



LOCAL AUTHORITY NATIONAL TRAINING SURVEY REPORT 2009

Report prepared by the Institute of Public Administration
in partnership with the
Local Government Management Services Board

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Local Authority National Training Survey Report 2009

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Executive Summary

The Local Government Management Services Board (LGMSB) initiated this survey to gather information from 3 separate and distinct groups:-

1. The Senior Managers and Directors of the Business Units
2. The Senior Management Team and the County Manager/Chief Executive
3. The staff members through the training requests they made in their PDPs

The survey which received 34 submissions generates (as best as is possible given the breadth of information sought) the overall national picture of training and development needs for the main functional areas within the Local Authority network. It further provides the budgetary situation in each of the Authorities given the current economic climate and attempts to quantify how the budgetary constraints and the impact of the downturn will affect the work of the units over the next 2/3 years.

Information has been provided on the business issues affecting 13 specific units and what training and development the staff are likely to need to deliver on these issues. Looking to the future as the cutbacks continue respondents are asked to consider what additional skills staff are likely to need to deliver on the corporate agenda. While each of the 13 (see section 1) listed a wide variety of issues, revenue generation, maintaining quality service delivery, and keeping abreast of both technology and legislation featured prominently. Regarding skills development (in addition to mandatory requirements to comply with legislation e.g. Health and Safety, procurement, financial management) the main requirement of managers for their staff is 'flexibility' – organisations need to be able to 'deliver more with less' and they need staff who are willing and able to multi-task.

The impact of the Department of Finance staff embargo on recruitment and the reduced funding (both central and local) coupled with reduced revenue generation is recorded by all the respondents. Over 50% of the respondents have had their training budget cut by up to 25% and almost 10% by up to 50% and it is acknowledged that this trend is going to continue. The challenge facing training officers is how to continue to deliver on the legislative commitments with regard to Health and Safety (which takes up to 50% of a training budget) with an ever reducing budget. Coupled with this is the need to identify innovative cost-effective ways to develop and enhance staff performance in order to maintain the high quality service delivery which the public have come to expect from their Local Authorities. A small number of respondents speak of the opportunity to develop initiatives working across county boundaries and sharing skills and expertise and many have already begun to do this. Aligned to this is the need to implement the recommendations of the Taskforce on Public Sector Reform with the introduction of shared services and interagency working.

Aligning the training needs to the business issues has never been more important – resources are severely constrained both in terms of funding and staffing. Organisations need to ensure that the training they are scheduling (either in-house or external) or the 3rd level educational assistance they offer to staff, achieves its objectives, enhances staff capability and has a wide and lasting organisational reach.

Introduction

Against a backdrop of severe economic cutbacks and resource constraint, the Local Government Management Services Board (LGMSB), on behalf of the Local Authority system generally, initiated this National Training Survey. The National Training Survey is intended to assist the LGMSB and the National Training & Development Steering Committee in achieving the following objectives:

- to identify the current and future staff training and development requirements of local authorities as measured against the business objectives of individual business units /directorates;
- to determine the impact of budgetary constraints on current and future delivery of staff Training & Development activities;
- to identify current gaps in the skills, knowledge and behaviour of staff that are being identified through the Personal Development Plan (PDP) process;
- to determine the extent to which various types of training interventions are being employed by local authorities in order to deliver targeted and value for money staff training; and
- to identify the extent to which barriers exist within local authority structures that impact upon the take up of staff Training & Development

The survey is divided up into six separate sections:

1. Training priorities for individual business units
2. Training priorities for local authorities including cross functional generic training requirements
3. Impact of budgetary constraints
4. Skills gaps identified through PDPs
5. Training interventions being employed
6. Organisational barriers to training

The first section of the report focussing on the business units was completed by staff designated by the relevant Director of Service, the second section by the County Manager and Senior Management Team and the remaining sections by the Training Officer on behalf of the organisation.

The report contains a section on each of the above and in relation to section one (business units) thirteen (13) separate segments have been prepared with responses from:

1. Motor Tax
2. Housing
3. Library Services
4. Planning
5. Community and Enterprise
6. Environment
7. Water Services
8. Infrastructure Services
9. Finance
10. Information Technology
11. Human Resources/Corporate Affairs/Corporate Services
12. Town Councils
13. Fire Service

At the end of the text for each of the 13 business units a section has been inserted on the likely future developments for that business unit and the possible staff T&D that might accompany any efforts to address these developments. The future developments have been identified by the IPA and the LGMSB based on analysis of legislation/regulations likely to be enacted/introduced/take effect in the coming years. In addition the LGMSB has incorporated some elements contained in various Government reports focusing on the transformation of the public services.

A number of functions submitted a very small number of responses (5 or less) and these responses have in the main been incorporated into larger related functions. Further analysis on very small units and their staff training needs or on business units that did not provide a geographical spread of responses has not been provided. The specific units in question are the Architects, the Law Department and the Parks Department all whom delivered only 3 responses to the survey.

Approach adopted to analysing the results of the survey

The material generated by the survey delivered both qualitative and quantitative data. The survey was designed to provide a breadth of information by gathering data from many levels of the organisation and then attempting to extrapolate this to form a national picture, by business unit, by grade grouping and by overall organisation.

This report consolidates both the quantitative numerical returns and the qualitative commentary from each questionnaire. While considerable amounts of quantitative data was generated by the responses particularly in sections two to six, the questions asked in section one were narrative and generated narrative style answers. When reading and interpreting the responses to section one, (particularly in relation to the business issues facing the business units), the limitations of extracting absolute results from survey questions which allowed respondents give narrative style answers must be taken into consideration.

While response rates for the survey as a whole are very satisfactory, the response rates from some business units to section one may be less than complete (e.g. eight (8) submissions from motor tax). The result of a low response is less certainty that the views expressed by the respondents from these business units are representative of the business unit from a national perspective.

Finally, it is important to say that Local Authorities are not homogenous entities and they vary significantly in terms of organisational size, structure, culture and scope of work undertaken. This feature has been commented upon in many previous reports on local government devolution and financing arrangements for local government. In terms of directorates and business units, there is no standard template applicable. Examples of how the location of business units can vary are (i) most locations incorporate Economic Development as part of Community and Enterprise while some locations see it as part of Planning; (ii) Derelict Sites as part of Environmental Enforcement however it was also recorded as part of Planning; (iii) Building Control as part of Environment again although some include it in Planning; (iv) Motor Tax was frequently recorded as part of the Finance function; and (v) the Arts Office can be part of Community and Enterprise and/or part of Library as well as being a Unit in its own right. In addition within larger counties, given the scale of demand, single or dual purpose units may exist with clearly defined boundaries. Within smaller counties, there is a greater likelihood of directorates and business units having multiple roles across a range of statutory and other functions.

Working within these parameters while acknowledging the significant variations that exist at Local Authority level the purpose of this report is to deliver the following:-

- The overall national picture for the 13 functional areas/business units,
- The budgetary situation nationally for training and development given the current economic climate
- The most frequently requested training courses (nationally) through the PMDS/PDP process for the previously identified grade groupings.

The 7 grade groupings as supplied by the LGMSB are:-

1. Senior Managers – (ie) SEO/SE
2. Line Managers
3. Supervisors of outdoor staff
4. Clerical/Admin Staff
5. Engineering staff
6. Outdoor General Operatives
7. Technical/Professional Staff

A high level overview of the findings with supporting statistics are provided for all of the above. Further detailed statistics on each section of the report can be provided if required.

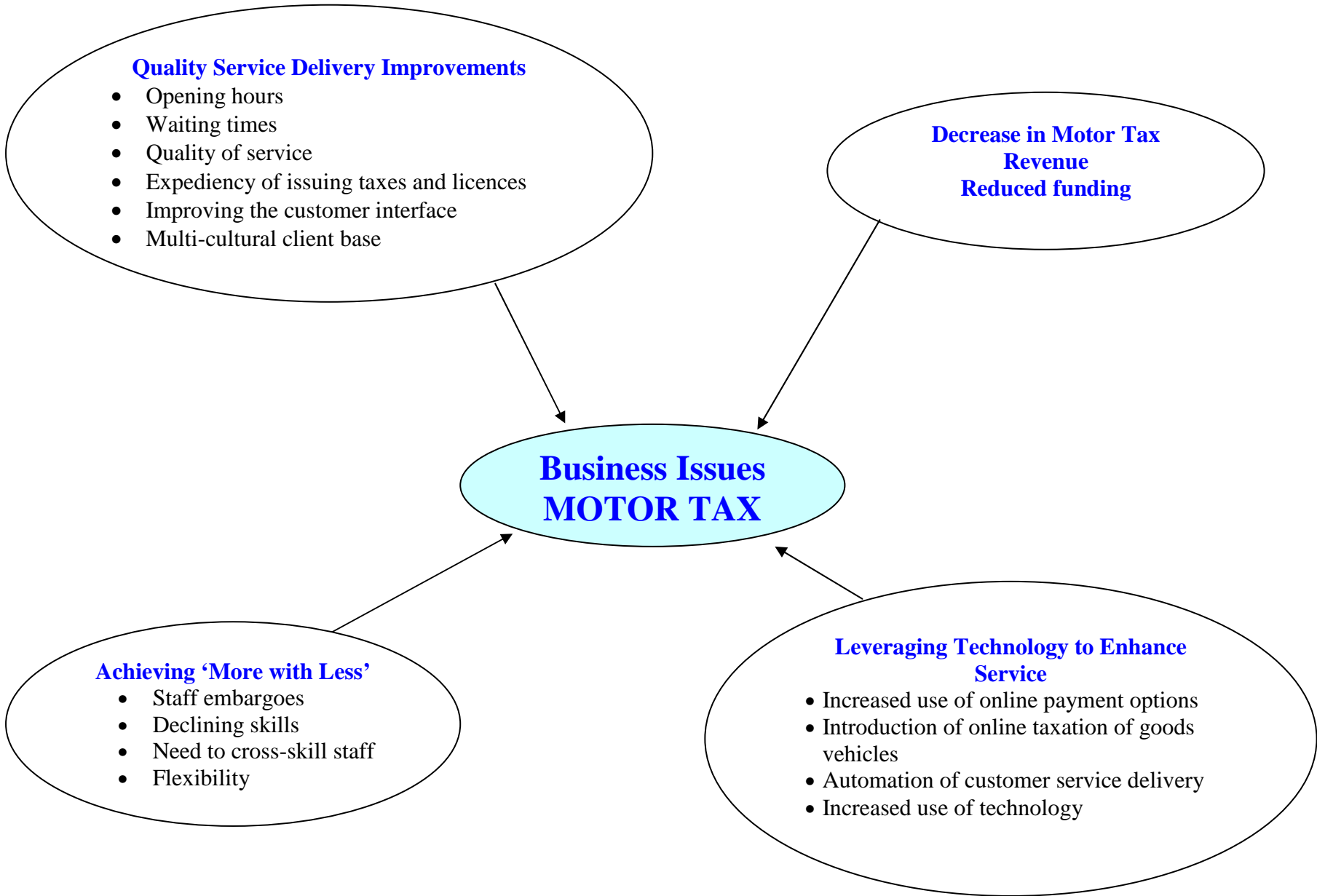
At the end of the text for Sections 3,4,5 and 6 there are a number of conclusions drawn based on analysis of the survey findings for each of the sections.

In addition to the closing summary at the end of the report a number of detailed recommendations have been added on how local authorities and the sector as a whole can address the issues that have been identified as a result of the survey.

Section 1

Training Priorities for Individual Business Units

Motor Tax



Motor Tax

Eight (8) units out of a possible thirty-four (34) responded giving a percentage response of 24%. In addition to this a small number of respondents incorporated the motor tax function into the Finance function and these have been counted under Finance.

What business issues are or will be the priority areas that your unit will need to address either currently or in the near future (i.e) 2009, 2010 and 2011?

The most significant business issue is how to continue to provide a quality service with declining resources and reduced funding from both central and local Government. Underpinning this is the need to maintain and if possible increase motor tax revenues to try to address the shortfall.

There is considerable focus on the need to achieve 'more with less' and how to leverage technology to maximise enhanced service delivery. Specific aspects that were listed include:-

- Increased use of online payment options
- Introduction of online taxation of goods vehicles
- The entry by test centres of Pass Statements on the NVDF system
- Increased use of technology and automation of customer service delivery

Business issues linked to improving standards and service for more traditional methods of service delivery are:-

- opening hours,
- waiting times,
- quality of service,
- expediency of issuing taxes and licences
- improving the customer interface

Dealing with a multi-cultural client base was identified by two of the eight respondents as a business issue.

While keeping up to date with legislation is a business issue for motor tax, respondents say that the Department of the Environment, Department of Transport and/or Road Safety Authority provide support and tutoring as and when it is needed. This is also the case for updates to any of the financial systems being used e.g. Agresso, NVDF etc.,

In order to achieve/address this objective/issue will training or development of your staff need to happen?

Four (4) business units identified possible mandatory training needs linked to legislation (both current and future) acknowledging that training (when needed) is generally organised by DEHLG, DoT and/or RSA or an authorised officers group e.g. identity fraud training in 2009.

A table of learning and development needs (none of which are mandatory) which the business units who responded to the survey highlighted as being beneficial for

effective implementation is provided at the end of this segment (see Fig 1). Even with the small number of respondents it is possible to deduce that the focus of the motor tax function into the future will continue to be the delivery of quality customer service despite budgetary cutbacks.

While some respondents specified the grades and actual numbers of staff to be scheduled for the training courses a larger number choose to say only that all staff would require the training or that the numbers to attend will be decided later.

In your estimation how will the budgetary constraints and the impact of the downturn in economic activity affect the work of your unit over the next two/three years?

With the strong focus on customer service it is not surprising that 100% of respondents were concerned about the impact the embargo on staff numbers is likely to have on their ability to deliver a quality service. The scenario of staff not being replaced, customer needs not being responded to as quickly as they should be (leading to backlogs in issuing licences) diminishing customer service and increased pressures on front office staff appears to be very real and very likely.

Concern about non attendance at meetings and conferences (due to staff shortages) was voiced by one respondent who believes this will result in lack of knowledge on proposed initiatives/policies, and the loss of their voice in discussions, policy formation and/or decision making.

Another financial constraint is the difficulty (again due to reduced staff numbers) of dealing fully with the statutory/mandatory output requirements of the Finance Unit e.g. Budget, Annual Financial Statements, quarterly returns, Payroll, Tax, VAT, etc. Added to this is the fact that while the number of transactions processed in early 2009 was down they appear to be increasing again month on month so workload is now increasing but the staff assigned continues to reduce.

One unit were of the opinion that the necessary drive towards increased efficiencies and value for money initiatives 'will leave business units with no option but to examine opportunities for increased automation'. Coincidentally the extended use of IT for delivery of motor tax services is one of the business issues highlighted by the respondents.

In your estimation will the impact of these changes require staff to develop additional skills? If yes please identify what you anticipate these additional skills might be?

Responses were divided in relation to whether staff will require further training to cope with the uncertainties of the current economic downturn – most felt additional skills will be required but equally most felt that they will be learnt in-house.

Reduced staff cover and lack of 'acting up' for absent grades will mean that the remaining staff will have to cover the function and this will require additional skill in policies, procedures and processing. Furthermore what will be needed is a pool of skilled, flexible personnel available for re-assignment e.g to deal with excessive

workloads and to ensure that customer service does not suffer. One respondent commented 'it would be unrealistic to expect that significant staff reductions will not ultimately lead to a reduction in the quantity and the quality of services delivered'.

Future developments in likely to have an impact on staff training & development

Introduction of additional local charges or taxes (e.g.) water charges, property tax, etc to replace existing transaction based local charges may require changes in how local revenue is collected and may also affect the amount of motor tax that is retained by local authorities. In addition any change away from motor tax transaction based charges to more sustainable motoring charges (e.g.) charges on cars based on carbon emissions, changes to calculation collection of VRT for example may require the current staff involved in collecting and processing motor tax application may have to be trained accordingly in any new collection methods to be applied.

