment papers and return them to the IT Training Officer, prior to attending their next planned session

4.15 The modules covered in Level 1 and 2 were:

- Microsoft Windows 2000/XP
- Microsoft Outlook 2000
- Microsoft Word 2000
- Microsoft Excel 2000
- Microsoft Access 2000
- Microsoft PowerPoint 2000
- Working with Images

4.16 The primary difference between the training for levels 1 and 2 was one of moving from the basic use of each application to making more use of some of the advanced functions within each of the software applications

4.17 Each session had its own assessment/examination portion, which had to be passed at greater than 60% to achieve an overall pass grade. This was assessed and marked by the IT Training Officer and each member of staff notified as to their own pass mark percentage.

4.18 The total time taken by each member of staff to complete all of the modules in the in-house training was 7 working days, although this was spread over a number of weeks. It was therefore easier for the line managers to cover for the one day in every fortnight, where the particular member of staff would be in training.

4.19 The in-house training has been extremely well received, both by the staff themselves and the managers of East Durham Homes. The overall success rate was very high

## **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1. The only area where any unbudgeted cost would be incurred would be in the purchase of external training.
- 5.2 Had we decided to take on an accredited formal qualification, such as the ECDL its NVQ level 2 equivalents, the approximate cost would be as shown below and exclude any changes which may occur from September 2007:

ECDL (All costs are shown as per student)

BCS Registration and Logbook	£25.00
Prepare for ECDL Part 1	£80.00
Prepare for ECDL Part 2	£80.00
Module Fees (6 Modules @ £90.00 each)	£540.00
<b>Total Cost per Student</b>	<b>£725.00</b>

ITQ Level 2 (NVQ Equivalent) Typical Costs, exact figures not currently available

Registration Fees £111.00

Module Fees £440.00

Materials Cost £63.00

**Total Cost per Student £614.00**

**6. Legal Implications**

None

**7. Policy Implications**

None

**8. Risk Implications**

None

**9. Communications**

Following successful communication with Heads of Service and Managers, the results of this report could be publicised through the councils own News and Views, as well as being notified via the e-mail system to all staff.

## **7. Corporate Implications**

### **7.1 Corporate Plan and Priorities**

#### **7.1.1 Striving to achieve excellence in the workplace.**

The district has a lifelong learning strategy and by allowing the staff to take the opportunity to develop their own IT skills they will be seen to be meeting the councils objectives under this heading

#### **7.1.2 Learning opportunities for all.**

The council is actively promoting lifelong learning throughout the district and again it will be observed that we are meeting those aims through this facility being offered to staff across the authority

## **8. Equality and Diversity**

This is an all inclusive proposal, aimed at all staff across the authority and as such there are no known issues which are in conflict with the councils equality and diversity, respect and dignity or access policy or strategy aims.

## **9. E-Government**

Again by virtue of the nature of this report it has taken into account all implications relating to IT and therefore is not in conflict with the councils IEG strategy

## **10 Conclusion**

10.1 There has been a significant increase in the use of ICT and the span of existing staff knowledge, in this area, is very patchy

10.2 ICT Skills are becoming more critical to the overall business needs of the Authority

10.3 The in-house training can be directly targeted at the users own needs and the business needs of the Authority

10.4 The training can be tailored and delivery can be arranged to suit the resource needs of each department

10.5 There no additional cost implications, saving potential training fees of £750.00 for each member of staff.

## **11. Recommendations**

- 11.1 The commencement of an in-house training programme in ICT for all staff working for the authority.
- 11.2 That the management of all departments agree to make every effort to facilitate the release of their staff to attend any training programme arranged.