

**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

**PEOPLE CABINET MEMBER  
POLICY & RESOURCES CABINET MEMBER**

**REVIEW OF LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT**

**1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide cabinet members with further options as part of a staffing review of council wide learning and development

**2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 The council's workforce is its most important resource. In order for us to have a competent, flexible workforce that provides excellent front-line services to the community, the council must ensure its workforce has the right attitudes, behaviours and skills, achieved through an effective workforce development approach.

Effective workforce development is about supporting our employees and partners, as individuals and teams, to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in order to do their jobs well and continually improve the service they deliver. It requires a clear workforce strategy around recruiting, developing and retaining the staff needed to help the council achieve its ambitions. Particularly important in times of change, employees need to be helped to develop resilience, flexibility and an ability to cope with uncertainty.

The council's workforce development strategy recognises these needs. The corporate learning and development function and service based workforce development teams currently provide a range of support mechanisms, from working with managers to identify the skills needed when recruiting new employees, delivering skills programmes to ensure competence in the workforce (and in partner agencies), working with managers and teams to resolve skills or performance issues, all help to improve the way services and activities are delivered.

These internal workforce development/learning & development teams possess detailed knowledge of national, regional and local policies and strategies concerning workforce development. They understand about working in local government, the knowledge and skill requirements of our

workers and can match these against the skills required by the council, and key factors such as government policy and funding, impacts from legislation, both national and international, industry best practice and regulation. The teams within service areas know the skills requirements of their external partners, such as social care providers, and provide them with learning and skilling opportunities, to improve the way services and activities are delivered to the community.

The People Services workforce development team is responsible for fulfilling the Director of People's responsibility for the social care workforce, through providing a range of development opportunities to the social care sector. They work in close liaison with the social care sector, and recent developments have indicated that additional income streams could be developed.

The contribution to organisational excellence made by learning and development is widely recognised; a recent Cranfield study demonstrated the links between employee productivity and commitment, showing how organisational commitment to employee development increases motivation and equips its employees with the skills to meet current and future business needs.

2.2 Following the recent functional review of council wide learning and development, a staffing review has been undertaken to ensure the Adult Community Learning Service (ACL) and the council's learning and development provision are fit for purpose, to support future adult community learning, service users, carers and partnership needs, together with workforce development, and to improve value for money across all areas. A task group was established to examine the specific issues that arose out of the functional review and consultation with employees commenced.

2.3 Accommodation requirements have been mapped, taking into account the requirements of People's Service, ACL and Corporate Learning & Development. Additional accommodation will be required for IT training as the demand for this is likely to increase due to the expansion of e-learning programmes.

The Boarding House at Sir John Nelthorpe School does have accommodation available that has the capacity to develop a central administrative function. Capital investment is likely to be required to make the building fit for purpose, and provide adequate car parking facilities.

2.4 At present, various workforce systems are in place (eg, Professional Personnel used by Corporate L&D, and People's Service, with ACL using MIS). Co-ordination of systems would be preferable, with a centralised room booking system to be established.

2.5 Administrative capacity can be released by eliminating the need to recharge across council services for training and use of rooms, which is in line with the council's Worksmart agenda. This would require top slicing the current

training budgets within service areas with employee development then being funded in according with agreed service and council priorities.

Training budgets across the council for 2011-12 were £977,910, of which £787,410 was spent externally and £190,500 represents internal spend that has been recharged. The council's learning and development strategy recommends that the total budget allocated to learning and development should be a minimum of 2% of employment costs per annum. A spend of £977,910 against the council's base staffing budget represents only 1% of the spend approved in the strategy.

- 2.6 Given that in corporate L&D alone in 2010/12, 1099 internal recharges were made, eliminating this process will release a non-cashable saving and increase capacity.
- 2.7 A central base for the learning and development provision would include having a single administrative team. This would create efficiencies within the current administrative functions and maximise capacity.
- 2.8 The commitment to e-learning enables the council to deliver significant amounts of training to large numbers at low cost. People's Service are also promoting e-learning to the external social care providers
- 2.9 A move from Glanford House would release the current rental of c. £55,000. Some accommodation at Glanford House is already rented to private organisations and further income could be generated by the increase in rental accommodation available.