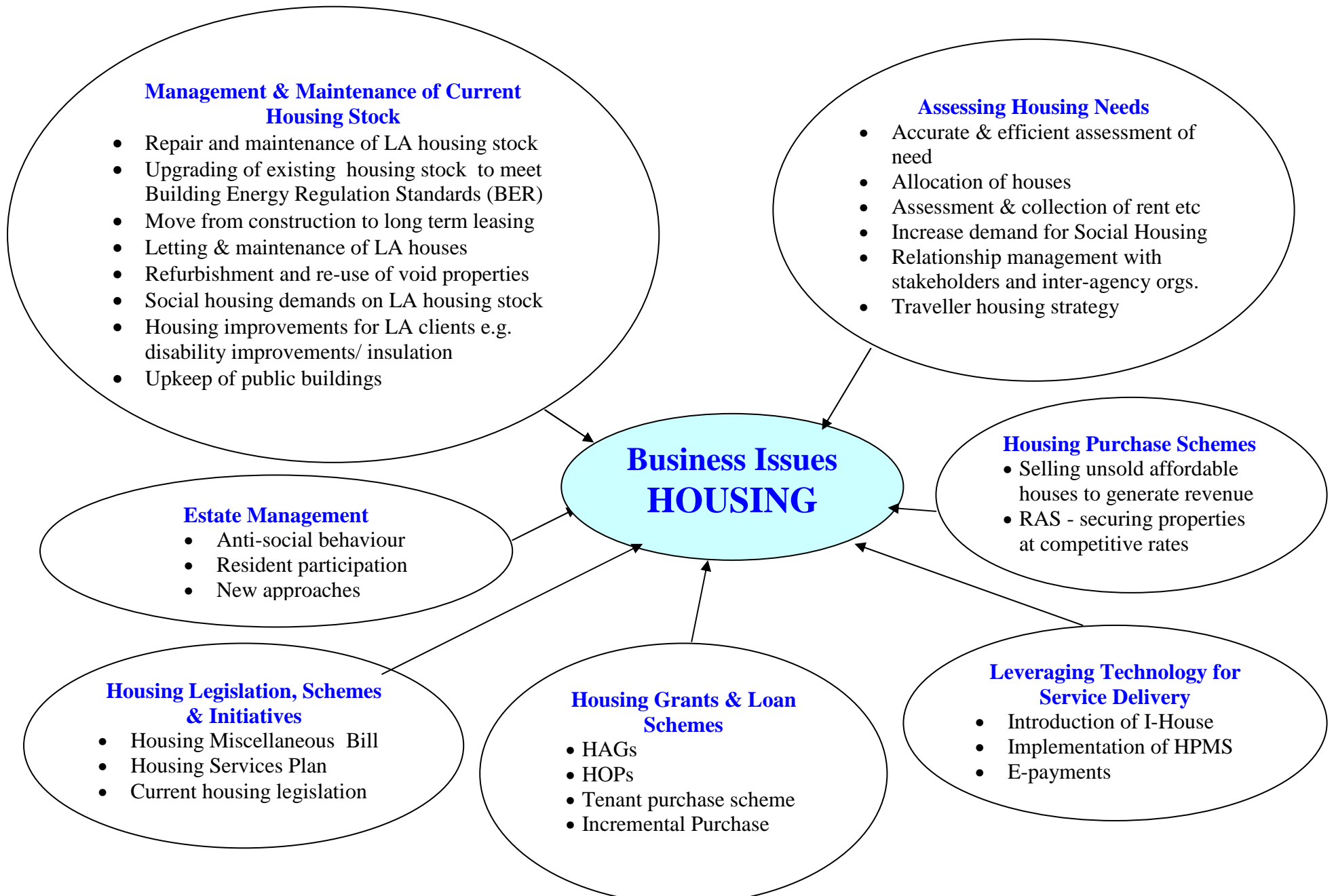
There may be greater use made of on-line methods for applying for services currently only available face to face in the motor tax office (e.g.) commercial van tax applications, driving license applications, etc.

Fig 1 Motor Tax

MOTOR TAX

Training/Learning and Development Needs Identified	Nature of training or L&D need		Numbers identified as needing training						
	Mandatory	Effective Implementation	All staff (no detail provided)	A/AO AO	SSO	SO	ASO	CO	Total
Customer service		X	47	1	1	1	2	9	61
First Aid		X	26						26
System & Financial control training		X	15		4				19
Teamwork		X			1	1	1	8	11
Dealing with diversity/multicultural population		X			1	1	1	8	11
Changes in relation to motor tax and driver licensing as may be proposed by DOE, DOT or RSA		X			1	1	1	8	11
VFM management training		X			1	1	1	8	11
Core HR-implementation of system		X			1	1	1	3	6
IT skills		X		1			1	1	3
CPD training				2					2
Overall Total			88	3	10	6	8	46	161

Housing



Housing

Thirteen (13) units out of a possible thirty-four (34) responded giving a percentage response of 38%. Furthermore a small number of locations submitted multiple responses as they have sub-divided the function resulting in an actual population of sixteen (16) business units and it is from this figure (16) that the results have been calculated.

What business issues are or will be the priority areas that your unit will need to address either currently or in the near future (i.e) 2009, 2010 and 2011?

There are a wide variety of business issues in the various housing units however there are also some common themes the most significant of which are:-

- 1) Management and maintenance of current housing stock
- 2) Assessing Housing Need including Social Housing
- 3) Estate Management
- 4) Housing Grant and Loan Schemes
- 5) Housing Purchase Schemes including Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)
- 6) Housing legislation, schemes and initiatives
- 7) Leveraging technology to deliver effective and efficient service

1) Management and maintenance of current housing stock

Over 50% of the respondents highlighted the management and maintenance of the current housing stock as a significant business issue for their Local Authority. The issue covered sub-issues such as:-

- Upgrading of existing housing stock to meet the new building regulation standards with regard to energy efficiency, radon testing, climate change protocols etc.
- Moving away from traditional construction of social housing units to acquiring units by way of long term leasing
- On-going letting and maintenance of existing Local Authority houses in the current economic climate
- Refurbishment and re-use of void properties and the need for ongoing proactive void management
- Maximising the use made of housing stock to meet increased demands for social housing in the current economic circumstances
- Housing improvements to rented stock including disability access improvements
- Housing repair and maintenance of the Council's social housing stock
- Maintenance and improvement of the Council owned public buildings

2) Assessing Housing Need

Social housing and the assessment of housing need were cited as business issues by 6 respondents. The issues covered sub-issues such as:-

- The accurate and efficient assessment of housing need, both social and affordable
- The allocation of all available social and affordable housing in accordance with approved policies and procedures

- The assessment and application of all rents and other charges for social and affordable housing and collection of all monies due in accordance with relevant arrears policies and procedures
- How to address satisfactorily (and on a very reduced budget) the increasing demand for social housing
- Relationship management and interagency co-operation with stakeholders involved with addressing housing need
 - Special Purpose Committees
 - Voluntary sector
 - Homelessness Forum
 - Health Services Executive
 - Homeless persons
 - Traveller accommodation initiatives

3) Estate Management

Six (6) Local Authorities (37%) particularly those based in the large urban areas cited estate management and the importance of addressing anti-social behaviour in the estates as a business issue. A linked issue is how to encourage resident participation in estate management.

4) Housing Grant and Loan Schemes

The various housing grant and loan schemes are also listed by two (2) respondents as business issues. Reduced resources may require the re-organisation and review of:-

- Housing Adaptation Grants Schemes (HAGs),
- Housing aid for older people (HOPs).
- The tenant purchase scheme
- The incremental purchase scheme

5) Housing Purchase Schemes

The importance of ‘offloading’ (as one respondent called it) unsold affordable houses (for the best possible price) to maximise revenue for use in other parts of the service was cited as a business issue for four (4) respondents. Linked to this issue respondents mentioned the need to secure good quality rental accommodation scheme (RAS) units at competitive rents.

6) Housing legislation, schemes and initiatives

The implementation of relevant provisions of new Housing Miscellaneous Bill when enacted, such as Housing Services Plan was mentioned by 2 respondents. Reference was also made to the fact that units need to be ready and able to respond to any new housing initiative developed by the DEHLG and given the reductions in staff as a result of the embargo this may prove difficult if called upon to do so. Linked to this is the importance of maximising the use of technology for prompt customer service with the introduction of I-House and the Housing Programme Management System (HPMS).

In order to achieve/address this objective/issue will training or development of your staff need to happen?

Just two (2) business units stated they would not require training or development to address the business issues while the remainder believed that a variety of both mandatory and non mandatory courses would benefit staff.

A table of learning and development needs (both mandatory and non-mandatory) which the housing units highlighted as being required by staff is provided at the end of this segment (see Fig 2). While the numbers of staff submitted are low for such large business units it is still possible to extrapolate from these to gain an overall picture. The relatively low staff numbers identified for the various courses may also reflect how prudent units are being with the limited resources available to them.

In your estimation how will the budgetary constraints and the impact of the downturn in economic activity affect the work of your unit over the next two/three years?

Given the broad range of services delivered by the housing unit respondents are concerned about the impact the embargo on staff numbers is likely to have on the delivery of the various support services. The scenario of staff not being replaced and customer's needs not being met leading to frustration and disappointment and very possibly increased tension on both sides of the counter is very real. As stated by one respondent, 'prioritisation will be key with lower staff numbers and reduced finances available through the central Government grants - assets must be protected and the community provided with a service'.

Looking at the situation from a societal perspective, respondents anticipate an increase in demand for social housing as people's economic situation continues to deteriorate with a possible rise in homelessness in some localities and increased numbers on the housing waiting lists. This increased demand will be compounded by a decrease in demand for social and affordable housing making it more difficult to sell properties and generate necessary income. It is also probable that demand for the rental applications scheme will also decrease due to unemployment and other economic constraints.

The collection of monies for rents and the repayment of mortgages will become increasingly difficult due to the many competing financial demands on families. If the economic situation continues to decline respondents say staff will have extra workload regularly re-adjusting rents and mortgages to take into account customers ever worsening financial situation and worst scenario of all is that more failures to pay rent may reach prosecution stage and court appearances with possible evictions.

From an asset management perspective, respondents predict that there will be less resources available for capital projects and for maintenance/improvements to houses even with the move from capital building programmes to long term leasing. Some predict that standards may drop due to less staff and less money and that overall every housing service provided will be negatively impacted. One respondent believes that a lot of needy people especially the elderly will not be able to get necessary

improvements made to their homes, and they may take their frustration out on the housing staff resulting in a lose/lose outcome for all involved parties.

In your estimation will the impact of these changes require staff to develop additional skills?

All the respondents (100%) are of the opinion staff will require further training to cope with the uncertainties of the current economic downturn – most believe additional skills will be required in areas such as time management, prioritisation (both of workload and of budgets), negotiation and change management. One respondent summed it up by saying that ‘staff need the ability to learn new skills quickly, adapt to changing roles and prioritise work functions’.

Furthermore respondents believe staff will need training for new regulations and/or policies and implementation of new schemes and for all technology advances such as I-House, HPMS and HOME to ensure the smooth running of the housing section.

Financial management skills are also required as is the ability to operate within reduced budgets while recognising the disappointment and frustration this may cause to many vulnerable clients. The challenges the current downturn will place on the staff of such a pivotal unit as housing should not be underestimated.

Future developments in likely to have an impact on staff training & development

Securing good quality properties suitable for the rental accommodation scheme (RAS) units at competitive rents may necessitate a change in emphasis for some housing staff so as to ensure that the anticipated demand is catered for. This may require some training for housing staff so as to ensure that the required levels of inspection and enforcement are achieved.

Implementation of relevant provisions of the new Housing Miscellaneous Bill when enacted, such as Housing Services Plan plus greater inter agency co-operation with the other stakeholders in addressing housing needs (including social housing) will necessitate the gathering of more accurate housing data. Data gathering skills and database management training will become more necessary over the coming years.

Proposals have been made to amend the EU Directive on the Energy Performance of Buildings (2002/91/EC). The proposed amendments will require that all existing buildings when they undergo a major renovation will be required to meet specified energy efficiency levels (and not just buildings above 1,000 m² as specified in the current Directive). In addition some of the terms contained in the Directive such as what constitutes a ‘major’ renovation are clarified. If adopted, these proposals will have to be reflected in new Building regulations issued to local authorities.

Fig 2 Housing

HOUSING

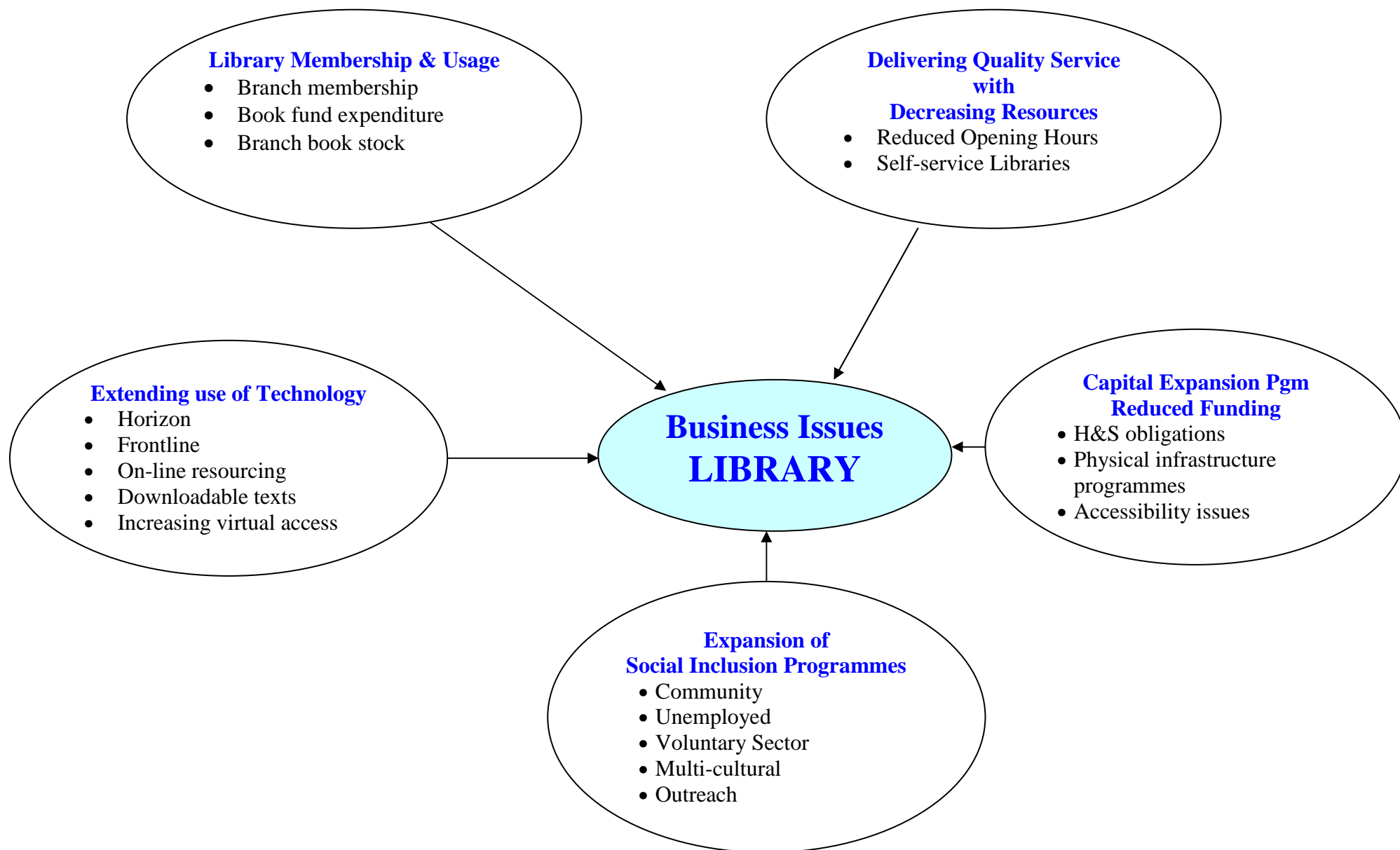
Training/Learning and Development Needs Identified	Nature of training or L&D need		Numbers identified as needing training				
	Mandatory	Eff impl	Senior Management	Admin Grades	Engineering/ Technician Grades	Housing Infrastructural Grades	Total
Customer service - dealing with public, difficult clients, elected reps, marginalised members of society both at the counter and on the phone		X	8	38	7	13	66
Ongoing housing legislation/policy updates to keep pace with changes, new schemes and initiatives in particular building regulations, incremental purchase, leasing schemes, miscellaneous bill etc.,	X	X	13	21	3	18	55
Report writing	X	X		28	7	13	48
Handling anti-social behaviour complaints and resolving conflict		X	2	28		12	42
Agresso - basic and browser		X	4	20	1	15	40
Time Management		X	4	21	1	10	36
Finance - budget management and budget preparation		X	4	14	5	8	31
Housing Programme Management system (HPMS)	X	X	5	7	1	10	23
I house training (HOME computer system)		X	3	16	2	2	23
Specific training on energy efficiency - DEAP		X	4	7	1	10	22
Marketing strategies for effective implementation of schemes		X	2	12		6	20
Asset based community development		X	2	12		6	20
Overall Total			51	224	28	123	426

Notes on Fig. 2

The grades of housing staff specifically mentioned by the respondents have been clustered into the following categories (for the purposes of this report) and these are used in the learning and development table (see Fig 2).

