

## PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

**Subject:** Learning Agreement  
**Committee:** Employment Liaison Committee  
**Date:** 11 March 2013  
**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Peter Smith  
**CMT Member:** Mark Grimley, Assistant Director for HR and OD  
**Author:** Eve Skuse, Head of Organisational Development  
**Contact details** Tel: 01752 307565  
email: Eve.Skuse@plymouth.gov.uk  
**Ref:**  
**Key Decision:** No  
**Part:** I

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### **Purpose of the report:**

To note the draft Workplace Learning Agreement which sets out the commitment to (and responsibilities of) the Trade Unions and Plymouth City Council to establish and support joint working arrangements around learning initiatives.

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### **Corporate Plan 2012-2015:**

Supports commitment to be a confident, learning organisation; an employer of choice where people feel they can develop and realise their full potential.

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### **Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications: Including finance, human, IT and land**

There may be the requirement for Trade Unions to recruit additional Learning Representatives, which will incur additional costs under the Trade Union Facilities Agreement. Training time will also be required for the Learning Representatives appointed.

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### **Other Implications: e.g. Child Poverty, Community Safety, Health and Safety and Risk Management:**

N/A

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### **Equality and Diversity**

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken? N/A

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### **Recommendations and Reasons for recommended action:**

For noting purposes only.

**Alternative options considered and rejected:**

**Published work / information:**

**Background papers:**

[illegible]

**Sign off:**

Fin		Leg		Mon Off		HR		Assets		IT		Strat Proc	
Originating SMT Member													
Has the Cabinet Member(s) agreed the contents of the report? Yes													

**Plymouth City Council & Joint Trade Unions  
Learning Agreement**

**Draft Version 3 – 27/02/13**

## **1. Partners**

All recognised Trade Unions with membership in Plymouth City Council employment. Our agreement applies to all employees, regardless of their sex, race, disability, employment status or Union membership.

In time, and as opportunities present themselves, this agreement may be extended to include schools and other associated employers. For this reason Trade Union Representatives for schools are members of the Learning Agreement Steering group.

## **2. Purpose of the agreement**

Plymouth City Council and the Trades Unions recognise that lifelong learning, and a development culture is essential for the future of the organisation, and its employees.

This partnership supports the view that learning, to meet organisational needs, develops the confidence and the skill of the individual and builds their engagement and as a result increases performance and productivity and enables the Council achieve its goals.

All parties are committed to working in partnership to promote, support and encourage participation in lifelong learning across the organisation, ensuring equal access to learning and development opportunities for all employees.

This partnership will encourage employees to participate in developing life skills, vocational training and development activities.

## **3. Workforce Development**

It is agreed that all learning, except for that which is necessary/mandatory to an individual's job role or function, should not be imposed upon employees. Equally it is also recognised that responsibility for learning and development is shared between the employer and the employee – see Council's competencies around Develops Others (manager responsibility) and Develops Self (individual's responsibility).

The Council supports its' workforce to develop leadership/management, interpersonal, specialist/professional, technical and life-long learning skills and is open to exploring different methods of development from coaching to workshops to achieve the best outcomes for individuals (taking into account access to learning) and the organisation (taking into account organisational constraints such as available budgets).

This learning agreement sets out the principles by which the Council, Trade Unions and others will work in partnership to establish, and deliver learning opportunities, involving Trade Union Learning Representatives (TULR). This agreement supports the council's appraisals and learning and development policies and practices

## **4. Aims**

- a. Build an effective learning partnership across Plymouth City Council where parties work together to identify, promote and deliver lifelong learning opportunities
- b. Develop the skills of the workforce to deliver council priorities and better services.
- c. Increase employee participation in agreed vocational and development activities and identify ways to increase equal access to development

- d. Maximise the use of government initiatives and Identify and secure external funding to support work of group and progress applications
- e. Support young people into work through increasing level successful apprenticeships for the council
- f. Identify and share suggestions on ways to improve the fairness and consistency of Learning and Development practices and mechanisms
- g. Engage the workforce with green initiatives in line with commitments in the manifesto and corporate plan.

## **5. Who the agreement covers**

This agreement covers all employees of Plymouth City Council, , however there may be occasion to extend provisions to Associated Employers where reasonable and practicable and where expressly agreed with the Employment Liaison Committee and key stakeholders from the associated employer.

Plymouth City Council and the Trades Unions are committed to ensuring that employees benefit as much as possible, from learning and development opportunities and will continuously review the impact of their work and make improvements.

