

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL
CORPORATE SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES
COMMITTEE

25 SEPTEMBER 2001

SKILLS TRAINING UNIT BUSINESS PLAN 2001/02 ETC.

Report by Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** To advise the Sub-Committee of the Business Plan for the Skills Training Unit (STU) for 2001/02 and other recent achievements of the Unit.

2. THE BUSINESS PLAN

- 2.1** Members will be aware that STU enjoys Scottish Quality Management Quality System (SQMS) accreditation. SQMS requires that there should be a systematic and collaborative approach to objective setting, policy making, planning and organisation, ideally expressed in an annual business plan.
- 2.2** Since 1997/98, there has been a quality assurance team within STU (the STU SQMS Quality Team). This team comprises representatives of each of the workgroups within STU and, since 1998/99, its responsibilities have included the drafting of the Business Plan. This approach to producing the plan, with active involvement of a cross-section of the Unit's employees, promotes 'ownership' of the plan amongst STU employees.
- 2.3** The 2001/02 Business Plan briefly reviews progress made in 2000/01, sets out a development plan for 2001/02 and briefly considers priorities for the next three years. This year, for the first time, specific performance indicators have been specified in each section of the plan.
- 2.4** In accordance with the style of previous reports, excerpts from the Business Plan for the Skills Training Unit for 2001/02 in the form of the summary and the main aims for the year are attached.

Copies of the full Business Plan are available to Members, on request, from the Head of Personnel.

3. CELEBRATION OF SUCCESS

- 3.1** On 13 June 2001, the Skills Training Unit recognised the success of 94 trainees who achieved vocational qualifications (VQs) during 2000/01. This included:

- Administration - 22 x Level 2 VQs
10 x Level 3 VQs
11 x Modern Apprenticeships
- Carpentry and Joinery - 4 x Level 3 VQs
- Mechanical Engineering - 4 x Level 3 VQs
- Civil Engineering - 3 x Level 3 VQs
- General Building Operations - 19 x Level 1 VQs
- Commercial Horticulture - 6 x Level 1 VQs
- Engineering Assembly - 5 x Level 1 VQs
- Welding/Fabrication - 2 x Level 1 VQs

3.2 Councillor Jackson presented these trainees with their VQ certificates at a presentation ceremony on 13 June. The Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources, the Head of Personnel, placement supervisors and representatives from Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire AND Ayr College also attended to acknowledge this significant achievement by the trainees and the Skills Training Unit. The trainees' achievements were publicised to the local community via local newspapers.

4. IN-HOUSE DELIVERY OF VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS IN ADMINISTRATION

4.1 Members may recall that STU has been validated, since 1999, by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) to deliver in-house the SVQ at Level 2 in Administration. This means that trainees pursuing this qualification no longer attend college on day-release but receive all underpinning knowledge training and other added-value training in the workplace, delivered by STU's own training staff, supported by placement supervisors. Not only is this more economic but, because the training is delivered by East Ayrshire Council employees in an East Ayrshire Council environment, the training is more relevant to the Council's business and the trainees' practical, day-to-day experience.

4.2 Building on this model, STU has recently received SQA validation to deliver in-house the SVQ at Level 3 and the Modern Apprenticeship in Administration. The Modern Apprenticeship is at a level beyond the Level 3 SVQ. It is available only to trainees in employment and requires them to undertake additional vocational and core skills (communication, numeracy, problem solving, working with others and information technology) training.

4.3 The in-house arrangement is continually reviewed to ensure best practice and the Level 2 VQ has already been updated with effect from August

2001. STU has been working since Easter 2001 to develop new training material to meet the needs of the revised qualification. The trainees who were recruited to commence training in August will be working to the new standard with the new material.

5. SQMS EXTERNAL AUDIT

- 5.1** Members may recall that STU's SQMS accreditation was subject to a full external audit in 2000. As a result of that audit, STU had to implement remedial action in two areas – Health and Safety and Guidance Services. These were implemented to the subsequent satisfaction of the external auditors and STU's SQMS accreditation has been confirmed until August 2003, subject to routine and interim auditing.
- 5.2** The 2001 interim audit took place in late-August / early-September and no remedial action has been required by the auditors to confirm STU's ongoing SQMS accreditation.

6 THE LORD CULLEN AWARD

- 6.1** The Scottish Chamber of Safety, established in 1974, seeks, along with other bodies, to influence government thinking on health and safety. It is organised through nine area groups across Scotland to share information and promote discussion on health and safety issues throughout Scotland. As part of the promotion of health and safety, The Scottish Chamber of Safety makes an annual Lord Cullen Award to those organisations that have done most to enhance and advance health and safety in the workplace. The Ayrshire Occupational Health & Safety group invited STU to submit an entry for the Award.
- 6.2** The Unit's entry was based on procedures adopted in pre-placement training for STN Skillseekers who were moving to work experience placement within the parks service. The training involves planning and preparation, personal protective equipment, storage and handling of machinery such as grasscutters, strimmers, etc. Trainees are not allowed to use machinery without demonstrating competence in their use.
- 6.3** The Skills Training Unit was awarded the Coombs Trophy for 2nd place in the competition for the good practice demonstrated.