Category of Grade	Grades included in category
Senior Management	Administrative Officer Director of Service Senior Executive Officer Senior Architect Senior Engineer
Business/Administration Grades	Senior Staff Officer Staff Officer Assistant Staff Officer Clerical Officer
Engineering/Technician Grades	Senior Executive Engineer Executive Engineer Senior Executive Architect Architects Technicians
Housing Infrastructural Grades	Housing Inspector General Operative/Outdoor staff Clerk of works Social Worker Senior Social Worker Anti Social Behaviour Officer Traveller Liaison Officer

Library Services



Library Service

Thirteen (13) units out of a possible thirty-four (34) responded giving a percentage response of 39%.

What business issues are or will be the priority areas that your unit will need to address either currently or in the near future (i.e) 2009, 2010 and 2011?

The main business issue for six (6) respondents (46%) relates to the need to maintain and where possible increase library membership and library usage. Linked to this is the issue of book fund expenditure and the importance of maintaining it (if possible) at current levels. Where this is not possible the issue will be how to deal with the reduced book fund expenditure to ensure that it does not adversely affect library membership or branch book stock.

Linked to this business issue for ten (10) respondents (80%) is the challenge of providing a quality service with decreasing resources. Some (though reluctant to do so) believe the only option is to address it conventionally by reducing opening hours, while others are investigating innovative solutions such as self-service libraries, on-line resourcing, downloadable texts etc. Extending the use of technology and increasing library access (both virtual and physical) is another significant business issue for 6 of the respondents.

A related business issue for three (3) respondents is the need to further extend library services to all members of the community through outreach programmes, programmes for the unemployed and the voluntary sector. The need to provide service for a multi-cultural client base of all ages was also mentioned as a business issue.

The challenge of delivering on agreed capital expansion programmes (given the reduced funding and accessibility available) coupled with the need to maintain funding for the health and safety initiatives which are both complying with legislation and enhancing the physical infrastructure of the buildings (e.g. ramps and handrails) was a key issue for five (5) of the respondents. The continuing rollout and embedding of PMDS into the service was cited as a business issue by 1 respondent.

In order to achieve/address this objective/issue will training or development of your staff need to happen?

Nine (9) business units (70%) identified training needs both mandatory and non-mandatory while four (4) business units stated they would not require training or development support to address the business issues they identified.

A table of learning and development needs which the business units who responded to the survey highlighted as being both legally required and beneficial for effective implementation is provided at the end of this segment (see Fig 3). Though not fully representative of library services nationally the numbers provided are considerable as is the range of courses specified. Extrapolating these figures provides a reasonably robust national picture. While some locations specified the grades for the courses others choose to say only that all staff would require the training or that the numbers to attend will be decided later depending on criteria.

The Library Council offer training at free or a minimal cost to library staff in a variety of subject areas. Below (as an example) is a suite of Library Council courses identified by one respondent as a possible set of training needs for their staff:-

- Training in the promotion of literature, stock display & use of bibliographic tools.
- Tailored courses in area of children's literature.
- Participation in national and local initiatives in areas of local history and archives.

Similarly updates to any of the IT systems being used e.g Horizon and/or Frontline can also be provided for library staff by its professional bodies.

In your estimation how will the budgetary constraints and the impact of the downturn in economic activity affect the work of your unit over the next two/three years?

The downturn in the economy is seeing an increased demand on the services of the library (library indicators for the first quarter of 2009 show an 8% increase in registrations and an 18% increase in internet usage) yet the service is also affected by the embargo on staff recruitment and is finding it increasingly difficult to deliver 'more with less'. Library service is very staff dependant e.g. physical service points must be manned or else they cannot be opened so it is quite possible that some of these will have to shut inconveniencing the customer base. As one respondent said 'it will affect the potential to provide a Public Library Service commensurate with 21st century societal expectations and may impact on (i) staffing (ii) opening hours (iii) bookstock (iv) public relations and marketing initiatives (v) capital programmes'.

Library membership and usage has continued to rise month on month in 2009 compared with figures for 2008. This means that branch libraries are now busier and in greater demand at a time when severe budgetary constraints are being implemented and staff embargoes are being implemented.

In your estimation will the impact of these changes require staff to develop additional skills?

All the respondents (100%) believed staff would require further training to cope with the uncertainties of the current economic downturn – most significant is the reference to change management for the senior staff and time and stress management for all. Flexibility across all aspects of work and willingness to multi-task is a priority.

One respondent pointed out that a shortage of staff means that training that takes staff out of the workplace for any prolonged time is 'not a reality and so most training will need to be conducted on the job or through on-line initiatives'. This links well to the business goal of enhancing the use of technology throughout the library service.

Future developments in likely to have an impact on staff training & development

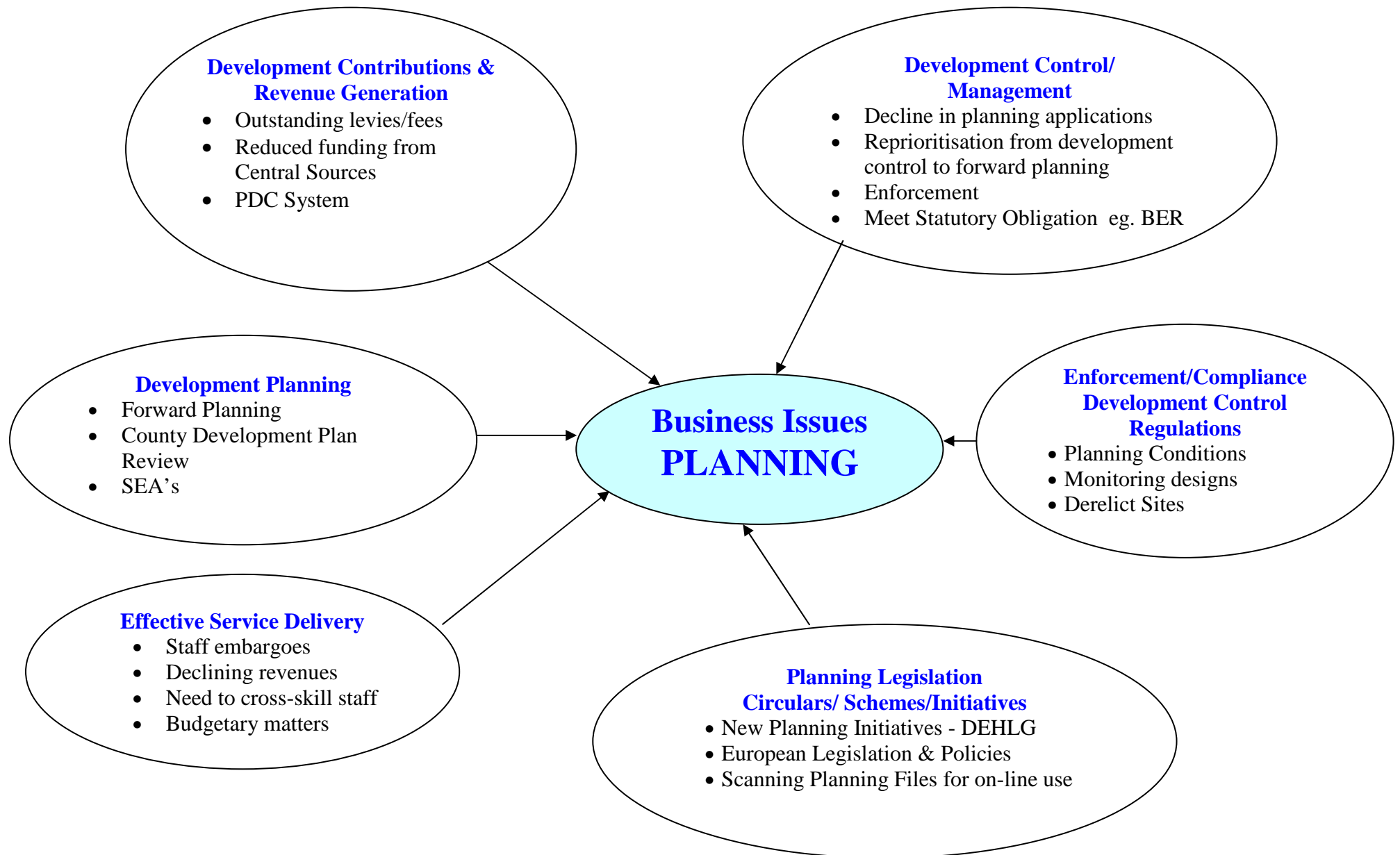
The challenge of providing a quality service with decreasing resources and maintaining the skill levels of staff will be the main staff T&D issue for the library services. As mentioned above staff availability for training that takes place during work hours will be curtailed. This may necessitate greater emphasis for on-line training for branch library staff.

Fig 3 Library

LIBRARY

Training/Learning and Development Needs Identified	Nature of training or L&D need		Numbers identified as needing training								
	Mandatory	Effective implementation	County Librarian	Sr Exec/ Senior Librarian	Exec Librarian	Asst Librarian /SO	Senior Library Asst	Library Asst /CO	Branch Librarian	all library staff (no detail provided)	Total
Customer service		X	2	18	14	20	17	49	7	47	174
Participation in joint training with providers in the areas of the socially and marginalised communities		X		18	14	15	30	46		9	132
Supervisory courses - development of future managers via professional training and on site training.		X	1	3	6	9	23	34	3	25	104
Upgrade of Horizon system required in second half of 2009. Library specific IT systems/Automation of services		X	1		1	4	2	6	4	50	90
P.R. & Marketing to promote service		X	1	3	6	9	23	34	3	9	88
Lead, promote and support PMDS and Staff Development		X		16	11	10	11	11	27		86
Staff participation Irish language courses.	X			2	3	4	19	19		34	81
Child Protection	X									79	79
Information Technology courses e.g. Word, PowerPoint, Excel -basic, intermediate and advanced ICT - training in accessibility issues for website design etc.,		X	1	3	6	5	4	15	3	40	77
Accessibility Training - Disability Training	X			3	6					63	72
Training relevant to library infrastructural development – achieved through conference/seminar/study visits etc.		X		2	3	4	19	19		9	56
Reader development		X		1	1	4				40	46
Overall Total			6	69	71	84	148	233	47	405	1085

Planning



Planning

Twenty (20) units out of a possible thirty-four (34) responded giving a percentage response of 59%. Furthermore a small number of locations submitted multiple responses as they have sub-divided the function resulting in an actual population of twenty-four (24) business units and it is from this figure (24) that the results have been calculated.

What business issues are or will be the priority areas that your unit will need to address either currently or in the near future (i.e) 2009, 2010 and 2011?

The business issues that emerged in the Planning Units who responded focused on the following categories:-

- 1) Development Contributions and Revenue Generation
- 2) Development Control/Management
- 3) Development Planning
- 4) Enforcement of and compliance with development control regulations
- 5) Planning legislation, circulars, schemes and initiatives
- 6) Effective service delivery with reduced staff numbers and budget constraints

1) Development Contributions and Revenue Generation

The collection of outstanding levies is a significant business issue for six (6) respondents as this much needed revenue could be used to fund other activities. At the height of the boom when planners were overloaded with processing large numbers of applications within the statutory timelines prioritisation might not always have been given to collecting outstanding payments. With the reduction in planning applications and the corresponding reduction in planning application fees recouping much needed revenue that is owed to the Council is a timely business issue. The on-going rollout of the Planning Development Contributions (PDC) system is a related sub-issue within this business issue.

2) Development Control/Management

Over a third of the respondents made reference to the fact that a decline in the planning application workload (due to the economic downturn) has resulted in reprioritisation and re-structuring of work and redeployment of resources from processing applications (development control) to forward planning and enforcement of development control regulations. For new planning applications a linked business issue is to ensure the plans/designs meet the statutory obligations with regard to building energy regulations.

3) Development Planning

Over half the respondents identified development planning and in particular forward planning whether at local area, town or county level to be another key business issue. Linked to this is the review of the County Development Plan and for some units the need to produce associated documentation and guidelines to facilitate the task. Other issues highlighted were the overall quality and sustainability of the design in the County Development Plan and the importance of fulfilling statutory obligations to

produce Development Plans underpinned with Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA's).

4) Enforcement of and compliance with Development Control regulations

Ten (10) of the twenty-four (24) units who responded listed enforcement as a major business issue. For most the focus is on the need to continue to monitor and enforce compliance with planning conditions and remedy unauthorised development. Issues such as derelict sites and enforcement of casual trading bylaws while given special mention appeared to affect only one or two of the units who responded.

5) Planning legislation, circulars, schemes and initiatives

Reference was made to the fact that units need to be ready and able to respond to any new planning initiative developed by the DEHLG and given the reductions in staff as a result of the embargo (and both the re-deployment and transfer of staff to other units) this may prove difficult if called upon to do so. Furthermore in addition to national legislation planning staff now need to be aware of, promote and implement European legislation and polices designed to protect the natural and built environment. Underpinning this is the importance of prompt customer service and leveraging technology to achieve this. Several respondents mentioned the business issue of scanning planning files in-house (to make them available on-line) a task which was previously outsourced for speed and efficiency.

In order to achieve/address this objective/issue will training or development of your staff need to happen?

Two (2) business units reported they would not require training or development to address these business issues while the remainder believed that a variety of both mandatory and non mandatory courses are needed to address the business issues.

A table of learning and development needs (both mandatory and non-mandatory) which the planning units highlighted as being required by staff is provided at the end of this segment (see Fig 4). Of particular note is the mention of 'expert witness training for court attendance' which may be necessary to enforce the planning laws and/or to recoup outstanding unpaid levies. While the numbers of staff listed is relatively low given the large number of business units who responded) it should still be possible to extrapolate from these to gain an overall picture bearing in mind that a lot of respondents did not specify how many staff might require training preferring to simply say 'all staff' .

In your estimation how will the budgetary constraints and the impact of the downturn in economic activity affect the work of your unit over the next two/three years?