The group supports the principles captured in the Council's Facilities Agreement around the role of the TULR and time off provisions to undertake this work including recognition "TU representatives.....are more likely to carry out their duties effectively if they possess the skills and knowledge relevant to their duties".

## **6. Role of Employee Liaison Committee**

The Learning Steering Group submits recommendations on its' priorities and proposals to the Employee Liaison Committee for consideration and approval. The LSG also regularly updates the ELC on the progress and impact of the group's interventions. The ELC will also input to annual formal reviews of the work of the LSG. (See section 9).

## **7. Key Responsibilities Learning Steering Group (The LSG)**

- a. Agrees priorities for the group in line with the city and council vision and strategy
- b. Inputs to workforce planning activity, learning needs analysis and skills audits
- c. Communicates and engages key stakeholders, including managers and staff on planned interventions.
- d. Works with stakeholders, including managers, to identify suitable and accessible models/times of delivery for learners that do not impact service delivery and enables agreed development to take place.
- e. Identifies and monitors progress against appropriate quality standards and agreed targets suggest improvements to processes and interventions. *Workforce Information gathered will be used by the group for learning and educational purposes and will remain confidential to members of the group.*
- f. Monitors implementation of this agreement and the success of the group in delivering its' objectives and how well this agreement works and undertakes formal reviews of its effectiveness as described in section 10

- g. Supports the work of the Apprentice Coordinator promoting and supporting apprentices to successfully secure their qualifications and where possible employment
- h. Supports work to assess and develop the workforce's literacy, numeracy and ICT skills
- i. Secures suitable venues where appropriate, for learning either in workplace or elsewhere
- j. In connection with the group's priorities and objectives, supports the commissioning of training programmes to external training providers and colleges and creates mutually beneficial partnerships which enable the group to meet its' commitments
- k. Provides on-going supportive information to workplace TULRs that is designed to facilitate the intentions of this agreement.

## **8. Equal opportunities, Equal access**

The partners recognise the importance of equal opportunities, and fair access to enhance skill levels, to meet both organisational individual learning and development needs.

Taking into account service delivery commitments, partners will work together to ensure all employees have access to training and development opportunities.

The LSG will:

- a. Support learning opportunities associated with this agreement to be provided to employees in accordance with the 2010 Equalities Act.
- b. Ensure that the facilities agreement is adhered to for workplace Union Learning Reps
- c. Assist the employees/learning reps to make informed choices in regards to learning programmes giving those concerned the ability to secure the maximum benefits possible from the opportunities available.
- d. Ensure that Trade Unions actively encourage their members to fully participate in all learning initiatives and opportunities.

## **9. Role of Trade Union Learning Representative**

Trade Union Learning Representatives will provide critical support to Learning Steering Group Members and will assist group members to implement proposals and deliver the group's objectives and commitments.

The Facilities Agreement recognises the role of Trade Union Learning Representative and allows "reasonable time off for planning, practice and review of workplace or work related learning programmes and preparation for and attendance at learning committees and associated forums".

In line with the Policy for Training and Learning Representatives in section 4 of the Facilities Agreement, TULRs support the work of the LSG to deliver on its' agreed priorities.

## **10. Composition of the Learning Steering Group**

The LSG constitution will comprise of equal numbers of Employer and Trade Union representatives. A quorum of 3 members from employer and Trade Unions will be required for meetings to take place.

Portfolio Holder will chair meetings and LSG members from both the Employer and the Trade Unions will take turns to act as Joint Chair and arrangements will be reviewed at each meeting.

### Trade Unions

1 x Lead Union Rep from GMB, Unite, Unison = 3

1 x Lead TULR from GMB, Unite, Unison = 3

GMB Learning Organiser

Unite Learning organiser

Unison Learning and Training Officer = 9 in total

### Plymouth City Council

Head OD

Deputy Council Leader

Apprenticeship Coordinator

Three Managers (yet to be identified) able to input on behalf of their Directorates on priority areas = 6 in total

### Other

Schools HR Adviser (where interventions being considered for schools)

GMB, Unite, Unison Regional Officers to attend as appropriate

Senior Union Support Officer – Unionlearn to attend as appropriate

Representatives from Teachers Trade Unions

External partners (i.e. providers) as appropriate and agreed by group in advance of meeting

As membership will change over time please contact Chair of LSG for up to date membership information

## **11. Review Mechanisms**

Arrangements will formally be reviewed initially six-months upon implementation of this agreement and thereafter annually to ensure arrangements are working effectively from both the view-point of the Trade Unions and the Employers and adjustments will be made as appropriate to ensure the on-going effectiveness of the group.