

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: WEDNESDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2010
title: QUALIFICATION TRAINING
submitted by: PERSONNEL OFFICER
principal author: JULIE SMITH

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To provide Members with information on members of staff currently undertaking training courses which lead to recognised qualification.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Council Ambitions – Training and development of staff supports the organisation in achieving its ambitions, as it will improve the levels of skill and knowledge used in service delivery. Such continuous improvement in service provision underpins all corporate ambitions
- Community Objectives – Supporting qualification training for staff who work and live in the community reinforces the Authority's commitment to education and life long learning.
- Corporate Priorities – Staff achieving qualifications support the Corporate Plan in delivering high quality, efficient and cost-effective customer focussed services. In addition, qualification based training encourages staff to reach their full potential.
- Other Considerations – None.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Information on approval of training is presented to Members at each meeting of Personnel Committee, however, training which results in nationally recognised qualifications represents a significant proportion of training expenditure. In addition this type of training tends to require a significant financial commitment for the Council and time commitment from the member of staff for periods of between one and five years.

3 ISSUES

3.1 Appendix 1 is a list of all employees undertaking qualification based training in the current academic year and gives details of the duration of the course and the period of commitment.

3.2 Following the successful completion of a large number of qualifications which were reported at the last meeting, we currently have 10 members of staff working towards recognised qualifications.

3.3 Our four modern apprentices, having successfully achieved NVQ Level 2 in Business Administration during their first year with us, will now be working towards NVQ Level 3.

3.4 Rachel Horton remains on the list for information only as she has passed all her exams and has only to successfully submit her dissertation in order to complete her qualification. There is no financial support required for this element.

3.5 Each member of staff requesting to undertake qualification training receives confirmation that their request for training has been approved. The confirmation provides details of the Authority's commitment in terms of tuition and examination fees, also traveller's assistance allowance.

- 3.6 Employees are able to borrow textbooks on long-term loan through a scheme in conjunction with Lancashire County Council Staff Library. However, there is also a commitment to pay for books, which cannot be borrowed, and these would be retained by the Authority for future students.
- 3.7 In addition, the Authority grants study leave in accordance with the NJC Green Book.
- 3.8 It should be noted that any financial commitment undertaken is on condition that the employee provides written agreement to reimburse 50% of course fees should they leave the Authority's employment within two years of completing the qualification or in the event they should fail to complete the course.
- 3.9 It is believed that these arrangements benefit employees and the Authority, whilst protecting the Authority's investment by sustaining and enhancing skills, knowledge and commitment.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Whilst there is a significant cost in supporting training which leads to nationally recognised qualifications, both in terms of the cost of the course and the time away from work to undertake the study, training opportunities of this type are key to staff development. Such investment will improve the employees' ability to carry out their duties and improve skills, knowledge and expertise within Ribble Valley Borough Council.
- 4.2 Written agreement is obtained regarding reimbursement, in the event of failure to complete the course or leaving the Authority within two years of qualification, manages which minimises the risk of losing the skills, knowledge and qualifications obtained.
- 4.3 Whilst training commitments are dependent on existing departmental training budgets, the current economic climate and the public sector spending review have prompted a review of our training policy and a revised draft document will be tabled for discussion at the next meeting.

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:
- Resources – Qualifications add value to existing resources with no additional salary cost and can also enhance commitment and loyalty.
 - Technical, Environmental and Legal – Qualified staff will ensure that actions and decisions taken comply with current legislation.
 - Political – None.
 - Reputation – Commitment to supporting employees in achieving qualifications will enhance the Authority's reputation and support the organisation in becoming an employee of choice.

6 **RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

- 6.1 Note the report.

PERSONNEL OFFICER

For further information please ask for Julie Smith, extension 4409.