The Planning Department appears to be one of the few departments where the economic downturn is having both a positive and a negative effect. While respondents are concerned about the impact the embargo on staff numbers is likely to have on the delivery of service they also acknowledge that with the significant reduction in the number of planning applications submitted in 2009 (which is likely to continue in the

next 2/3 years) an opportunity has arisen to deal with a backlog of issues which built up during the height of the boom years. The fact that this 'opportunity' brings with it a significant decrease in revenue generated from planning fees cannot be ignored. Though much reduced applications are still being received and must be processed according to the statutory requirements and as one respondent says 'applications may be down but staff numbers are also down'.

Furthermore less commencement notices will allow more frequent inspections and improved enforcement of building regulations. However the non replacement of staff and the budgetary cutbacks will impact negatively in building control and enforcement as there are fewer people available to inspect a wider catchment area.

Mention is made of the fact that public expectation of planning sections (based on improved services over the past number of years) is high, however the budgetary constraints mean that it may not be possible to maintain this expanded level of service into the future resulting in frustrated customers and potential missed deadlines.

A direct consequence of the economic downturn identified by a small number of respondents (3) is the likelihood of an increase in requests for the taking in charge of non local authority housing estates. This is due largely to two factors, firstly the condition the estates are left in and the dissatisfaction of the owner/occupiers and secondly the pressure on developers to release bonds/hand over estates to council. Developers' looking for bonds back before work is completed and developers facing liquidation and leaving unfinished housing estates would seem to be a very real possibility for Local Authorities particularly in the regions most affected by recession.

Speaking somewhat pragmatically one respondent said that the continuing loss of staff from the planning unit through transfers to other overstretched units may result in staff not being available to undertake new planning activities and 'will obviate the need for training in new systems or compliance with new regulatory requirements'. The net result of this for the cash strapped planning sections would be unplanned and unexpected savings from a reduced number of training and development initiatives.

In your estimation will the impact of these changes require staff to develop additional skills?

All the respondents (100%) believe staff will require further training to cope with the uncertainties of the current economic downturn – most believe additional skills will be required in both legislative areas and also areas to develop staff flexibility such as time management, change management, project management and motivational skills.

Furthermore some of the professional planning staff will need to upgrade their skills to ensure that they can carry out the work previously undertaken by consultants and some administrative staff will require GIS training to assist with mapping queries (previously viewed as technical queries). One respondent summarised the situation saying 'the additional skills required will be whatever is necessary to allow staff to take on additional work allocated to them - development control, enforcement, building regulations, validations and mapping whatever it is, whatever is needed'.

Future developments in likely to have an impact on staff training & development

The proposed new Planning Bill, 2009 which is at a late stage of drafting, may have significant impact on how planning sections operate and the tasks they carry out. As the draft Bill may not be enacted until 2010 at the earliest its impact is hard to determine at this stage.

Proposals have been made to amend the EU Directive on the Energy Performance of Buildings (2002/91/EC). As part of this Directive national governments will be required to facilitate the development of increased numbers of low or zero energy and carbon buildings, such as passive houses. The public sector, including local authorities, will be expected to take the lead in investing in such buildings. Therefore, buildings owned by public bodies will have to comply with the provisions of the new Directive by the end of 2010, whereas all other buildings will be required to comply by 2012. If adopted, these proposals will have to be reflected in new Building regulations issued to local authorities.

The Government's capital programme (up to 2013) will be emphasising targets aimed at achieving sustainable transport. The ratio of expenditure on new Transport projects is likely to favour public transport over roads than was the case heretofore. This change in emphasis may necessitate planners involved in producing development plans to become more familiar with sustainable development.

Fig 4 Planning

PLANNING

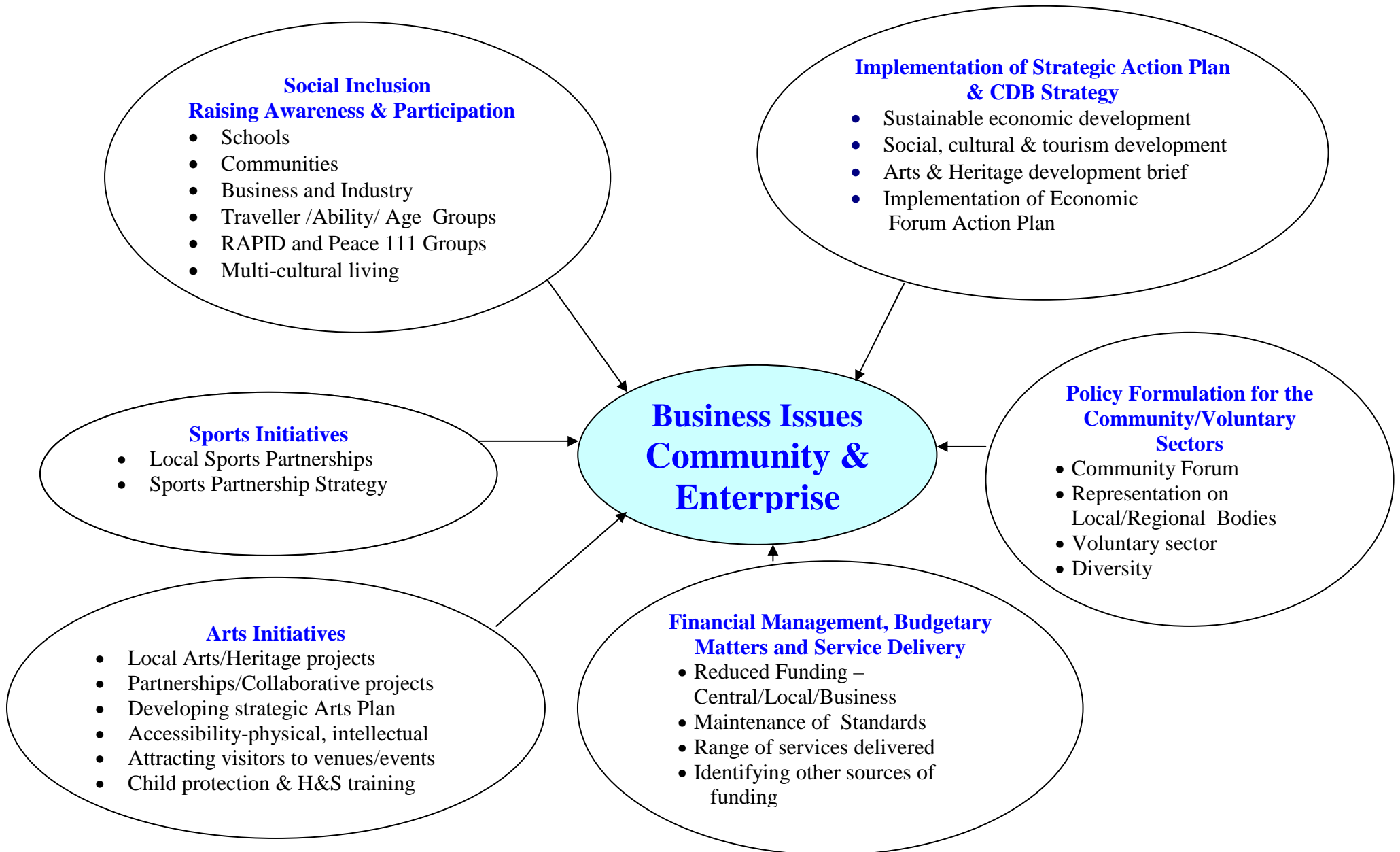
Training/Learning and Development Needs Identified	Nature of training or L&D need		Numbers identified as needing training				
	Mandatory	Effective Implementation	Senior Mgmt	Admin Grades	Planning Grades	Engineer & Technician	Total
Ongoing planning legislation/policy updates		X		32	35	6	73
Customer care/dealing with conflict		X	1	20	15	6	42
Agresso - for budget mgmt and financial reporting		X	11	13	14	3	41
Expert witness training for court attendance	X	X	3	13	13	5	34
Development contribution computer system (PDC)		X	1	27	4		32
Report writing	X	X	2	12	13	5	32
Stress management		X	2	12	13	3	30
Tendering/Procurement for technical staff		X	2	12	13	3	30
Health & Safety (incl safepass)	X	X	2	13	9	4	28
Time Management		X	2	12	9	3	26
Strategic Environmental Assessment		X	3		19		22
Overall total			29	166	157	38	390

Notes on Fig. 4

The grades of planning staff specifically mentioned by the respondents have been clustered into the following categories (for the purposes of this report) and these are used in the learning and development table (see Fig 4).

Category of Grade	Grades included in category
Senior Management	Administrative Officer Director of Service Senior Executive Officer Senior Planner Senior Engineer
Business/Administration Grades	Senior Staff Officer Staff Officer Assistant Staff Officer Clerical Officer
Engineering and Technician Grades	Senior Executive Engineer Executive Technician Technician Draughting Technician Enforcement Technician Engineer Inspector Technical Building control team
Planning Grades	Senior Executive Planner Executive Planner General Planner Assistant Planner GIT Conservation Officer

Community & Enterprise



Community and Enterprise

Nineteen (19) units out of a possible thirty-four (34) responded giving a percentage response of 56%. Furthermore with only five (5) responses from Arts Offices and the fact that many Community and Enterprise units integrate this function into their portfolio, they are also being included in this segment resulting in a population of twenty-four (24) or 70%.

What business issues are or will be the priority areas that your unit will need to address either currently or in the near future (i.e) 2009, 2010 and 2011?

There are a wide range of business issues in the various Community and Enterprise Units however the following common themes emerged with multiple respondents:-

- 1) Social inclusion
- 2) Implementation of Strategic Action Plan and County Development Board strategy
- 3) Policy development/formulation for the community/voluntary sectors
- 4) Sports initiatives
- 5) Arts initiatives
- 6) Financial Management, budgetary matters and service delivery

1) Social inclusion

The social inclusion portfolio (which was highlighted by fourteen (14) of the respondents) covers a broad range of different areas and groups focussing as it does on raising awareness and promoting participation and involvement in sectors such as:-

- Schools
- Communities
- Business and Industry
- Traveller groups
- Ability groups
- Age groups (all ages)
- RAPID groups
- Peace III groups (where appropriate)

2) Implementation of Strategic Action Plan & County Development Board strategy

Community and Enterprise units frequently have a sustainable economic development brief and the business issue for six (6) respondents is for them to review and re-engage this brief with the overall strategic action plan. Furthermore many of the economic development units brief has broadened to include social, cultural, tourism, arts and heritage functions. A linked business issue identified in relation to sustainable economic development is the implementation of an economic forum action plan.

3) Policy formulation for the community/voluntary sectors

A business issue for fourteen (14) Community and Enterprise units is the formulation, development and implementation of policy with regard to community/voluntary initiatives. A sub-issue within this issue is the on-going support of the Community

Forum and its members and ensuring sufficient representation for their projects on local and regional bodies. Website support for the forum members was specifically cited as a business issue by one respondent.

4) Sports initiatives

The development, support and maintenance of Local Sports Partnerships is a business issue for six (6) units who responded to the survey and linked to this is the need to develop and deliver a sports partnership strategy if not already in place.

5) Arts initiatives

Attracting visitors to venues and events and securing funding to support the Arts are the business issues for those who responded to the survey and linked to this is the need to continue to deliver to the community an imaginative cost effective cultural programme. Accessibility is also mentioned with one respondent saying it is both 'physical and intellectual'. Linked to this two (2) respondents identified child protection and fire safety training as necessary while website design and photoshop are also needed to highlight the events and raise awareness of the service in the community.

6) Financial Management and Budgetary Matters

One of the most challenging business issues for C&E units at present and for the foreseeable future is financial management and budgetary control in a climate of reduced resources. This has, and will have a direct bearing on the maintenance of standards and range of services delivered to clients. Resources are fundamental to all C&E services and the challenge of delivering the array of services the public have come to expect with reduced funding i.e. 'delivering more with less' will not be easy.

In order to achieve/address this objective/issue will training or development of your staff need to happen?

All business units said they would need some training or development to address the business issues and while primarily selecting courses for effective implementation some mandatory courses are also suggested as being needed to address the business issues i.e. Health and Safety (H&S), Child Protection, Fire Safety.

A table of learning and development needs (both mandatory and non-mandatory) which the community and enterprise units highlighted as being necessary for staff is provided at the end of this segment (see Fig 5). Of particular note is the mention of 'facilitation/consultation techniques to support inter-agency working' showing that C&E staff operate as an extended team that stretches far outside the Council building. The numbers of staff may seem low given the number of units who responded however in general C&E teams are quite small with few staff fulfilling many roles. Extrapolating the numbers should provide an overall picture bearing in mind that a lot of respondents did not specify how many staff might require training preferring to simply say 'all staff' .

In your estimation how will the budgetary constraints and the impact of the downturn in economic activity affect the work of your unit over the next two/three years?

Given the very broad range of services delivered by the C&E unit and the sources from which it receives its funding respondents are very concerned about the impact the lack of funding is likely to have on the delivery of the various services. C&E funding is matched by a number of units within the council - development contribution monies, and local rates based generated income all of whom are experiencing reductions themselves.

Equally challenging is the fact that many events depend on private sector sponsorship which will also be in short supply. The loss of funding (either central or local) is likely to decrease activity levels with a corresponding decrease in inter agency working. Social inclusion grants have also been cut as have FAS grants. Resources not being available to address client needs may result in frustration and disappointment for staff as they are committed to creating enterprising initiatives for their service users. Funding restrictions will result in significant cutbacks and proposed capital works programmes such as playgrounds and enhanced walking routes may not now be provided. Reduced funding to the C&E unit becomes reduced funding to the community as the Local Authority will be unable to pay grants for community driven projects and this will impact negatively on the wider local community.

The Arts teams are particularly concerned about the effect the downturn is likely to have realising that a reduction in staff will correlate to a reduction in services offered. Lack of funding will effect the amount of exhibitions and events that can be commissioned and consequently if the events are not hosted or the exhibitions do not change regularly the public may lost interest and stop visiting. Another respondent said that the impact is as yet unknown 'due to the range of external factors affecting the context in which the Arts Office operates'. Another respondent was more pragmatic saying that 'it will provide an opportunity to be more reflective, and assess the work that is being undertaken in more detail'.

In your estimation will the impact of these changes require staff to develop additional skills?

All the respondents are of the opinion staff will require further training to cope with the uncertainties of the current economic downturn. Employees will be expected to maintain the same standard of customer service and provision that is outlined in the operational plan, however it is inevitable that service will change given the reductions in staff and resources.

Skills such as 'sourcing grant aid' and adopting a 'more advisory and mentoring role to artists and community groups' are highlighted by the Arts Offices coupled with e-marketing to extend the reach of the limited advertising budgets when promoting events. One respondent said that 'the cost of implementing new skills may not correct the imbalance of a budget cut' therefore with limited budgets staff need to think laterally, prudently and competitively, as another respondent said 'identifying relatively cost neutral ways to develop workshops and events'. Community

involvement would seem a very likely way of boosting numbers and delivering on the objectives of the Arts Plan at the same time.

One respondent summarised the challenge for Community & Enterprise units in the economic downturn 'the change required from staff will be more attitudinal rather than skill set based but even attitudinal change will be of little importance if the funding is not there to carry out the work'.

Future developments in likely to have an impact on staff training & development

As the economy continues to weaken the focus of Community & Enterprise staff will be redirected towards supporting local job creation more directly and attracting inward investment into the administrative areas of the Council. Greater emphasis will be given to the enterprise portion of C&E in comparison to the Community portion. This may necessitate training in marketing, etc for C&E staff.

The Report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure programmes (2009) advanced the view that the current mechanisms for delivering services at local level through the use of non-statutory organisations should be streamlined. On foot of these proposals there may be a great shake up in the number of organisations at local level and up in how these organisations receive their funding. This will affect how the various community based committees (e.g.) CDBs, SIMs, etc function. If the McCarthy report is implemented in full it may also assign a role in funding approval to the C&E units in local authorities.

