Forest Heath District Council and

St Edmundsbury Borough Council

Learning & Development Policy

Date Approved XXX 2014

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1.   Introduction

1.1   This policy explains, in broad terms, the support and commitment the Council provides for the development and training of its employees and members. (for clarity, where the term "the Council" is used it refers to both Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council, collectively known as "West Suffolk").

1.2   The Council is committed to meeting the needs of the residents of West Suffolk and recognises the contribution employees and members make in shaping and delivering the corporate priorities and the ultimate success of the Council in meeting resident needs. The council therefore has a priority to ensure that staff and members receive the training and development opportunities they need to support their role.

1.3   The Council is committed to creating a learning environment for all employees and members, which values and empowers people at all levels. The Council aims to embed a culture of encouragement for learning and continuous development to ensure a safe, productive working environment and meet the changing needs of the organisation. Employees and members therefore have the right to:

1. Induction
2. Equality of learning provision
3. Individual learning needs to be identified on a regular basis
4. Induction
5. Access to nationally recognised qualifications
6. On-the-job development for any new duties and responsibilities (including up-date and refresher training)
7. Time off to undertake approved development

1.4   Implicit in all learning and development is the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy which ensures that all eligible employees should have equal access to learning and development opportunities relevant to their careers irrespective of gender, race, sexual orientation, marital status, age, ethnic origin, disability, or whether employed full or part-time.

1.5   This policy is linked to the Corporate Plan and Workforce Development Plan and is underpinned by the principles of the Elected Member Learning & Development Charter.

1.6   This policy should be read in conjunction with the 'Learning and Development – Guidance Notes', which provides details on practical application of the policy.

2.   Scope

2.1   This policy applies to all employees and members of Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council

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2.2   This policy statement will be brought to the attention of all new employees and members of Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

3. Responsibilities

3.1   Training and development is the responsibility of all Council employees and members. In particular

- **Senior Management -** in promoting a climate, and providing space and resources to ensure that learning and individual development is recognised as imperative to support delivery of the corporate plan;

- **Line Managers and Supervisors** - in being actively committed to developing their team and demonstrate that they are fair, supportive and provide equality of opportunity in development of their teams. Ensuring that all new staff within their work area receive a planned and appropriate induction into their new role and ensure mandatory training courses are completed. In conjunction with each employee, carry out a systematic analysis of learning and development needs as part of the performance development review process;

- **Individual's –** in ensuring that they have the ability, knowledge and experience to carry out their role effectively and taking an active part in identifying their own learning and development needs;

- **Human Resources (learning and development) -** in assisting in the identification of learning needs and priorities, offering advice on alternative ways of meeting needs. Formulating and commissioning the corporate learning and development programme, including design and delivery of short courses as appropriate. Management and monitoring of expenditure of the training budgets for staff and member development.

4. Identifying Development Needs

4.1   The Council will adopt a strategic and structured approach to identifying the development needs of employees and members, both individually and for particular groups:

Council wide development needs - to be identified through:

8. Consideration of the skills requirements of the corporate plan
9. Consideration of the skills requirement implications prior to the introduction of new policies and procedures
10. Consideration of the skills requirement implications for changing external situations
11. Reviews or staff feedback obtained through staff surveys, organisational reviews, Training needs analysis

Team/Group development needs – to be identified through:

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12. Consideration of collective skills updating needs as part of a regular process of setting out operational and work plans
13. Regular review of work performance for the team/group in question

Individual development needs - to be identified through:

14. An initial discussion as part of induction to the Council and the individual's role
15. The annual performance and development review process supplemented by regular follow up reviews
16. Ongoing discussion with staff about work performance and any changes to the work of the employee

Member development needs – to be identified through:

17. Consideration of the training needs analysis questionnaire completed by each member
18. Consideration of self-assessments where members assess their current level of expertise and log those areas in which they wish to develop further skills and knowledge
19. Consultation with senior management to identify development activities to meet national and local priorities
20. The recurring development needs to particular committees or groups of Councillors such as Cabinet, Development Control and Licensing and Regulatory committees.

