

Agenda item 6

For decision - Staffing and Training Matters

Authors: Peter Wheelhouse, Economic Development and Regeneration Manager and Deputy Town Clerk and Jackie Wheeler, RFO

Summary

The purpose of this report is to set out current arrangements for staff training and recommends that next financial year the staff training budget is divided evenly between the staff and that plans for how that will be spent are agreed by line managers at annual appraisal. It is recommended that a separate budget is created for councillors' occasional attendance at conferences.

The report also updates councillors on new staff, returners and recruitment.

Training – background

Training is currently discussed annually at staff appraisals in March. Staff are encouraged to identify training that will support their role and if it is thought to be appropriate is agreed by their line manager. Training requirements can vary from year-to-year and the budget is not divided evenly between staff. The budget is also used to cover unscheduled conference attendance by staff and councillors.

Central Services budget

The 2016/17 training budget for staff and councillors was £8,000. It has been increased to £9,000 for 2017/18, which equates to £600 each staff not including councillors.

In 2016/17 Central Services staff training was divided between one day specific workshops which all staff attended covering areas such as Participatory Budgeting, Data Protection, Website and First Aid and conferences, which individual staff and councillors attended if relevant to their area of work. This accounted for 65% of the budget.

Travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses accounted for the remaining 35% due to distance travelled and overnight stays required to attend conferences such as the Locality Conference which is held over two days.

Environmental Team training budget

The 2016/17 environmental staff training budget was set at £4,800 supplemented by £1,500 from the tree budget to total £6,300. It has been reduced for 2017/18 to £4,000 equating to £1,000 per ranger.

Last year specific training such as chainsaw cutting and tree felling accounted for 33% of the budget and the remaining 67% was spent on specific training on play equipment repair, wildflower management, woodchipper, fire marshal and first aid. It also included travel and subsistence expenses incurred in attending the courses.

Individual staff training allocations

Currently, there is a lack of clarity in terms of what is available to each member of staff to support their development which makes it difficult for staff and their line managers to plan at appraisal time. To support that planning and to create greater ownership by staff of their

training plans, it is recommended that a different arrangement is introduced next financial year. The recommendation is that the staff training budget is divided evenly so that each member of staff has an allocation that they can use through the year. How that is used would be agreed by line managers at annual appraisal time so that there is a clear plan for training through the year. At the same time, it is recommended that a separate budget is created to support councillors' occasional attendance at conferences.

Staffing changes

Nicola Cretney joined us as the Health & Wellbeing Manager on 30 May and will be working closely with Kate Hellard.

Nykki Mehta is joining us on 21 June as the Customer Service Advisor and will be working 18.5 hrs on the later part of week with Tricia Mugridge enabling the reception desk to be staffed Monday to Friday.

Claire Worrall, currently at Bath University, will be starting with us on 3 July for 12 months working as the Marketing and Tourism Intern focusing on the promotion of walking and cycling and supporting the performing arts.

Cara Naden has moved from Resilience Officer maternity cover to a Project Officer role maternity cover working mainly with the Environment Team until 30 September.

Anna Francis returns to the role of Resilience Manager on 6 June.

Laura Flaherty, Democratic Services Administrator has taken on the role of Mayor's Secretary.

Applications have been received and interviews will take place soon for the Communications and Marketing Administrator post.

We have advertised and have recruited a bank of casual staff covering the reception desk during out of hours hire of the rooms in the Town Hall; they are paid the national living wage currently £8.45 ph.

Recommendations

1. That in the next financial year 2018/19, the staff training budget is divided equally so that each member of staff has an allocation for training; how these allocations are spent will be agreed by line managers at annual appraisal
2. That a separate budget is created next financial year to support councillors' attendance at conferences