### **3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 To move the current arrangements to a single administrative centre, with each area managing a top sliced learning and development budget that is linked to council and service priorities.

This would then be followed by a full restructure of all learning and development provision with the aim of creating a single workforce development team with a one council approach. The team would comprise of a workforce development commissioning unit and a workforce development design and delivery unit. The vision is to develop a conference facility and centre of excellence model for social care, ultimately including other subject areas where there is a proven, commercially viable, demand, with a view to becoming an arms length organisation in approximately two years. This centre of excellence would maximise income streams from external sources, whilst retaining an in-house learning and development provision, ensuring high levels of flexibility, added value, with local government knowledge and directorate focus.

#### 4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

4.1 Option 3.1 will remove areas of administrative overlap between workforce development teams and create a central training function. It will provide the council with a one council approach that supports both the council's own workforce development needs with a team that is responsive to the council's changing needs and provides value for money, whilst maximising income from the development of a conference facility and centre of excellence.

#### 5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

##### 5.1 Financial

The functional review of council wide learning and development identified savings of around £200,000. With an annual corporate training budget of £977,910, it is proposed that £200,000 of this is withdrawn and £150,000 can then be used to meet any funding costs of capital works necessary to create a council wide training centre. The remaining £777,910 is allocated to the relevant learning and development functions to provide the council with a value for money training resource that supports directorates' generic and specific training requirements. This will be managed through a "hub and spoke" approach with each directorate responsible for producing accurate and timely workforce development plans, at an agreed time each year, to enable effective planning of the council's development requirements

The agreement of a "hub and spoke" business centre model will provide a basis for developing a staffing structure that will provide:

- An enhanced, co-ordinated service for lower financial outlay (VfM)
- The setting and implementation of standards for delivery
- Identification of skills levels against council requirements and commissioning of delivery against this gap analysis
- Reduced costs due to removal of duplication
- Provision of evaluation data demonstrating return on investment
- Policy compliance
- Standard accreditation frameworks
- Consistency of administrative procedures
- Income generation from external delivery of training
- Non-cashable savings, to include savings on financial processes

Additional savings have already been identified and accounted for within the relevant service areas as part of the council's cost reduction exercise, which include officer and management savings.

Additional areas that have since been identified include removing duplicate awarding body costs, e-learning (moodle) costs, and the removal of recharging across services through top slicing of training budgets

Any running costs of new accommodation and booking of additional rooms can be met from within current budgets.

## 5.2 **Staffing**

It is likely that the council-wide workforce development function will include fewer posts. Any subsequent review of staffing structures will be carried out in accordance with the council's Review Protocol

## 5.3 **Property**

Accommodation requirements have been assessed and the savings figures assume that the current People's Services Workforce Development team would no longer be based at Glanford House and would require alternative accommodation.

Any building must provide ease of access both in terms of disability access to the building and an accessible location, both to council employees and service users.

The Boarding House at Sir John Nelthorpe School could provide the facilities/location needed but it would require an initial spend to make it fit for purpose

## 5.4 **IT**

None

## 6. **OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)**

6.1 A reduction in workforce development activity may impact negatively on areas where there are mandatory training requirements, such as health & safety, diversity and specialist areas within service areas. A risk assessment must be carried out to ensure that reduction in workforce development support does not have a negative impact on council employees' competence and qualifications.

## 7. **OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION**

7.1 The relevant trade unions have been consulted about the review.

7.2 The service areas that have workforce development teams have collaborated together to put forward the above options.

7.3 The Council Management Team are aware of the review.

7.4 Further consultation in accordance with the council's review protocol will be necessary should it be decided to proceed with a staffing review in line with the above options.

## 8. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 That cabinet members approve option 3.1.

### DIRECTOR POLICY & RESOURCES

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**Background Papers used in the preparation of this report: None**