Fig 5 Community & Enterprise

COMMUNITY & ENTERPRISE

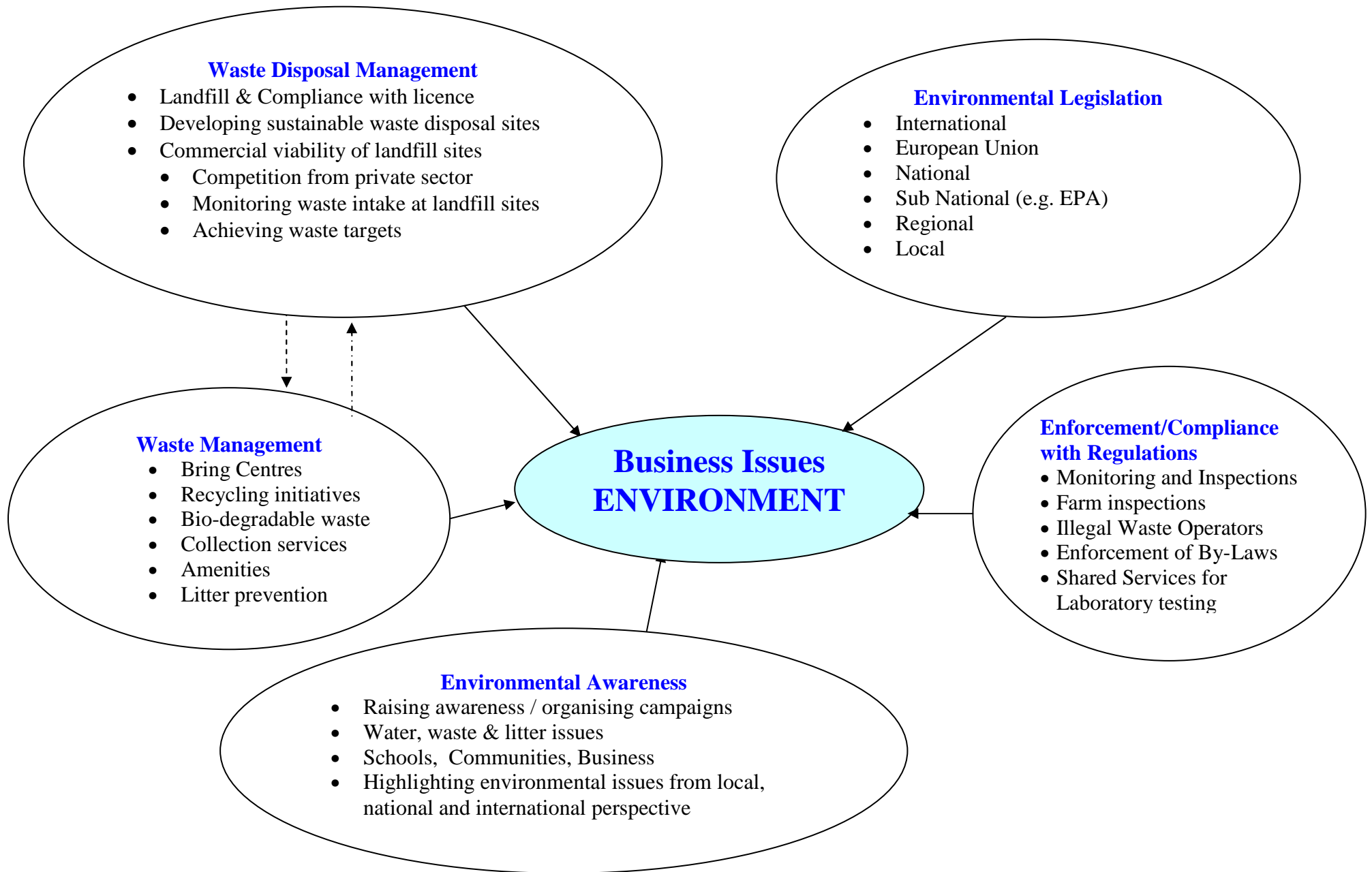
Training/Learning and Development Needs Identified	Nature of Training or L&D need		Numbers identified as needing training					Total
	Mandatory	Effective Implementation	Senior Mgmt	Admin Grades	Arts Personnel /Heritage	Sports Personnel	Community Personnel	
Aggresso - Preparation of Budgetary Reports		X	29	54	5	1	3	92
Facilitation Skills/Managing meetings - Consultation techniques (FCT) to support inter-agency working – Group Dynamics		X	28	13	5	5	13	64
Health & safety (incl first aid and child protection and safepass and disability training (technical and awareness))	X	X	12	17	7	4	14	54
Diversity and equality - social inclusion proofing C&E projects including the capacity to develop a social inclusion ethos across the organisation		X	16	14	5	4	14	53
Project management		X	18	13	3		2	36
Media and marketing/advertising/public relations training (incl on-line PR) - Photoshop CS4		X	12	21	1	2		36
Community Development		X	6	5	5	5	13	34
Facilitation & Development - Board membership or directorates, corporate governance etc.,		X	7	2	4	4	13	30
Legislative training in acts and procedures regarding land acquisition and disposal - training on the new Property inspections register system	X	X	4	20				24
Time Management		X	9	9	3		2	23
Procurement and public tendering polices		X	7	15				22
I.T training including Project Vision; Mapinfo;		X	3	10				13
Museum collection care of wood, textiles, glass etc.					6			6
Overall Total			151	193	44	25	74	487

Notes on Fig. 5

The grades of community and enterprise staff specifically mentioned by the respondents have been clustered into the following categories (for the purposes of this report) and these are used in the learning and development table (see Fig 5).

Category of Grade	Grades included in category
Senior Management	Administrative Officer Director of Service Senior Executive Officer
Business/Admin Grades	Senior Staff Officer Staff Officer Assistant Staff Officer Clerical Officer Project officer Administrator
Community Personnel Grades	Principal Community officer Senior community officer Community & Enterprise officer Rapid co-ordinator
Sports Personnel Grades	Sports Participation Officer Sports co-ordinator Principal Sports officer Senior sports offer Sports officer
Arts Personnel Grades	Arts officer County Arts officer Assistant County Arts officer Museum Curator Acting Museum Curator

Environment



Environment

Eighteen (18) units out of a possible thirty-four (34) responded giving a percentage response of 53%. Furthermore a small number of locations submitted multiple responses as they have sub-divided the function resulting in an actual population of twenty-two (22) business units and it is from this figure (22) that the results have been calculated.

What business issues are or will be the priority areas that your unit will need to address either currently or in the near future (i.e) 2009, 2010 and 2011?

The Environmental Units who responded identified a very broad range of business issues with just three high level common themes emerging:-

- 1) Environmental legislation
- 2) Environmental awareness
- 3) Inspections, enforcement and compliance with environmental regulations

1) Environmental legislation

Legislation is fundamental to the environment unit with one respondent mentioning its ever growing complexity as a business issue. However the implementation of all existing and proposed environmental legislation and enforcement/obligations (from the DEHLG and the EU) is of primary importance to all the units who responded.

There are at least five (5) separate and distinct categories of environmental function namely waste, litter, water, air, and noise and for each of these categories legislation and regulation is likely to emanate from any or all of the following sources:-

- International
- European Union
- National
- Sub National (e.g. Environmental Protection Agency)
- Regional
- Local

International Climate Change

While the international climate change strategy tends to be a cross directorate function the environment unit is likely to be the driving force behind its adoption and implementation. It links to the housing unit to address obligations with regard to energy efficiency and to planning and transportation units to consider how to reduce car dependency through innovative design projects and improved public transport. There is also a cross dimensional element in relation to developing a flood management strategy. However most significantly it is concerned with developing renewable energy efficient initiatives to ensure sustainable development. The business issue for local environment units is how to implement the climate change strategy locally while adhering to any regional and sub national restrictions which may be imposed (for the greater good) by the EPA or other national and/or sub-national regulatory bodies.

Waste

Most business units have sub-divided the waste function into two separate tasks –
1) management of waste disposal dealing with landfill and the importance of developing sustainable waste disposal sites 2) the reduction/management of waste.

Waste Disposal

Four (4) respondents cited business issues around this function mostly in relation to ensuring landfill operators comply with the conditions of their landfill licence and to the viability of continuing to operate this approach as the only method of waste disposal. There are also issues concerning the age of the landfill sites and the viability of sustaining, extending and redeveloping them to deal with ever growing waste. The financial viability of landfill was also highlighted as was the challenge for the Local Authority of monitoring waste intake at landfill sites to achieve the financial targets given to them and ensure their commercial viability into the future.

Waste Management

Given that the opposite of waste disposal is prudent waste management Local Authorities list as a business issue delivering on the Council's commitment to expand the number of bring centres, recycling initiatives, bio-degradable waste collection services etc.,

Litter

Four (4) Local Authorities who responded list the prevention, enforcement and re-education of the public with regard to litter as a key business issue. The need to finalise and implement a litter management plan was mentioned by several respondents as is the need to find cost effective initiatives for street sweeping and maintaining civic amenities.

Water

As the majority of environmental business units who responded to this survey have sub-divided water into a separate business unit it will be dealt with under its own heading 'water services'.

2) Environmental Awareness

Environmental awareness initiatives in schools, communities and businesses is an essential service with the key business issue to draw attention to environmental issues on a local, national and international platform. Campaigns such as green flags cost little and do much and are mentioned by several respondents as methods of raising awareness in relation to water, waste and litter issues. Another business issue is how to promote community participation in environmental campaigns such as Tidy Towns competition to maximise the community involvement and minimise the resources expended by the Local Authority particularly in times of reduced resources.

3) Inspections, enforcement and compliance with Environmental regulations

The importance of undertaking regular environmental inspections to ensure enforcement and compliance was cited as another business issue. Enforcement projects mentioned ranged from farm inspections to achieve water framework directive targets, to illegal waste operations, to enforcement of by laws e.g. littering etc,

A linked business issue is the testing of environmental constituents ranging from water schemes to chemical pollutants. Reference was also made to the commercial viability of shared services for laboratory work undertaken for other Council's, for commercial organisations and for private individuals.

In order to achieve/address this objective/issue will training or development of your staff need to happen?

All business units (100%) reported they would require training or development to deliver on the business issues and several qualified this by saying that legislative updates would suffice and they were what would be of greatest benefit to them. Others made reference to the fact that they are currently engaged in on-going programmes of learning and continuing these will be sufficient to keep them on target.

A table of learning and development needs (both mandatory and non-mandatory) which the environmental units highlighted as being required by staff is provided at the end of this segment (see Fig 6). Legislative knowledge has been subdivided into its various components based on the information returned in the survey and the fact that many local authorities have sub-divided these functions into separate units – in reality it is most likely the updates would address developments across the 5 environmental categories listed earlier. The categories of noise and air did not raise any specific business issues.

Many of the environmental units who submitted data provided detailed analysis of staff training requirements so the numbers reported should be a true reflection of the wider picture and could be extrapolated to gain an overall national picture. It may also be possible that the low staff numbers identified for the various courses demonstrate not only how prudent units are being but also how specialised the skill base is.

In your estimation how will the budgetary constraints and the impact of the downturn in economic activity affect the work of your unit over the next two/three years?

Respondents are very concerned about the impact the embargo on staff numbers and reduction in funding is likely to have on the operation of the various functions given the broad range of functions provided by the environmental unit.

Reference is made to the fact that reduced resources will curtail monitoring and make implementation of policy and enforcement of regulations very difficult. One respondent believes that the inevitable decrease in the number of inspections/enforcements due to overtime and travel restrictions could potentially

increase the number of offences. There is major concern that targets will not be met and this will impact on and be in breach of EU legislation, national returns, service indicators, EPA, DEHLG returns etc.,

Very popular and well established environmental awareness campaigns such as green schools, community initiatives, blue flags, litter tidy-up days etc., are likely to be affected which as one respondent said will have an adverse effect on community relations and negative perceptions of Local Authorities will re-emerge.

It is likely that the reduced funding and reduced staff will affect many or all of the following projects:

- Opening hours in bring centres and other local authority recycling facilities
- The elimination and re-development of derelict sites
- Litter initiatives
- Civic amenity sites and projects to develop green open spaces for recreational use
- Graffiti removal programmes

One respondent said that commitments on targets made by the elected representatives in the waste management plan for increased numbers of recycling centres may be affected and may not be achieved. Furthermore it may prove very difficult to collect waste disposal charges from households experiencing financial difficulty and this will both impact on service delivery and increase the risk of a rise in illegal dumping and related prosecutions.

Reference was also made to the fact that reduced resources will necessitate staff making a significant technical shift from one environmental function to another e.g. from waste to noise pollution and that technical training will be required to enable this to happen and legislative training to ensure they understand fully what is required.

Speaking pragmatically one respondent said that ‘the budgetary cutbacks will provide staff with an opportunity to examine their area of responsibility and prioritise accordingly’.

In your estimation will the impact of these changes require staff to develop additional skills?

Eighteen (18) out of twenty-two (22) respondents (82%) are of the opinion staff will require further training to deliver on the business issues and cope with the uncertainties of the current economic downturn. Staff would benefit from additional skills in areas such as time management, prioritisation both of workload and of budgets, negotiation and change management however, what is really required for environmental personnel is knowledge of the legislation and the obligations it contains. One respondent summed it up very well saying that ‘working as part of many different teams will require staff to be flexible, assertive and highly organised in addition to being knowledgeable across a broad range of environmental disciplines’. The EPA appear to offer a lot of the courses that will be required to ensure this cross discipline working becomes a reality.

Financial management skills are also required as is the ability to operate within reduced budgets always conscious of the consequences of reducing quality delivery. The personal challenges the current downturn will place on the staff of this key unit should not be underestimated and it is therefore not surprising that stress management is listed by many as a necessary learning and development need.

Future developments in likely to have an impact on staff training & development

The Bathing Water Regulations 2008 issued by the DEHLG will give effect to the EU Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC). While the monitoring of bathing water and remedial actions resulting from the results of this monitoring and identification of pollution sources may be of more direct concern to the water services section of local authorities there will be some areas of responsibility for environment sections. The main areas of responsibility for environment units will be around ensuring 'blue flag' status for public beaches especially as the new regulations introduce more stringent criteria for achieving this award. Specific training will be required for appropriate staff involved in beach management and the treatment of wastewater.

New proposals were published in 2008 to amend the WEEE Directive (2002/96/EC) on the collection and recycling of electrical and electronic waste. Under the proposed changes, new and more ambitious targets would be set for the collection and recycling of WEEE. One possibility being considered is that household collection of WEEE be introduced although it is not yet clear whether this will form part of the final version of the Directive.

The introduction of the national regulations in April 2009 that give effect to the Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/EC). This Directive gives specific legal effect to the polluter pays principle in EU law and is intended to ensure that operators of waste facilities and those causing 'environmental damage' will be held liable for that damage. The Directive covers both prevention of damage and remediation measures to be taken. The EPA is designated as the 'competent authority' in Ireland under the terms of the Directive, which means it has the main role in identifying liable polluters and ensuring that they undertake either preventative or remedial action. Local authorities may be affected in their role as operators of some of the waste water treatment or waste management facilities requiring licensing. As a result of introducing a more stringent licensing regime all staff involved in waste water treatment or waste facility operation may be required to training to higher standard than is the case now and may be required to achieve accreditation prior to carrying out certain duties so as to ensure overall quality assurance and licensing compliance.

The introduction of new noise regulations by the EPA in late 2009/2010 will necessitate training for local authority staff in noise monitoring, interpreting results & devising effective mitigation measures.

