

**LEARNING MANAGEMENT PLATFORM FOR COUNCILLOR
AND OFFICER TRAINING**

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The Committee is **RECOMMENDED:**

- 1) to note the benefits of introducing a Learning Management Platform for councillor and officer training;
- 2) to note that officers have met with a Learning Management Platform provider and have obtained indicative information regarding functionality, implementation and costs;
- 3) to note that the anticipated cost of providing access to all councillors and employees is in the region of £15,000 to £20,000 per annum;
- 4) to note that implementation is expected to take approximately 60 days from appointment of a provider; and
- 5) to delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Executive, to undertake the necessary procurement process in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations and appoint the most advantageous Learning Management Platform provider.

Purpose of Report

To consider the introduction of a Learning Management Platform (LMS) for councillor and officer training and to seek delegated authority to progress procurement and implementation.

Background

The Council operates within an increasingly complex governance, legal and regulatory environment. Councillors and officers are required to understand and comply with a wide range of policies, procedures, financial regulations, legal duties and governance requirements in order to effectively discharge their responsibilities.

Training is currently delivered through a variety of methods including inductions, briefings, professional guidance, policy documents and external training courses. Whilst these arrangements provide access to learning opportunities, they do not provide a centralised system through which training can be managed, monitored or evidenced.

As the Council's governance framework continues to develop, it is important that councillors and employees have access to consistent training resources and that the Council can demonstrate that appropriate learning and development opportunities are being provided.

An effective Learning Management Platform would support not only the delivery of training but also the recording of participation, completion and understanding, providing assurance that important policies and procedures have been communicated and made accessible to those responsible for applying them.

Proposal

Officers propose to explore the introduction of a Learning Management Platform that would provide a central location for training, learning resources and development materials for both councillors and officers.

Such a platform could support training and awareness across a wide range of areas, including:

- Governance and decision-making.
- Financial Regulations and financial management.
- Councillor and officer roles and responsibilities.
- Data protection and information governance.
- Health and safety.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Human resources policies and procedures.
- Cyber security awareness.
- Procurement and contract management.
- Records management and access to information.
- Code of Conduct and standards matters.
- Project and risk management.

The platform could also provide a means of recording training completion, monitoring mandatory training requirements and maintaining an auditable record of learning activity.

Benefits

A Learning Management Platform has the potential to:

- Support good governance and regulatory compliance.
- Promote consistent understanding of Council policies and procedures.
- Improve access to training resources for councillors and officers.
- Assist with induction and ongoing professional development.
- Provide evidence of completed training.
- Support organisational resilience and succession planning.
- Reduce administrative burdens associated with organising and recording training.

In addition, a Learning Management Platform would enable the Council to move beyond simply publishing policies and procedures to actively monitoring engagement with them. The platform could provide functionality to issue reminders, require completion of specific learning modules, record acknowledgements of key policies and produce management reports demonstrating participation and completion rates.

This would provide assurance that important policies have not only been adopted and made available but have also been brought to the attention of those responsible for applying them. It would help reinforce the shared responsibility of councillors and officers to remain informed of current policies, procedures and governance requirements and would provide a clear audit trail should confirmation of training and awareness be required.

Current Position

Since preparing the initial report, officers have met with a Learning Management Platform provider to obtain a clearer understanding of the functionality available, implementation requirements and likely costs.

Those discussions indicate that providing access for all councillors and employees would cost in the region of £15,000 to £20,000 per annum, depending on the final specification, number of users and support requirements.

Officers have also been advised that implementation, configuration and deployment would take approximately 60 days from the award of a contract.

The meeting with the provider has provided sufficient information to establish the likely level of investment required and to understand the practical benefits that could be realised from implementation.

Bringing a further report back to a future meeting in approximately two months' time would necessarily delay commencement of procurement and implementation. Given the expected 60-day implementation period, this would postpone the governance, compliance and organisational benefits that the platform is intended to deliver.

Officers therefore consider that sufficient information is now available to progress to procurement without the need for a further report to the Executive.

Procurement

The proposed procurement exercise will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations and will seek to ensure that the Council secures an appropriate platform that delivers the required functionality, accessibility, support and value for money.

The procurement process will assess providers against a range of criteria including:

- Functionality and ease of use.
- Quality and relevance of available training content.
- Reporting and compliance monitoring capabilities.
- Accessibility for councillors and employees.

- Implementation arrangements.
- Ongoing licensing and support costs.
- Overall value for money.

Delegating authority to the Chief Executive/Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Executive, will enable the procurement process to proceed efficiently while maintaining appropriate oversight.

Financial Implications

Initial market engagement indicates that the annual cost of providing access to all councillors and employees is likely to be in the region of £15,000 to £20,000 per annum.

The final cost will be subject to the outcome of the procurement exercise and any contract negotiations.

The proposed delegation will allow officers to complete procurement and implementation without unnecessary delay while ensuring compliance with the Council's Financial Regulations and achieving best value for the Council

Conclusion

A Learning Management Platform would provide a structured, auditable and accessible approach to training and development for councillors and employees. It would strengthen governance arrangements, support compliance, improve organisational learning and provide assurance that important policies and procedures have been understood and acknowledged across the organisation.

Officers have now obtained sufficient information to understand the likely costs, benefits and implementation requirements. Given the anticipated annual cost of £15,000 to £20,000 and an implementation period of approximately 60 days, delaying consideration for a further report would unnecessarily postpone the benefits that the platform would deliver.

It is therefore recommended that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Executive, to undertake the procurement process and appoint the most advantageous provider in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations