

Report to Stronger Council Select Committee



Date of meeting: 3 March 2022

Portfolio: Corporate Services - Councillor D Sunger

Subject: Learning & Development Programme 2021/22

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Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- 1. To note the report and acknowledge the positive impact on employees from the Learning and Development Programmes 2021/22.**

Executive Summary:

The report looks back at the learning and development activity that has taken place over the last 12 months. A Leadership Programme has been developed and implemented, wellbeing initiatives, IT skills and Customer skills have been provided for our employees.

Our apprenticeship programme continues to go from strength-to-strength, the Council has been able to provide development for existing employees using the apprenticeship levy.

Report:

- During 2021 the approach to employee learning and development has been to ensure employees drive their own learning by having access to the skills and knowledge required to support the Council plan, including transition into hybrid working.
- These are some of the programmes which have achieved high levels of engagement from our workforce:
 - 2.1 Skill Pills** – are virtual 60-90 minute sessions open to all employees. We have and are covering topics such as: Resilience, Mindfulness, Wellbeing, Coping with Change, Creative thinking, Diversity & Inclusion, Manager V Leader, Managing Expectations, Making Effective Agreements, How to build relationships when hybrid-working and Work Life Balance. We receive continued good attendance, engagement and employees feed in their ideas for future sessions.
 - 2.2 Our Leadership Programme** launched in Summer 2021, and all Service Directors, Service Managers and Team Managers have been engaged in learning via activities such as coaching, psychometric assessments, workshops, group work, 360 degree feedback and self managed learning. The programme takes a strengths based approach and covers key subjects which are required for our leaders of the future, and evolved via feedback from our managers. Team Managers can achieve an ILM (Institute of Leadership & Management) approved certificate at level 3. This programme has also offered 7 aspiring Team Managers the opportunity to develop team manager skills; supporting future internal succession and talent mapping.
 - 2.3** Alongside the EFDC Leadership Programme we have a cohort of managers completing the **Solace ILM Level 5 in Management**. This is an Essex wide cohort, where the majority

of delegates are from EFDC. The Apprenticeship Levy is used for this programme, meaning no additional costs for our corporate training budget.

2.4 **HR Business Partner ‘Power Hours’** – these sessions are run both for new employees and new managers. The People Team facilitate regular friendly, informal sessions to look at policies, systems, useful information and signposting for those joining EFDC. The sessions have now also become popular with current employees who use them to keep updated with any changes.

2.5 **MS Teams training sessions** – we realise that many employees have never had to work virtually using MS Teams prior to 2020. Therefore, we have run a series of 60 minute sessions, on how to effectively use the different elements of MS Teams. Microsoft provides these training sessions free as part of the Council’s contract with them.

2.6 In August 2021, Learning & Development (L&D) conducted a survey with our employees checking training requirements. The most in demand skill was **Excel**, in response, we have continued to run various levels of Excel training, with great feedback, particularly from Accountancy who have subsequently been able to change their reporting formats to make these easier for them to work with managers.

2.7 In September another cohort of 12 **Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA)** were trained and accredited, this brings our total employees trained to 80. Mental Health First Aid England recommend a target of 60 for our size organisation. This group now meet bi-annually and at the meeting on 25 November MHFAs were asked to support the mental health over the winter months using the new Winter Wellbeing pack.

All MHFAs will now be trained in Dementia Friends; a 45 minute session on how to support anyone living with dementia. Also all MHFAs will be invited to train as Menopause Mentors; Menopause has been linked to both anxiety and depression, so we feel our MHFAs will be able to provide additional support. Jo Budden (Service Manager, People, Wellbeing and Culture and Internal Communications) is now accredited as a Youth MHFA, which means we can offer additional support to our younger employees and apprentices.

2.8 A **‘Customer’s Shoes’** webinar was developed by the Service Manager of Customer during 2021, with employees shaping the content by giving feedback. Experienced employees present their tips for good customer service. The webinar has been attended by over 120 employees, with excellent feedback, and will now be developed into a video to be used for further training with employees and members.

3. EFDC now employs 28 Apprentices in various occupational areas, from Level 2 (GCSE) to Level 7 (Masters). Our public sector target is to employ 13 apprentices. This year apprentices have been supported with coaching, training courses in technical skills, and webinars to cover CV writing, applications and how to use social media for hidden job markets. This training and coaching support enables EFDC to continue to achieve high retention, qualification and employment rates for our apprentices.

4. What’s next for Employee Learning and Development? To ensure we can build on this success in December 2021 we have launched a new Learning Management System to all employees, called Litmos. There is a separate report on the agenda with further details - ‘Use of the Litmos Learning Management System – Employee Induction/Onboarding’.

Reason for decision: No decision is required by the Committee as the report is to note the range of Learning and Development activity taking place.

Options considered and rejected: N/A

Consultation undertaken: N/A

Resource implications: N/A

Legal and Governance Implications: N/A

Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications: N/A

Consultation Undertaken: N/A

Background Papers: N/A

Impact Assessments: N/A

Risk Management: N/A

Equality: N/A