In order to comply with obligations under the Sea Pollution (Amendment) Act 1999 coastal local authorities will be required to ensure that the relevant environment staff are trained in the preparation of oil spillage contingency plans as part of their overall emergency planning. Oil spill contingency planning will require a high level of detailed inter-agency planning. In addition local authorities will be required to ensure

that they have adequate staff trained in how to respond and clean up any oil spillages that do occur in coastal and inshore settings.

The revised Programme for Government 2009 also indicates that the following activities will be prioritised in the coming years (i) licensing and inspection of septic tanks and (ii) the application of resource management and resource recovery techniques to waste management. While details of what is envisaged have not been provided it is possible that one or both of these new activities will become areas of responsibility for the environment sections of local authorities.

It should also be noted by environment sections that some staff in these units will be required to complete mandatory training to fully comply with obligations under legislation whose primary impact falls with the Water Service sections (e.g.) the Water Frameworks Directive and the Habitats Directive, etc. The detailed regulatory framework taking shape for the provision of quality water services will necessitate a high level of mandatory training for staff in environment sections.

As a result of addressing climate change and in a bid to reduce costs water treatment and wastewater treatment plants will need to become more energy efficient.

Fig 6 Environment

ENVIRONMENT

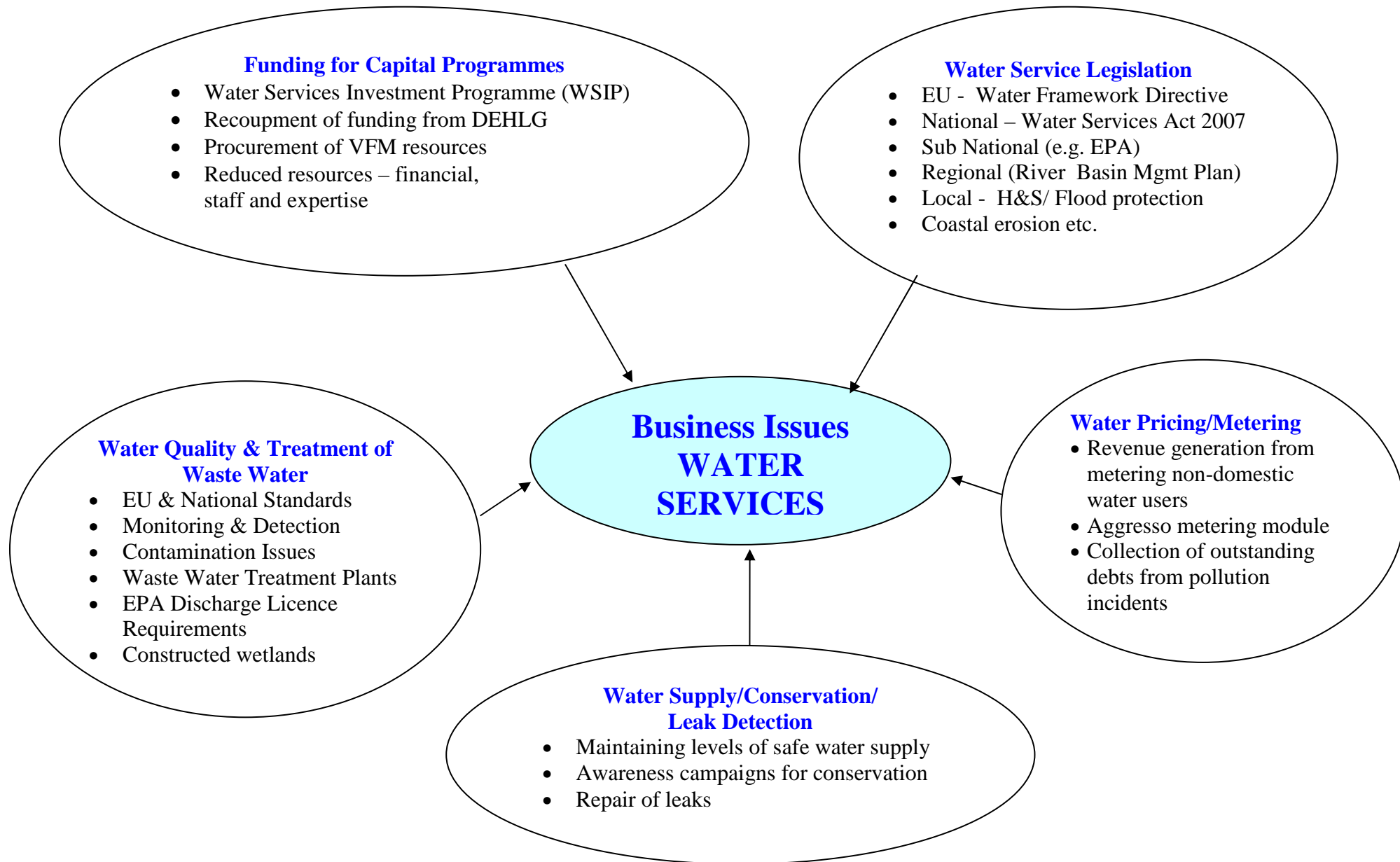
Training/Learning and Development Needs Identified	Nature of training or L&D need					Numbers identified as needing training		
	Mandatory	Effective implementation	Senior Mgmt	Admin Grades	Technician Grade	Environmental Infrastructural Grades	Other Environmental Grades	Total
Health & Safety (incl SLG & Safepass)	X	X		2	8	74	5	89
Agresso - for Budget Management		X	3	49	17	11	7	87
Legislative knowledge, policies and technical expertise for litter mgmt		X	10	32	3	2	28	75
Advanced Financial Management	X	X	4	63	1		4	72
Succession Planning - Knowledge transfer both formal and informal	X	X	1	56				57
Tendering /e-tendering/ Procurement		X	11	10	8	6	21	56
Time Management		X	6	17	9	6	11	49
Customer care		X		10		18	7	35
Computer skills		X		35				35
Stress Management		X	3	10	8	6	7	34
Legislative knowledge, policies and technical expertise for air quality	X	X	4	6	19	1	2	32
Legislative knowledge, policies and technical expertise for water quality	X	X	5	6	16	1	2	30
Legislative knowledge, policies and technical expertise for waste mgmt	X	X	5	6	7	1	4	23
Overall Total			52	302	96	126	98	674

Notes on Fig. 6

The grades of environmental staff specifically mentioned by the respondents have been clustered into the following categories (for the purposes of this report) and these are used in the learning and development table (see Fig 6).

Category of Grade	Grades included in category
Senior Management	Administrative Officer Director of Service Senior Executive Officer Senior Engineer
Business/Administration Grades	Senior Staff Officer Staff Officer Assistant Staff Officer Clerical Officer
Engineering/Technician Grades	Senior Executive Engineer Executive Engineer Chief Technician Senior Executive Technician Executive Technician Technician Grade 1 Technician Grade 11 Technician Environmental Technicians Executive Scientist Environmental Education/Awareness Officer
Environmental Infrastructural Grades	Landfill Manager Foreman General Operative Clerk of works
Other Environmental Grades	Executive Engineer Area Engineer Veterinary Inspector Dog Warden Litter Warden & supervisor

Water Services



Water Services

Fifteen (15) units out of a possible thirty-four (34) responded giving a percentage response of 44%. The fifteen (15) Local Authority submissions were made up of thirteen (13) distinct water service business units plus two (2) infrastructure service units who provide both water services and transportation services. In these two cases as information was provided about both functions the data related to water services has been included in this segment. This is to ensure that as much as is possible the figures provided give the national picture.

Furthermore a small number of the fifteen (15) locations submitted multiple responses as they have sub-divided the water services function resulting in an actual population of twenty-one (21) business units and it is from this figure (21) that the results have been calculated.

What business issues are or will be the priority areas that your unit will need to address either currently or in the near future (i.e) 2009, 2010 and 2011?

The business issues highlighted by the Water Service units can be recorded under a number of common themes namely:-

- 1) Water Services legislation
- 2) Funding for Capital Programmes and the Water Services Investment Programme
- 3) Water quality and treatment of waste water
- 4) Water Supply and Water Conservation including Leak Detection
- 5) Water Pricing and Water Metering

1) Water Services legislation

Legislation underpins all the functions of the water services unit. The implementation and enforcement of all existing and future water services legislation is of primary importance to all the units who responded. Legislation can be drafted by any or all of the organisations listed below and currently the focus is on:

- European Union
Implementation and compliance with The Water Framework Directive
- National
Implementation and compliance with The Water Services Act 2007
- Sub National (e.g. Environmental Protection Agency)
Implementation and compliance with regulations in relation to water treatment
- Regional
Implementation and compliance with The River Basin Management Plan
- Local
Implementation and compliance with local regulation such as Health and Safety and local issues e.g. flood protection, coastal erosion etc.,

2) Funding for Capital Programmes-The Water Services Investment Program

Eight (8) of the business units who responded highlighted lack of funding as the primary business issue affecting them at this time and most likely that the remainder were saying exactly the same thing in other ways. Recoupment of funding ring fenced for the Water Services Investment Programme (WSIP) (which covers both water and waste water plant) from the DEHLG is crucial to the continued viability of the maintenance programmes as is the tendering for and procurement of value for money resources. Some respondents are nearing the end of this work and are eager to advance it to completion while others need to secure the previously agreed funding to implement their plans having regard to the very different economic conditions they are now operating in.

3) Water quality and treatment of waste water

A major business issue for seven respondents is the need to achieve EU and National Standards for water quality and waste water discharges within an ever reducing budget. Water quality programmes require continuous monitoring and detection of deviations in compliance standards (both EU and National) and the importance of testing the early warning signals to prompt boil notices etc.,

Linked to this the treatment of waste water is a major business issue for 4 respondents. Many waste water treatment plants are working at unprecedented levels and infrastructurally may be in need of replacement but again this is subject to available resources. Furthermore respondents mention the fact that significant numbers of staff with years of expertise have been lost through retirements and the service seems to be continuously working at reduced capacity. The business issue for the units is how to operate and maintain wastewater networks and treatment systems and ensure they meet the statutory discharge standards (e.g. the EPA discharge licence requirements or the urban waste water treatment directive) with ever reducing resources.

4) Water Supply and Water Conservation and Leak detection

The business issue reported here by five (5) respondents is the challenge of protecting and maintaining levels of safe water supply and how best to operate and maintain a water supply network to meet the ever increasing demands of the public while maintaining water at the highest quality. The development of water conservation measures including leak detection are also identified as issues and the need to develop and enhance water conservation policies is also mentioned. Water conservation can also benefit from awareness campaigns encouraging people not to overuse or waste water, not to overfill appliances, to switch off taps fully etc.,

5) Water Pricing and Water Metering

Revenue from metering of non domestic water users and the related aggro module that deals with this is highlighted as an issue for two (2) respondents as is the collection of outstanding debts from water pollution incidents.

In order to achieve/address this objective/issue will training or development of your staff need to happen?

All business units (100%) reported they would require some training or development to deliver on these business issues. One unit stated that some training will be required for most areas due to the shift from project management (using external consultants) to the provision of in-house services. Legislative updates are likely to be required. Business units were eager to point out that while training may be needed to address some objectives it may not be needed for others, depending on the staff that are assigned to the projects at the time.

A table of learning and development needs (both mandatory and non-mandatory) which the water services units highlighted as being required by staff is provided at the end of this segment (see Fig 7). The numbers are large compared to many of the other business units but this may be primarily because of the nature of the training (mandatory and legislative) as it requires every member of staff to attend and so managers provided absolute numbers.

In your estimation how will the budgetary constraints and the impact of the downturn in economic activity affect the work of your unit over the next two/three years?

Respondents are very concerned about the impact the embargo on staff numbers and reduction in funding is likely to have on the various schemes and essential infrastructure projects such as the Water Services Investment Programme and on the possibility that commitments made may not be fully implemented.

Reference is made to a potential public health risk which may present itself due to the loss of experienced staff resources and to the fact that statutory obligations might not be met due to a lack of necessary resources for monitoring and recording findings. There is also a fear that the much needed expenditure earmarked for capital projects will be diverted to meet the statutory and sub-national (EPA) obligations with regard to water quality.

There is a sense of a catch-22 situation with one respondent pointing out that restrictions in budget will limit the ability to assign staff for necessary legislative training (which is necessary to meet the Council's legal requirements) thereby creating a risk for the organisation. Overall there is a frustration at the inability to plan ahead for large capital projects due to the uncertainty of future budgets despite continuously demanding legislative constraints.

This business function more than any of the others seems to be suffering from severe staff shortage with work being spread over a smaller number of less experienced staff resulting in increasing stress levels and possible de-motivation of staff. One respondent said that 'projects will be suspended while others will take longer to complete'. However another sees this forced stoppage as a relatively positive outcome saying that 'if the pace of delivery of new projects were to slow down this would allow time for reconciliation, review and completion of older as yet unfinished projects'.

In your estimation will the impact of these changes require staff to develop additional skills?

Fifteen (15) out of twenty-one (21) respondents (72%) are of the opinion staff will require further training to deliver on the business issues while coping with the uncertainties of the current economic downturn with just two(2) business units saying that no additional skills are required. The range of skills required is general with nothing in particular emerging. Requirements range from specialised skills (across a range of professional engineering competencies) that would normally have been provided by consultant engineering companies to aggressive training (to maximise the use of this facility as a management decision making tool) to coping skills to deal with the additional work pressures. Furthermore as a result of the inevitable cutbacks it is assumed that staff will come under additional pressure from the public in terms of their expectations of what services should be provided and as one respondent says 'while already skilled in how best to respond it is likely that the additional pressures they are dealing with will challenge them further'.

While personal development training and support is vital to staff working under such pressure it is also clear that the technical skills that many are in need of is the main driver and suggestion is made by one respondent that consideration could be given to sending staff on courses similar to those already provided for the waste enforcement team as many of the challenges appear to be similar.

Financial management skills are also required as is the ability to operate within reduced budgets and to be able to tender for and procure good and services cost-effectively without impairing quality delivery.

Future developments in likely to have an impact on staff training & development

Implementation of regulations and guidance documents resulting from introduction of a number of recent pieces of legislation and EU regulation (e.g.) Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC), Habitats Directive (92/43/EC), water safety planning, drinking water incident management, etc , will result in a high level of training requirements for staff in water services units over the next few years. As a result of the introduction of a more stringent licensing regime all staff involved in water services may be required to undergo training to a higher standard than is the case now and may be required to achieve accreditation prior to carrying out certain duties so as to ensure overall quality assurance and licensing compliance.

As a result of addressing climate change and in a bid to reduce costs water treatment and wastewater treatment plants will need to become more energy efficient.

Possible introduction of domestic water metering on foot of the reintroduction of domestic water charges will require training for water services staff similar to that introduced for metering of commercial premises. As is the case already with water metering of commercial premises and group water schemes there will be increased pressure to improve water conservation especially through improved leakage detection and location.

The revised programme for Government 2009 will see a greater emphasis being placed on sustainable development initiatives. The more widespread introduction of one such initiative (i.e.) constructed wetlands as a sustainable method for treating wastewater will require training for water services units. The revised programme for Government as well as the Report on the Special Group on Public Service Numbers & Expenditure programmes also introduce the prospect of the introduction of a single national body to plan and manage water supply based on a river basin management approach rather than on county/administrative area boundaries will have an impact on how the water services sections of local authorities do their jobs. There may be some retraining required for staff if areas of responsibility are changed.

