

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-109n-2009/10

Date of meeting: 19 April 2010



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Performance Management

Subject: E-Learning

Responsible Officer: Paula Maginnis (01992 564536).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

(1) That, as requested by the Joint Consultative Committee, the report is agreed subject to any amendments or suggestions made by Cabinet; and

(2) That, as requested by the Joint Consultative Committee, Cabinet agree that an under spend of £8,000 from the 2009/2010 Training CSB budget is carried forward to 2010/2011 and ringfenced to developing e-learning modules.

Executive Summary:

The Essex Strategic HR Partnership has invested resources in developing an IT system hosted by a company called Learning Pool for use by Essex councils for their e-learning requirements.

Using the Learning Pool file-sharing environment the Council can share and download resources from other authorities so that time is saved by not starting from scratch with each course. The Council will be able to make changes to existing courses, use our own branding and amend them to fit the Council's needs, thus saving time and money.

A draft Project Plan to implement e-learning has been developed and attached at Appendix II for the Committee's consideration and comment.

The current Training CSB budget is predicted to show an under spend of £8,000 due to a number development projects not taking place in this financial year. The Cabinet is asked to agree that this under spend is carried forward to the next financial year and ringfenced to develop further e-learning modules.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To inform and consult members on the introduction of e-learning for staff and for members.

To allow an under spend from the 2009/2010 training budget be carried forward to 2010/2011 and ringfenced to develop further e-learning modules.

Other Options for Action:

Cabinet could decide not to agree the recommendations and substitute other options.

Report:

1. The Essex Strategic HR Partnership has invested resources in developing an IT system hosted by a company called Learning Pool for use by Essex councils for their e-learning requirements.
2. Learning Pool was originally set up by the IDeA to provide a shared e-learning service to the public sector and is the only system of this type in the Country. By using Learning Pool Epping Forest District Council will be able to create, access and share e-learning material that is specifically designed for the public sector by the public sector which can easily be amended for the Council's needs, thus saving time and money.
3. A further advantage of using Learning Pool is that the system has a 'Dynamic Learning Environment' (DLE). This is a software package that allows the Council to evidence, monitor and record learning activity across the Council.
4. Work is currently being undertaken by staff across the Council in developing courses, for example, the Code of Connectivity (COCO) training for Benefits staff, IT courses for agency workers and temporary staff and in HR a Managing Absence course. It is proposed to launch these courses in June. The intention is to implement e-learning to blend with existing 'classroom' training, but in some areas such as IT and Health and Safety savings could be made by delivering the majority of this training by e-learning.
5. Basildon Council has launched 6 management courses which have been shared with the Partnership and they have also developed a set of protocols for their e-learning courses. Their protocols have been used as a basis for Epping's protocols and for information a copy is attached at Appendix I.
6. A draft Project Plan to implement e-learning has been developed and attached at Appendix II for consideration and comment by members.
7. The launch of e-learning throughout the Council is the first phase of this project. Phase 2 will consider how those staff without ready access to IT can benefit from e-learning. The third phase will consider using the 'Modern Councillor' suite of modules for member development and taken forward by Democratic Services.
9. Learning Pool has developed a package of modules called the 'Modern Councillor' which members can use to develop their skills through e-learning. Designed to be easy to use the courses are short, typically lasting 30 minutes and consisting of a few separate modules. The content is structured to allow members to dip in and out of a course as their schedules permit. There are 13 courses and members can revisit the material as often as they wish.

Resource Implications:

The current Training CSB budget is predicted to show an under spend of £8,000 due to a number development projects not taking place in the financial year 2009/2010. Cabinet is asked to agree that this under spend is carried forward to the financial year 2010/2011 and ringfenced to develop further e-learning modules.

In general, e-learning modules will be developed using existing resources, mainly the Corporate and IT training budgets and existing provision in the Benefits team training budget.

Legal and Governance Implications:

N/A

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

N/A

Consultation Undertaken:

N/A

Background Papers:

JCC Report 8 April 2010

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management

N/A

Equality and Diversity:

Did the initial assessment of the proposals contained in this report for relevance to the Council's general equality duties, reveal any potentially adverse equality implications? No

Where equality implications were identified through the initial assessment process, has a formal Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken? No

What equality implications were identified through the Equality Impact Assessment process?

How have the equality implications identified through the Equality Impact Assessment been addressed in this report in order to avoid discrimination against any particular group?