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** The commitments made within the 2001/02 Business Plan will require to be met from within existing resources which include a Council contribution of £124,770.

8. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1** STU's Business Plan continues to meet with the approval of Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire (SEA) and SQMS Scotland and is an essential element in maintaining the partnership funding arrangements with SEA.

8.2 By its activities, STU contributes to the achievement of a number of the objectives in the Council' plan:

- Tackling unemployment
- Inspiring young people
- Excellence through education

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 It is recommended that the Sub-Committee:

- a) endorse the main aims for the Skills training Unit as detailed in the Business Plan: and
- b) otherwise note the content of the report.

Graham Haugh,
Head of Personnel.

eb/eb
3 September 2001.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

NONE

Anyone wishing further information should contact Eoghan Baird, Training and Development Manager. (01 563 555 276)

a:stubpetc3.

EXTRACT FROM SKILLS TRAINING UNIT –
BUSINESS PLAN 2001/02

SUMMARY

This Business Plan briefly reviews progress made in 2000/2001 and sets out a development plan for 2001/2002.

The Skills Training Unit will, at all times, operate within the policies and procedures determined by East Ayrshire Council and within the requirements of the Personnel Service's Department's ISO 9001 accreditation and the Unit's own SQMS (Scottish Quality Management System) accreditation. During 2000/2001, Personnel Services, including the Skills Training Unit, was subject to a 'health check' using the EFQM Excellence Model.

A quality team comprising representatives of each of the workgroups in the Unit has formulated the business plan. Members of the quality team are;

Eoghan Baird, Training and Development Manager
Bob Greer, Skills Training Manager
Isabel Campbell, Assistant Skills Training Manager
Tricia Ferrie, representing Trainee Monitoring and Lead Internal Auditor
Ronnie Richardson, representing STN / EASY
Ian Frater, representing Training Supervisors
Elaine McNulty, representing Administration
Lisa McMillan, representing Trainees

Graham Haugh, Head of Personnel (ex-officio)
**Fiona Lees, Depute Chief Executive & Director of Corporate Resources
(ex-officio)**

The business plan will be regularly reviewed by the Quality Team and by all employees at staff meetings.

Funding bodies will receive a copy of the business plan.

EXTRACT FROM SKILLS TRAINING UNIT –
BUSINESS PLAN 2001/02

MAIN AIMS

- Ensure that the Skills Training Unit has a clear sense of purpose and direction by the preparation, implementation, communication and review of this business plan.
- Provide equality of access to training leading to attainment of S/NVQ's and Modern Apprenticeships through various awarding bodies.

- Review, maintain and communicate an integrated quality assurance system, ensuring the maintenance of SQMS and ISO 9001 certification, which ensures that clients (Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire and others), trainees (Skillseekers and Adults) and employees needs are met.
- Continue to improve marketing of the Skills Training Unit to ensure that its services meet the identified needs of clients (Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire and others) and trainees (Skillseekers and Adults) and its services are effectively promoted.
- Maintain close links with Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire and the East Ayrshire Employment Initiative to ensure that the Skills Training Unit is in a position to respond positively to any training business opportunities.
- Maintain a staffing structure, which facilitates the provision of services to trainees (Skillseekers and Adults).
- Maintain the Council's employee development scheme (EAGER) to provide employee development opportunities which meet organisational and individual needs in accordance with the Council's Training and Development policy.
- Ensure effective communication within the Skills Training Unit.
- Improve communication between the Skills Training Unit and other Council Departments, Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire, the Careers Partnership, East Ayrshire Employment Initiative, colleges, employers and the public in general. This with a view to increase the range of employer placements available (particularly for the STN group), maintain the number of participants in training and to maximise business opportunities.
- Maintain the accuracy of record keeping within the Skills Training Unit in order to meet more effectively the requirements of clients (Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire and others) and trainees (Skillseekers and Adults).
- Ensure effective financial management in order to minimise the Council's financial contribution to the operation of the Skills Training Unit.
- Ensure the training provision is relevant to the trainee and the qualification sought in order to increase measurable positive outcomes for both Adults and Skillseekers.
- Investigate the practicalities of providing different training disciplines to increase the range of occupational areas offered.
- Develop and maintain systems to evaluate the effectiveness of training.
- Seek to consolidate and enhance the services provided by the Skills Training Unit to meet the identified needs and build on current strengths.
- Maintain the Health and Safety systems and procedures within the Skills Training Unit in line with the Council's Health and Safety Policy in order to ensure compliance with current Health and Safety legislation as it applies to young people and adults in a workplace / training environment.

The details outlined above indicate the main individual issues, which have been identified and will be addressed over the next twelve months.

AGENDA