5. Provision of Learning and Development

5.1 Learning and development provision includes a wide range of activities and methods, which are designed to meet the individual and organisational needs including; work based learning, class room, on-line learning, shadowing, coaching and mentoring. Training activities will be designed to meet a range of learning styles using current best practice and proven techniques.

5.2 Where required e-learning will be delivered as a blended learning solution supplemented with class room delivery. A suitable remote access, learning management system (LMS) will be used for the delivery of e-learning. Content will be commissioned externally or created internally as required. For content created internally copyright will be retained by the Councils.

5.3 **In House/ Corporate Training** – organised as part of the Corporate Learning and Development programme, and delivered through the Council's learning and development department. This and will typically be through a blended learning solution, with delivery of 'classroom' training being delivered by council staff where there is the in-house expertise is available or procurement of external training providers as required.

These include development activities which are; mandatory to all staff, service specific and optional staff development opportunities. All

employees are encouraged to attend the optional courses on topics such as; interpersonal and communication skills management and organisation.

Managers should ensure employees complete mandatory development activities that include:

Induction/Health and Safety Training – each new employee and member will have an agreed induction plan and receive health and safety training for new or changed roles Line manager's are responsible for arranging service/role specific induction. Further detail can be found in the Induction Guidance for Managers.

Management development – all staff appointed to a managerial role in the Council should attend training and development appropriate to that role - for example leading teams, carrying out performance and development reviews, HR training in the management of staff and related policies and procedures.

Equality and Diversity – all employees should attend equality and diversity training and all managers the extended management training.

Safeguarding & Protecting Children and Young People – all employees who have a role that brings them in contact with children and young people, will receive suitable information during their induction process to raise awareness of their role in recognising, understanding and safeguarding children. Line managers/designated officers should receive suitable raining to enable them to deal with reported concerns and to support individuals reporting concerns.

Roll out of new technology or systems appropriate to changes in role – all employees where the requirements of their role change with the introduction of new technology and software implementation as appropriate.

Apprentices work based assessment sessions - all apprentices have a responsibility to set and attend regular assessment sessions with their education provider and to inform their line manager of the dates and times.

Data Protection and information security – all employees will complete some level of training at induction and subsequent training will be delivered dependant on the role of the individual.

Some of the above training will be mandatory in certain roles and for access to confidential information and the Government Connect Secure Intranet (GCSX).

5.4   **External – Short Training Courses /Seminars** - These are usually short, non-accredited, specific development events designed to cover a

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particular topic of one or two days and are often a suitable way to meet job and individual specific development needs and contribute to an individual's continuing professional development requirements. This might include for example, specialist service specific database training for updates, Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC).

In most cases these will be procured and delivery arranged by the L & D Department. For service specific training some cases, where at the outset the training need and budget has been identified, the course may be organised and delivered by a Service/Department.

Heads of Service have responsibility for authorisation and payment from their conference and seminar budget but are required to inform the L & D Department of the details to ensure training records are updated.

5.5 **External –Qualification/Professional Development -** This would lead to a recognised accredited qualification and typically be development that would take place over an extended period of time either by distance learning or course attendance and would be directly linked to an individual's role i.e. HNC Computing, Diploma in Housing Studies etc. The Council would consider financial support for costs associated with such development on the basis that it has a direct link to organisational and service objectives and would have the outcome of increasing proficiency in the individual's current role and/or career development. Funding is agreed through an application review process and is linked to the requirement for the individual to repay course fees should they leave employment within two years of completion of the training, or abandon the training without good reason (see Learning & Development Guidance document).

6. Funding Arrangements

6.1 The Council aims to allocate the appropriate resources to support training and development activities informed by corporate priorities and informed by Service Plans, Workforce development priorities and the PDR process. The training budget which is set annually and agreed by the Joint Leadership Team, includes support for; corporate training, learning management system, service specific and accredited professional development. A separate budget for member development and member conferences is agreed by Cabinet on an annual basis.

