

EMPLOYMENT MATTERS COMMITTEE

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LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT POLICY

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Summary

The current Learning & Development Policy (previously known as the Workforce Development Policy) has recently been reviewed and updated as part of the 3 year review. The proposed revisions have been consulted upon with a deadline of 26.08.2022 and no comments have been raised from the trade unions or employee forums for consideration.

1. Budget and policy framework

- 1.1 The consideration of policies for staff is a matter for the Employment Matters Committee. The Learning & Development Policy forms part of the Council's employee offer and must at a minimum comply with statutory legislation.
- 1.2 Following consideration and approval by the Employment Matters Committee, the draft Learning & Development Policy as detailed in this report will be published.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Learning & Development Policy (previously Workforce Development Policy) is due to be refreshed every 3 years.
- 2.2 The purpose of this Learning and Development Policy is to provide a framework to demonstrate Medway Council's commitment to its learning and development activities in a coherent and systematic way.
- 2.3 This policy provides a public document that all employees can refer to as a guide to the council's approach to learning and development. It aims to ensure that learning and development actions are aligned with the goals of the organisation.
- 2.5 The Learning & Development Policy has been merged with the Study Leave appendix to create one document to create clarity.

3. Key Changes

- 3.1. The updating, condensing and merging of the Study Guide into the policy to provide a clearer document.
- 3.2. Assistant Director approval: to ensure tighter budget controls, all requests that incur a direct cost must be approved by the relevant Assistant Director.
- 3.3. Volunteers and Work Experience: addition of clear guidance for managers, volunteers and those undertaking work experience to outline what is available.
- 3.4. Probation: clear guidance that only essential training that is necessary for fulfilling the job criteria will be considered during a staff member's probationary period. This is to protect the learning and development training budget.
- 3.5. Climate Change: measures have been outlined how Learning and Development are supporting the climate change agenda including running virtual training to reduce travel and transport use and costs, as well as sending electronic course literature to reduce the carbon footprint and to reduce the overall costs of printing.
- 3.6. Learning Agreements: where Medway Council previously issued learning agreements at the request of a manager, it is proposed that the learning agreements are issued for any staff member receiving an individual qualification where the value exceeds £2000, or whereby the total number of qualifications being undertaken equals £2000 or more. The council is then able to seek repayment from staff who leave the council within 2 years of completing the course. It is recognised that Medway Council will have benefitted from the investment in the training, and it is therefore proposed the repayment amount is on a sliding scale. 0-12 months; 100%, 12-18 months; 50%, 18-24 months 25%.

4. Advice and analysis

- 4.1 the revised policy formalises practices and procedures already in place to ensure a consistent approach across the council.
- 4.2 A Diversity Impact Assessment has been undertaken in relation to the draft policy; this is set out in Appendix 5.

5. Risk management

- 5.1 Risk management is an integral part of good governance. The Council has a responsibility to identify and manage threats and risks to achieve its strategic objectives and enhance the value of services it provides to the community.
- 5.2 By reviewing and updating the Learning & Development policy, the council is protected through the outlining of clear responsibilities of the council and the individual.

5.3 There are no significant risks in adopting this policy.

6. Consultation

6.1 This policy has been consulted upon with the following stakeholders:

- Trade Unions
- Chief Operating Officer

6.2 The consultation period ended on 26.08.22 with no comments to consider from those consulted.

7. Financial implications

7.1 The potential financial implication of not implementing the Learning Agreement would cause double funding of qualifications due to the outgoing employee costs as well as the incoming employee training costs. Additional implications include reduced available training budget to be invested in other council employees.

8. Legal implications

8.1 The potential legal implication – anyone that receives financial support from the council to achieve a qualification will be expected to remain at the council for a period 2 years.

9. Recommendation

9.1 The Employment Matters Committee is asked to consider and approve the revised Learning & Development Policy at Appendix 2 and subsequent amendments to the Learning & Development policy as laid out in section 3 the report.

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Appendices

- Appendix 1: Current Learning & Development Policy
- Appendix 2: Draft Learning & Development Policy
- Appendix 3: Training Agreement
- Appendix 4: Current Study leave appendix
- Appendix 5: Diversity Impact Assessment

Background papers

None