Fig 7 Water Services

WATER SERVICES

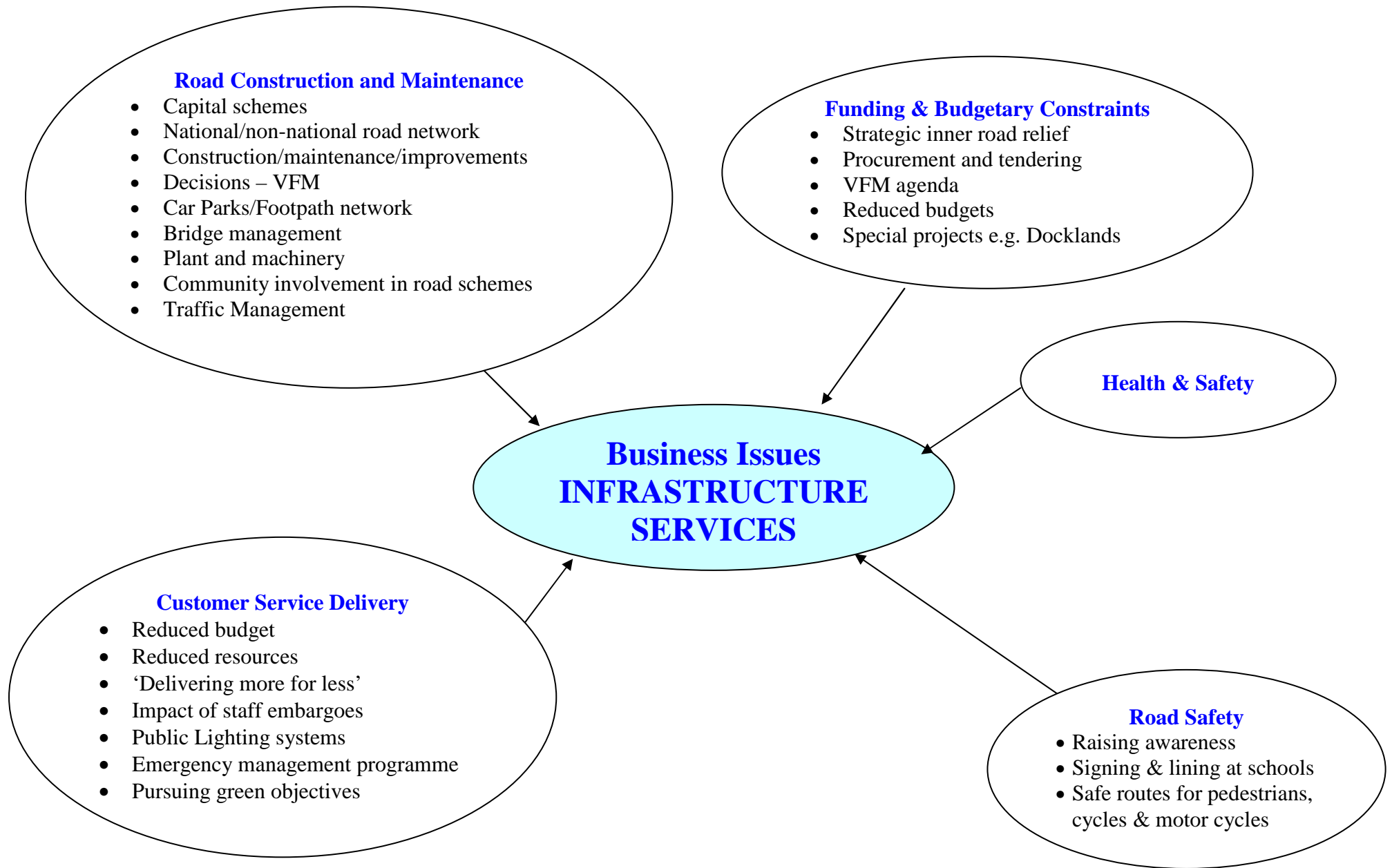
Training/Learning and Development Needs Identified	Nature of training or L&D need		Numbers identified as needing training				
	Mandatory	Effective Implementation	Senior Mgmt	Business/ Admin Grades	Engineering/ Technician Grades	Water Services Infrastructural Grades	Total
Legislative knowledge, policies & technical expertise for water quality	X	X	34	70	98	191	393
Operation and management of water and waste water treatment plants	X			16	20	154	190
Health & Safety	X	X		16	25	124	165
General IT Training				16	20	94	130
Specialised technical training related to the water services function (e.g. water/effluent)	X		3	5	27	75	110
Procurement of contracts& other capital project requirements		X	10	11	33		54
Technical skills in relation to SCADA		X				21	21
Project Mgmt ie. compliance with capital projects procedures	X	X	8	6	6		20
Water conservation training		X				15	15
Time Management		X		4	10		14
Training on design of schemes		X	6	5	3		14
Training on management of contractors/consultants		X	6	5	3		14
Systems - Leak detection software		X	1		4	8	13
Systems - Agresso, PCS, Labinfo, meter management and other DEHLG systems		X	3	9	1		13
IT (software skills) Project control systems		X	5	1	3		9
Financial mgmt	X	X	2	4			6
CPD - continuous personal/professional development		X	3	1	1		5
Machinery training		X	3	1	1		5
Supervisory training		X	3	1	1		5
Customer care		X	3	1	1		5
Overall Total			90	172	257	682	1201

Notes on Fig. 7

The grades of water services staff specifically mentioned by the respondents have been clustered into the following categories (for the purposes of this report) and these are used in the learning and development table (see Fig 7).

Category of Grade	Grades included in category
Senior Management	Administrative Officer Director of Service Senior Executive Officer Senior Engineer
Business/Administration Grades	Senior Staff Officer Staff Officer Assistant Staff Officer Clerical Officer
Engineering/Technician Grades	Senior Executive Engineer Executive Engineer Assistant Engineer Area Engineer Executive Technician Technician Grade 1 Environmental Awareness Officer
Water Services Infrastructural Grades	Supervising Inspector Inspector Waterworks caretakers/maintenance crews Plant Manager Van Crews Craftsmen Foreman General Operative Clerk of works

Infrastructure Services



Infrastructure Services

Twenty-one (21) units out of a possible thirty-four (34) responded giving a percentage response of 62%. The twenty-one (21) Local Authority submissions was made up of nineteen (19) distinct infrastructure services (roads and road related activities) business units plus two (2) infrastructure service units who provide both water services and transportation services. In these two (2) cases as information was provided about both functions the data related to infrastructure services has been included in this segment. This is to ensure that as much as is possible the figures presented represent the overall national picture.

Furthermore a number of the twenty-one (21) locations submitted multiple responses as they have sub-divided the transportation function resulting in an actual population of twenty-nine (29) business units and it is from this figure (29) that the results have been calculated. This represents a response of almost 90% from this business function which is the highest of all the units surveyed.

What business issues are or will be the priority areas that your unit will need to address either currently or in the near future (i.e) 2009, 2010 and 2011?

The business issues highlighted by the Infrastructural Services units can be recorded under a number of common themes namely:-

1. All aspects of roads and road maintenance including traffic management
2. Funding for Capital Programmes and the Roads Development Programme
3. Road Safety
4. Health and Safety
5. Customer Service Delivery including public lighting systems and green issues

1) Roads and Road Maintenance

Over 40% of the respondents highlighted the management and maintenance of the roads network as a key business issue for their Local Authority. The issue covered sub-issues such as:-

- The efficient and effective operation of the roads network programme
- The maintenance and improvement of both national and non-national roads
- Developing the relationship between the unit and the National Roads Authority
- Development, placing and capacity of car parks and the associated revenue stream
- Maintenance of plant and machinery owned and leased by the Council
- Bridge management – construction and maintenance
- Footpath network management – construction and maintenance of footpaths
- Encouraging community involvement in road development to hear the local views
- Delivering on the traffic management strategy including the regulation of street side parking clamping, clearways, parking meters, freeflow initiatives etc.

2) Funding for Capital Programmes and the Roads Development Programme

Nine (9) of the Business Units who responded highlighted decreased budgets as a primary business issue affecting them at this time and most likely the remainder were saying exactly the same thing in different ways. Value for money procurement of

goods and services and the re-negotiation of existing contracts were identified as sub-issues as was the need to pursue the modernisation/transformation agenda.

One respondent singled out the strategic inner road relief scheme for particular mention as a business issue. Similarly two Council's listed the investment they have separately made in Docklands infrastructure in their locality as a business issue. Reduced funding for necessary supports i.e. training, equipment etc. coupled with reductions in numbers of experienced staff appear to be very real business issues for this sector.

3) Road Safety

Over 30% of the respondents highlighted the promotion of road safety awareness and the delivery of road safety initiatives as a business issue for their Local Authority.

Road safety covers a broad range of sub-areas such as:-

- Initiatives regarding cycle safety e.g. safe cycle routes etc.
- Initiatives regarding motor cycle safety
- Initiatives regarding safety for all school going personnel, this includes signing, lighting and guarding precautions at schools and colleges
- Initiatives regarding road safety awareness in the business community

4) Health and Safety

Health, Safety and Welfare of the workforce while delivering on the needs of the organisation and the community was listed by nine (9) of the twenty-nine (29) respondents (31%). This covers the Council's statutory obligations under the road traffic acts as well as all the Health and Safety legislation related to transportation and personal safety at work.

5) Customer Service Delivery

A most significant business issue affecting the transportation units and mentioned by twelve (12) respondents (41%) is the delivery of quality services given the reductions in resources both financial and staff related. Coupled with this is the need to retain and enhance current expertise to increase the flexibility and mobility of the available staff.

The Council's emergency management programme is listed as a business issue by two (2) respondents as is the maintenance of the public lighting system also cited by two (2) respondents as a business issue.

Lastly delivering on the Council's commitments under its 'green agenda' and the challenge of operating in line with 'green objectives' is mentioned by one respondent.

In order to achieve/address this objective/issue will training or development of your staff need to happen?

All business units (100%) said they would need training or development to deliver on the business issues. Respondents listed primarily mandatory training in such areas as:-

- Signing lighting and guarding at roadworks
- Safe pass
- Health and safety at road works (both full and half day)

Some less practical more administrative courses were also specified such as budget control, procurement and contract law. From an environmental perspective a course on composting was specifically mentioned. The impact of the economic downturn is very evident with one respondent saying that 'with staff contracts being terminated, it would seem that training won't be an issue'.

A table of learning and development needs (both mandatory and non-mandatory) which the units highlighted as being required by staff is provided at the end of this segment (see Fig 8).

In your estimation how will the budgetary constraints and the impact of the downturn in economic activity affect the work of your unit over the next two/three years?

Respondents are very concerned about the impact the reduced funding and the embargo on staff numbers is likely to have on the delivery of service by the unit. One respondent says that the consequences of the embargo on recruitment will reduce numbers available and this may affect day to day operations due to unforeseen staff absences. Similarly as one respondent says there will be a significant reduction in the number of new projects authorised to proceed. With reference to the transforming agenda and the need to optimise resources respondents say that significant improvements in value for money will be required.

From a staff perspective respondents say that the impact of the downturn will be decreasing morale due to project uncertainty and more pressure being placed on existing staff due to loss of experienced staff capability. Equally it is believed that project managers will be unable to forward plan due to uncertainty regarding resources and this will impact on service delivery resulting in a frustrated public (who may have been waiting patiently to have the problem resolved) and who may react aggressively to the infrastructure services team on hearing the project is being postponed or given a lower priority.

With reference to training needs (both mandatory and non-mandatory) respondents say that training is essential to enable cross-cover to be available however another manager says that restriction in budgets limits the ability to assign staff for necessary training to meet legislative requirements thereby creating a risk for the Council.

Project delays and reductions in services are the major casualties of the impact of the economic downturn with respondents saying repeatedly there will be 'severe impact on maintenance of roads and essential services' and a 'major slowdown in capital projects'. One respondent says there will be 'less real work done' while another says there will be a 'deterioration in assets' as the periods between maintenance visits is extended..

One Council says the impact of the economic downturn while it will result in 'less activity in relation to capital projects' will result in resources 'being focused on planning / designing new infrastructure solutions' and 'managing and maintaining existing assets' both of which are positive outcomes.

In your estimation will the impact of these changes require staff to develop additional skills?

Four (4) of the twenty-nine (29) respondents (14%) said staff will not require further training to address the budgetary constraints with the remaining respondents mentioning the need for training to help staff 'become more adaptable and more skilled in efficiency/cost effectiveness and be better able to manage their time and workload'. Furthermore respondents say staff will require 'good communication skills to enable them to deal with the public and the public representatives who press them to explain why it was not possible to deliver on projects'.

Respondents say skill levels in the areas of handling significant change and modernisation will be required and an entrepreneurial approach will be required to ensure that value for money is achieved and staff can deliver on what was agreed in the Corporate Plan.

Future developments in likely to have an impact on staff training & development

National Roads Authority (NRA) will be taking responsibility for the technical supervision and programme management of non-national roads. Roads staff will require briefings on best way to establish and maintain relationship with NRA staff.

As part of sustainable development the Government's capital programme will be rebalanced with less emphasis on building of roads and on carbon-based transport. The expected ratio of expenditure on new transport initiatives will shift away from investment in roads towards investment in public transport.

Responsibility for the maintenance of the public lighting system from ESB networks will necessitate training for roads section staff. As maintenance work will no doubt be contracted out roads staff will have to develop new skills in areas of contractor selection, quality assurance techniques, contract management and inspection.

As a result of addressing climate change and in a bid to reduce costs public lighting will need to become more energy efficient.

Fig 8 Infrastructure Services

INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

Training/Learning and Development Needs Identified	Nature of training or L&D need		Numbers identified as needing training							Total
	Mandatory	Effective implementation	Senior mgmt	admin grades	engineering/ technician	technical	supervisory outdoor	Infrastructural /outdoor general	other	
Safepass	X							210		210
Safe Systems of Work Plan (ii)		X						199		199
Financial management - training required to comply with legislation. budgets, funding, pgm delivery etc.,		X		20	15		15	140		190
Improved technical knowledge in structures, traffic management and ongoing developments in general Civil Engineering activity.					15		15	140		170
Improved awareness of legal structures pertaining to Road Maintenance activity					15		15	140		170
Legislative knowledge, policies and technical expertise for various schemes				80	41	37			10	168
Health and Safety training	X			19	44	3	1	84		151
Disability and accessibility		X		19	41			70		130
Stress management				10	27			70		107
Development of specialist knowledge/technical skills related to the IS functions to keep abreast of changes in standards and processes.		X		18		37			10	65
CSCS (1 day)								63		63
Updating cross functional requirements				19	41					60
Overall Total				185	239	77	46	1116	20	1683

Notes on Fig. 8

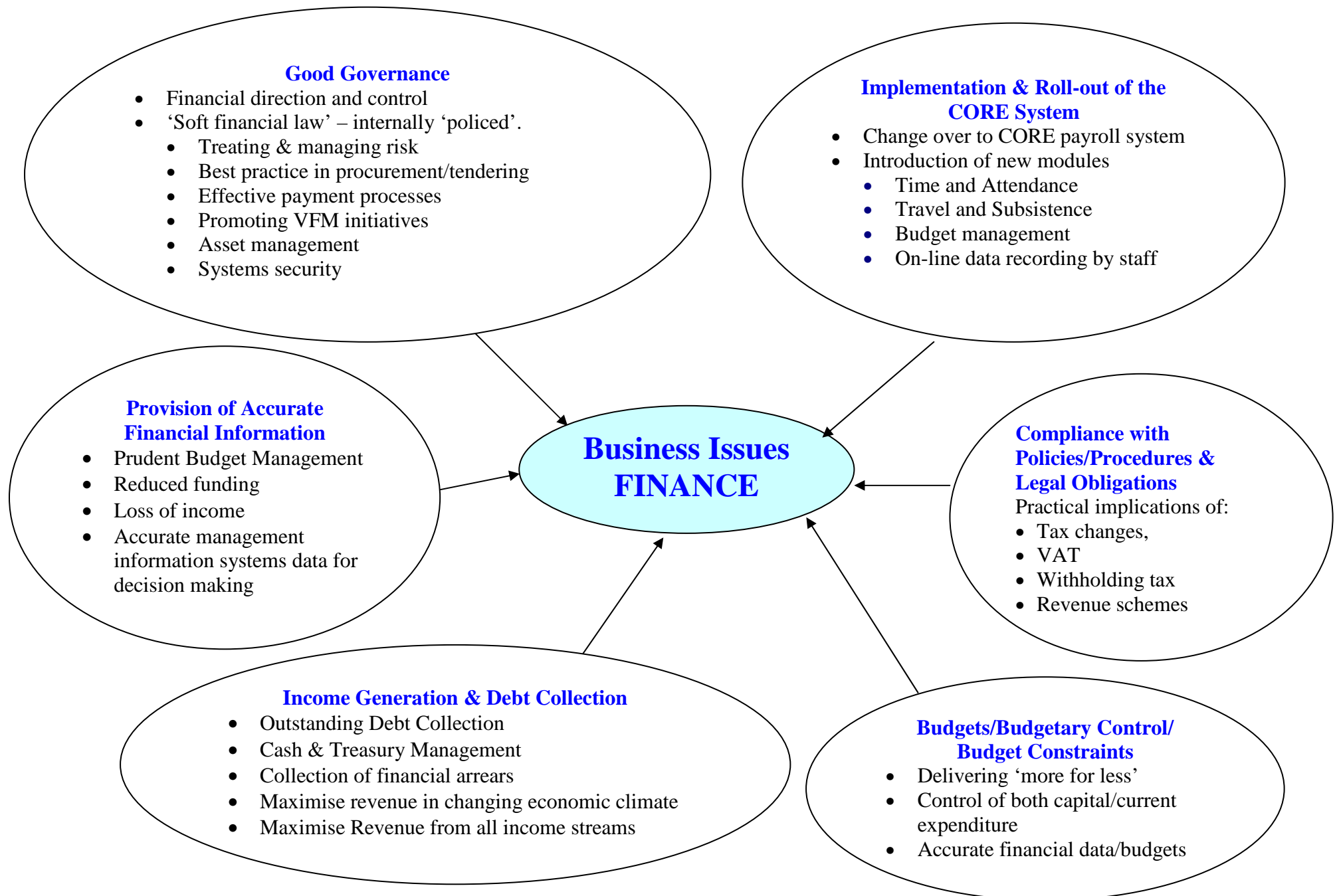
The following non-mandatory courses were also identified as being of benefit to staff for effective implementation and delivery of business issues. However in some cases no staff numbers were provided or the numbers given were very low (less than six (6) staff) so they did not feature on the final table.