6.2 The Learning & Development department is responsible for the management of the training budget, ensuring appropriate utilisation of finances and monitoring and review of expenditure. The L& D Officer will be responsible for identifying any potential sources of external funding for training (e.g. government funding) and for investigating and applying for grants as appropriate.

6.3 To ensure finite resources for training and development are directed appropriately and the available budget is not exceeded, priority is given to training and development needs that meet immediate service needs, particularly legal compliance.

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6.4   Heads of Service will be responsible for the management of a budget set for seminars and short courses, which is agreed and retained within their department budget

7. Evaluation and Monitoring

7.1   The L & D department will ensure that all training and developments activities are monitored and evaluated to maintain quality and improve provision. Managers are responsible for evaluating events at an individual level. The joint member development group are responsible for the evaluation and monitoring of member events.

7.2   All employees and members are expected to participate in the evaluation of training and development.

7.3   Development is evaluated at a number of different levels shortly after each development event to determine:

- whether they met the identified aims and objectives;
- whether the development need has been fully met and/or if a further development need has been identified as a result of attending; and
- the most important piece of learning which was gained from the activity.

8. Member Development

8.1   Member Development is taken to mean any learning or development activities designed to provide Members with opportunities to update the skills and knowledge required to undertaken their individual and collective roles effectively and to the benefit of the organisation. In addition to formal events development opportunities are offered to develop Councillors knowledge in specialist areas, for example through becoming a member of a panel or review group, taking forward a particular piece of work, or membership of working parties on major projects.

8.2   The joint member development group requires that in any one year the programme provided for councillors should consist of a number of elements:

1. The recurring development needs of particular committees or groups of Councillors such as Cabinet, the overview and scrutiny committees or Development Control and Licensing and Regulatory committees.
2. Providing development opportunities/briefings to reflect national priorities.
3. Providing development opportunities/briefings on local priorities and initiatives.
4. Meeting the top collective development needs identified by Members through the annual Training Needs Analysis.

8.3   The programme should be member led but with consultation with senior managers, to meet national and local priorities. These events are

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supplemented by attendance at specialist external events and seminars where appropriate. Councillors are asked to share any presentations or other useful information with other Members through the Members' Bulletin. Feedback is analysed and presented to the joint member development group. **The Joint member development group's responsibilities include:**

- approving the development sessions which are planned each year;
- monitoring attendance by Members at internal and external sessions;
- suggesting any necessary changes to the Training Needs Analysis questionnaire;
- analysing the results of the annual questionnaire;
- analysing the results of individual development session evaluations;
- monitoring the progress of the actions on the Member Development Action Plan;
- induction planning in election years;
- ensuring the Member Development Policy continues to meet the Council's Corporate Priorities and individual Members' needs;
- working towards achieving the Member Development Charter;
- monitoring the member development budget.

8.4 The Joint member development group extends an open invitation to any Member to attend and contribute to discussions on Member Development. Member Development updates are reported to Cabinet via - the Portfolio Holders.

8.5 The Learning and Development advisor's responsibilities include:

- Providing supporting information to the joint member development group
- Commissioning and organising delivery of training on recommendations from members
- Maintaining records of attendance at events and evaluations of events
- Publicising events to all Members through the appropriate channels
- Supporting democratic services on the induction of New members
- Advising Members on delivery methods and topics
- Administering the short course/conference attendance protocol

9.   **Enquiries and Change Control**

9.1 All enquiries relating to this document should be directed to Human Resources.

9.2 This policy will be subject to a review every two years which will be initiated by the HR Business Partner (Learning and Development).

9.3 Suggestions for any changes to this document should also be forwarded to the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development.

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Revisions

Date of review or revision	Reason	Author
December 2013	Aligning FHDC and SEBC policies	Juliette Maguire
April 2014	Small amends following Cabinet Planning FHDC	Karen Points

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