

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration & Environmental Services (Land & Environmental Services)

Community Safety and Environmental Services Committee: 4 April 2007

Subject: Leisure Services Provision of National Pool Lifeguard Qualification (NPLQ) courses & First Aid at Work courses

1. Purpose

- 1.1** To update the Committee on the success of Leisure Services role as a training provider in delivering National Pool Lifeguard Qualification (NPLQ) courses for staff and public and First Aid at Work courses for essential first aiders within the department.

2. Background

- 2.1** West Dunbartonshire Council's Leisure Services Section is an Approved Training Centre venue verified by the Institute of Qualified Lifeguards (awarding body of the Royal Life Saving Society UK). All three leisure centres (Meadow Centre, Vale of Leven Swimming Pool and Play Drome) are involved in the co-ordinated delivery of NPLQ courses and examinations on an annual basis for staff, local college students and members of the public. Verified by the Institute of Qualified Lifeguards, Leisure Services Trainer/Assessors ensure that lifeguards in Council leisure facilities maintain their skills, knowledge and qualifications.

- 2.2** Leisure Services has also invested in training key staff to be First Aid at Work Trainer/Assessors. Initially this was undertaken to ensure that the service could train its own staff in this essential qualification in a cost effective manner. Subsequently there proved to be a demand from other Council services to receive this training from the Leisure Services Section. Previously this course was sourced from an external provider, namely Clydebanks College, at a higher cost.

3. Main Issues

4.

Pool Lifeguarding

- 3.1** All staff involved in swimming pool supervision must hold an approved lifeguard qualification; this qualification requires to be renewed every three years. Leisure Services Trainer/Assessors ensure that lifeguards in Council leisure facilities maintain their qualification and receive high quality training as part of a weekly training programme.

- 3.2** Leisure Services also run NPLQ training courses for members of the public. In 2006, six public courses were run and thirty six external candidates gained the qualification. Successful candidates ranged from unemployed individuals, students, young people referred from the Skillseekers programme, lifeguards from other leisure organisations and candidates from organisations such as Jobcentre Plus.
- 3.3** Given that this is a nationally recognised qualification and a pre-requisite for working as a Lifeguard many external candidates have gone on to gain employment within West Dunbartonshire and/or other local authorities. The provision of this course is therefore assisting in meeting one of the Council's six key priorities – 'Regenerate and develop the local economy'.
- 3.4** In 2006 several candidates, recently settled in the Glasgow area from Poland and the Middle East, qualified as lifeguards, and one candidate, referred by the Scottish Refugee Council, completed the course and successfully achieved the qualification with an interpreter in attendance .
- 3.5** Leisure Services has received many positive comments on the quality of the training courses being delivered. In an email sent by one of the course participants in October 2006 the candidate commented on the well structured, professionally delivered course and that "West Dunbartonshire Council should be commended on their high quality of staff". Feedback like this from external candidates attending the course enhances the reputation of West Dunbartonshire Council and Leisure Services shall continue to endeavour to deliver a quality training service.
- 3.6** Six NPLQ public courses are planned for 2007 across the three sites; these are advertised within the Leisure Services weblet pages on the Council website along with information about the course content.

First Aid

- 3.7** The First Aid at Work qualification requires to be held by a number of designated First Aiders across the Council's workforce. The role of these designated First Aiders is to give emergency first aid to employees in the event of accident or illness within the workplace.
- 3.8** The training for this qualification, which requires to be renewed every three years, was previously out-sourced to Clydebank College. Leisure Services has a number of staff qualified to deliver and assess this certificated course and trains its own First Aiders in-house. Leisure Services can deliver two-day refresher First Aid at Work re-qualification courses, full four day First Aid at Work qualification courses and half-day emergency first aid courses.
- 3.9** During 2006 Leisure Services ran two full four-day First Aid at Work courses providing training for nineteen staff from out-with the section. Providing this training within the Council's own resources is considered more economical than out-sourcing to an external training provider.

- 3.10** It is anticipated that six First Aid at Work courses will be run in 2007. These courses will run when there is a sufficient demand for either refresher or full re-training for groups of staff.
It is intended that once the full demand for the training has been ascertained these courses will be planned each year in advance in the same manner as the NPLQ courses are now organised.

5. Personnel Issues

- 5.1** Leisure Services currently has six employees qualified as NPLQ Trainer/Assessors. These members of staff are involved in delivering the in-house programme of weekly lifeguard training and delivering NPLQ courses for both staff and external candidates.
- 5.2** Leisure Services currently has six employees who are qualified as First Aid at Work Trainer/Assessors.
- 5.3** The employees involved have maximised their personal development opportunities and are now involved in assisting with the delivery of high quality, best value services and regeneration of the local economy.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** The cost of training a member of staff either as a First Aid or NPLQ Trainer/Assessor is approx. £500. Leisure Services has therefore invested approx £6,000 from the Trading Account training budget in recent years to establish the team of trainers currently in place.
- 5.2** Significant savings are presently being made by training and certifying staff in First Aid at Work and NPLQ in-house rather than engaging external training providers.
- 5.3** Income is also being generated for the Leisure Services Trading Account by the provision of courses to other council sections and external candidates.

6.0 Risk Analysis

- 6.1** There are no risks associated with the content of this report.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1** Running NPLQ and First Aid courses within Leisure Services provides staff development opportunities within the organisation by offering employees the opportunity to gain the NPLQ or First Aid Trainer Assessor Qualifications.
- 7.2** Providing employees within the Council with the First Aid at Work qualification in-house at a lower price than an external provider assists in meeting one of Council's six key priorities of 'Providing high quality, best value services'.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 The Committee is requested to note the investment made by Leisure Services to achieve NPLQ Approved Training Centre status and to note the success of the Leisure Services Section in providing these training courses.**

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Date: 2 March 2007

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Appendices: None

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All