

REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR - HR AND CUSTOMER SERVICE**IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW LEARNING SYSTEMS****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide Members with details of the development and implementation of the Council's new learning management system and the 'Learning Pool' e-learning platform in support of a presentation to this Committee.

Information and Advice**Background**

2. The Authority has procured a learning management system (Learning Solutions – LSO) as part of the continued roll-out of the Business Management System (BMS) programme. The previous Learning and Development System (LDS), was faltering technically and was cost prohibitive to upgrade. The new LSO system is now an integral part of the wider BMS programme and links directly to the other BMS modules.
3. In addition, the Authority has also procured a new e-learning platform - 'Learning Pool'. This provider replaces Skillport. In addition to being a more modern platform with an extensive catalogue including personal development, management and leadership and social care, we will be able to better provide e-learning access to employees without NCC PC access and, going forward, give controlled access to employees of partner organisations.
4. The introduction of these effective and modern learning systems will support the delivery of the workforce planning and organisational development element of the Council's Workforce Strategy and help to ensure that the workforce is appropriately skilled to meet future business needs.

New Learning Management System - LSO

5. The new learning management system (LSO), launched in November 2014, will improve the process of identifying and booking learning and development opportunities for employees. The learning catalogue within the system now contains classroom-based courses, e-learning and other learning resources such as self-help guides, now all available in one place. Consequently, employees can now see the full range of development opportunities available to them with greater ease.
6. Booking onto relevant learning opportunities is quick and easy. Employees and managers can find information, book and cancel places on learning events via their BMS portal. This

adds another useful tool to the suite of services available via the BMS portal which currently includes booking leave; managing expenses; access to payslips etc.

7. The introduction of LSO has stream-lined the learning evaluation process. After each learning event, employees with PC access will now be sent an e-mail with a link to complete the evaluation online. This moves away from paper-based systems and introduces greater efficiency.
8. As LSO is part of the BMS programme, it has the advantage of linking directly to all the other modules of the wider system such as the organisation structure and employees' details which will improve reporting from the system and the tools which the Council can deploy as part of its workforce development strategy. The previous learning management system (LDS) was separate from the HR Payroll system and had to be connected via a bespoke interface.
9. There is the opportunity to develop the system further and link employees' learning options to the EPDR process and to talent management. There is an additional module of BMS called Learning Objectives and Appraisals (LOA) that could be deployed to do this in the future.

New E-learning Platform – Learning Pool

10. Learning Pool was also launched across the Council in November 2014 and works both in tandem and independently of BMS Learning Solutions. When staff with BMS portal access select an e-learning programme from the catalogue they are seamlessly linked to Learning Pool which acts as the host for the e-learning programmes. All staff with BMS access have been provided with their login details and users are accessing programmes.
11. All current Frontline staff without NCC PC/BMS Portal access have been set up on the system, this means they can access e-learning at home, library or any PC with internet access. Username and password information is being communicated to staff via the January issue of the Frontline staff newsletter.
12. The Learning Pool catalogue is very extensive and more focussed on the needs of local government than the previous provider. In addition to bespoke content developed by Learning Pool itself, and this Council, the catalogue includes access to programmes developed by other Councils.
13. E-learning programmes created by the HR Workforce Planning and Organisational Development team have also been converted and migrated to the new platform (e.g. the HR and health and safety suite of programmes).
14. Both LSO and Learning Pool provide more system options to centrally allocate learning programmes to staff and monitor completion. Going forward this will support initiatives where mandatory completion of training is required or where refresher training needs to be provided.

Other Options Considered

15. Several learning management systems were reviewed including upgrading the previous LDS, however, the LSO system provides the best outcomes and value for money and has the advantages outlined of being part of BMS.
16. All the e-learning providers listed on the NCC procurement system were reviewed in terms of the platform they offered, the range of content available, user support and the flexibility to provide e-learning to both NCC employees at work or at home and non NCC partners. While some had an effective platform and others a good catalogue of content, only Learning Pool offered the combination that met all our requirements.

Reasons for Recommendation

17. The implementation of the LSO and Learning Pool systems will enhance and improve the way the Authority offers learning and development opportunities to employees. The new systems are more efficient to use and also have the potential to be developed further as learning processes are reviewed and refined going forward.

Statutory and Policy Implications

18. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, the public sector equality duty, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

19. The implementation, development and ongoing maintenance costs of the Learning Solutions system are contained within the Business Support Centre budget. The implementation, development and ongoing maintenance costs of the Learning Pool platform are contained within the Workforce and Organisational Development team budget.

Human Resources Implications

20. The implementation of LSO and Learning Pool will improve and streamline the processes needed for employees of the Authority to identify and access learning and development opportunities appropriate for their roles. The systems are easier to use than previous systems, have less paper-based processes and give greater access to the whole spectrum of learning available. As part of BMS, the systems have the option of further development to include management of EPDR or appraisals and talent management.
21. The new learning systems will be demonstrated to the recognised Trade Unions at the Joint Redundancy and Redeployment Working Group on Monday 5th February 2015.

RECOMMENDATION

1. It is recommended that Personnel Committee note the information contained in the report and presentation.

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Constitutional Comments (SLB 02/07/14)

22. This report is for noting only.

Financial Comments (SEM 02/07/14)

23. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All