Road design skills update
Signing and implementation of traffic management
Road safety officer training
Cycle tester training
Map Road
Auto Cad
Bridge management
Surface dressing
Mini digger driving
Dumper driving
Roller driving
Location of underground services
Safe working with hot products (bitumen)
Specialist vehicle and equipment courses.
Specialist lighting design courses
Transport and mechanical plant
Training for roads and transportation staff in transport planning, traffic management and modelling

HR training
Supervisory skills and Management Training
Ongoing New Form of Contract Training
Presentation Skills/Public speaking/PR
Performance measurement – in-house working groups
Project management
Procurement procedures, also DOF requirement re documentation and cost benefit compliance.
Agresso (Financial Management System) and other software packages
Funding strategies

ECDL and all computer courses
Minute taking
Managing change
Marketing and Communications
Handling violence and aggression in the workplace

Finance



Finance

Twenty (20) units out of a possible thirty-four (34) responded giving a percentage response of 59%. Several of these locations submitted multiple responses as they have further sub-divided the function resulting in an actual population of twenty-seven (27) business units and it is from this figure (27) that the results have been calculated.

What business issues are or will be the priority areas that your unit will need to address either currently or in the near future (i.e) 2009, 2010 and 2011?

The Finance Units who responded tended to have the same business issues which fall logically into the following themes:-

- 1) Income generation, debt collection and maximising revenue from income streams
- 2) Implementation and roll-out of the CORE system
- 3) Provision of accurate financial information
- 4) Compliance with policies, procedures and legal obligations
- 5) Budgets and budgetary control/budget constraints
- 6) Good governance
- 7) Knowledge management

1) Income generation and debt collection

Thirteen (13) of the twenty-seven (27) business units (48%) reported that income generation and revenue collection is the main business issue. Within this issue outstanding debt collection, cash and treasury management and collection of financial arrears are all identified as sub-issues. The need to maximise revenue collection in a changing economic climate and furthermore to maximise revenue from all income streams are also reported as significant related business issues.

2) Implementation and roll-out of the CORE system

The smooth and successful change over from the current payroll system to CORE and/or the implementation of the CORE payroll upgrade (if the unit has already installed CORE) is highlighted as a business issue in at least ten (10) finance units (37%). Reference is made to the introduction of the new CORE modules namely time and attendance, on-line submission of travel and subsistence claims and budget mgmt. A related business issue identified by respondents is relationship management-working with the CORE project team to ensure the effective introduction of the system while another is to ensure that CORE procedure manuals are all written and in place to support the roll-out.

3) Provision of accurate financial information

This business issue focuses on the provision of accurate financial information for distribution to the various business functions to enable them to manage their budgets prudently and accurately. Finance departments, in all of the Local Authorities have a major challenge to work with and support the managers of the business units to control both revenue and capital expenditure in view of the reduced funding and loss

of income currently being experienced. Further to this is the importance of ensuring proper use of financial data and systems data for the same purpose. The challenge of achieving effective devolved financial management is recorded as another business issue and again is of critical importance to decision makers. Linked to this issue is the need to review, prepare and monitor budgets and to prepare accurate budgets with the restricted finances available. Agresso can contribute hugely to this objective if used correctly as it provides financial management reporting information to aid decision making.

4) Compliance with policies, procedures and legal obligations

The Finance Department need to stay abreast of all legislative obligations and this is listed as a business issue by three (3) respondents . For example, keeping up to date with the practical implications of tax changes, vat, withholding tax and all other revenue schemes is a necessary skill and a documented business issue.

5) Budgets and budgetary control/budget constraints

The need to ‘achieve more with less’ is a business issue central to nine (9) respondents (45%). Departments need to control both their capital and their current expenditure and require the support and assistance of the Finance Dept to achieve this. Effective budgetary control is a collaborative process. Accurate budgeting and estimating will only happen if managers have access to accurate timely financial data from the Finance Unit.

6) Good governance

This business issue centres around financial direction and control. While not underpinned with legislation it is often regarded as ‘soft law’ and is internally ‘policed’. Sub-issues within this business issue are :-

- Treating and managing risk
- Best practice in procurement and tendering
- System security
- Process manuals for the various systems
- Effective payment processes
- Promotion of value for money initiatives
- Payment of vat by principal contractor
- Data Protection
- Asset management
- Shared services
- Knowledge management – developing effective MIS systems to aid financial decision-making

In order to achieve/address this objective/issue will training or development of your staff need to happen?

Twenty-four (24) out of twenty-seven (27) respondents (88%) reported they would require training or education to deliver on the business issues and that a variety of both mandatory and non mandatory courses are needed to address the business issues. Just three (3) business units reported they would not need any training.

A table of learning and development needs (both mandatory and non-mandatory) which the finance units highlighted as being required by staff is provided at the end of this segment (see Fig 9). Debt collection has emerged as the most necessary of skills across all the units followed closely by CORE training to support the payroll implementation and Agresso training. While the numbers of staff are relatively low for such a large business unit it is possible to extrapolate from these to get an overall national picture.

In your estimation how will the budgetary constraints and the impact of the downturn in economic activity affect the work of your unit over the next two/three years?

The Finance Unit has overall responsibility for managing the finances of the Council and respondents are concerned about the impact loss of revenue is going to have on the level of funding available for each of the various schemes. The general belief among respondents is that despite the reduction and/or re-distribution of workload in other sections work will continue much as normal in the Finance Unit – reports prepared and produced, bills issued, invoices paid, cash managed etc. The sense from the respondents is that the standard day to day processes will remain unchanged although they may involve slightly lower volumes of data.

Below is a list compiled from the respondent views highlighting the shifts that are likely to occur in day to day working in the finance units as a consequence of the budgetary constraints:-

- Greater focus on financial planning and management
- Greater focus on debt collections
- Greater focus on demonstrating value for money
- Greater focus on maximising income streams, treasury and debt mgmt
- Greater focus on ensuring compliance with all national and local directions

Furthermore respondents say there will be:-

- Increased work in changes in VAT as the Government change the legislation
- Increased work in applications for Motor Tax as applications continue to rise
- Increased workload in creditors and debtors control
- Increased pressure to make payments quicker
- Increased demand from budget holders to monitor and reconcile expenditure
- Increased requests from project managers for improved financial information for new projects
- Increased pressure to collect revenue

- Increased time spent making and monitoring agreements with customers
- Increased time spent implementing new or upgrading existing computer systems
- Increased time spent completing returns to Government departments and state agencies

The Finance department will also be affected by the Dept. Finance staff embargo with vacancies likely to remain unfilled. It is predicted that the pace of work will slow down significantly and depending on how long a position has been vacant that the function may come to a complete standstill.

Taking a societal view, the collection of monies for rents and the repayment of mortgages may become increasingly difficult due to the many competing financial demands on families.

Furthermore, if the economic situation continues to decline weekly deadlines may not be achieved e.g. staff payroll not being processed on-time resulting in non-payment of staff and increased employee frustration and anger.

In your estimation will the impact of these changes require staff to develop additional skills?

Twenty (20) out of twenty-seven (27) respondents (74%) are of the opinion staff will require further training to cope with the uncertainties of the current economic downturn – most felt additional ‘soft’ skills would be required in areas such as time management, prioritisation both of workload and of budgets, negotiation and change management.

In addition to these, innovative approaches to financial management will be required and it is suggested that further learning in the following areas would benefit staff.

- Electronic Funds Transfers
- Direct Debits
- On line systems
- Reporting systems
- Innovative ways of procuring goods and services
- Development of shared services

Future developments in likely to have an impact on staff training & development

Possible major changes into how local government is funded and introduction of new sources of local charges will necessitate finance staff receiving training in (i) new calculation methodologies that need to be applied; (ii) gathering of accurate data on people/premises liable for charges; and (iii) database management of people/premises charged.

Introduction of EU and national initiatives in the field of green procurement will necessitate finance staff (as well as senior managers) becoming more knowledgeable about this issue. Green procurement initiatives aim to ensure that public bodies when purchasing works, services or supplies give adequate attention to environmental factors in their purchasing and contracting decisions, while respecting EU procurement rules.

Finance staff and once again senior managers in local authorities will need to receive training in how best to achieve value for money and economies of scale in the procurement of goods and services through co-operation with neighbouring local authorities and or by participation in regional tender competitions.

Government shared services initiatives may necessitate finance staff developing skills in the areas of (i) drafting and managing service level agreements; (ii) managing service provision on an outsourced basis.

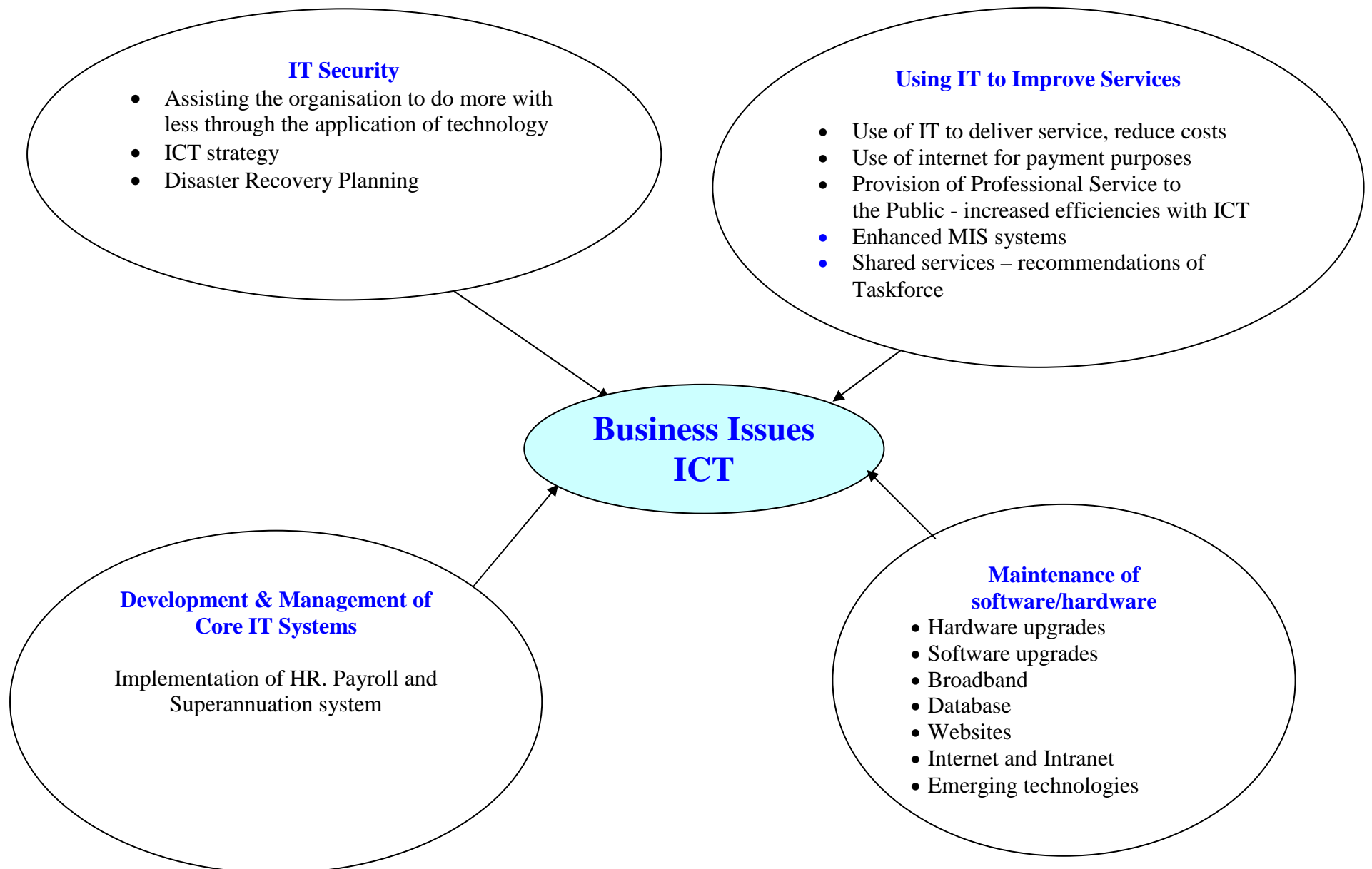
All local authorities will have to maximise the amount of revenue being collected over the next couple of years. Finance section staff as well as staff in the business units that have responsibility for collecting revenue and/or for accounts receivable will have to ensure that their staff are skilled in account management and in debts recoverable techniques.

Fig 9 Finance

FINANCE

Training/Learning and Development Needs Identified	Nature of training or L&D need		Numbers identified as needing training							
	Mandatory	Effective implementation	Finance staff (grade not specified)	Senior Mgmt	SSO	SO	ASO	CO	SEO	Total
Training for Debt Collection and Management of Debt and Credit Control - to include Legal Process		X	62	8	17	16	24	32		159
Financial Management Reporting and Budgetary Control, risk management, corporate governance, preparing AFS, procurement, contract negotiation etc.,		X	21	20	15	19	6	7		88
Specific financial training recognising the realities and service prioritisation needed in the current global and national recession, such as improved use of resources (manpower/financial), improved procurement practices and core statutory requirements.	X	X	14	6	3	10	10	39	2	84
Training on use of new CORE payroll system (including new processes) Provided as part of HR/ Payroll Project. Training will also be needed for the introduction of Core Time & Attendance & Wages.		X	4	3	7	14	23	27		78
Better use and understanding of Agresso Financial Management System and the various modules e.g. Tax, I-home, PCS, Accs Payable, Revenue, Rates, Water Metering etc.,	X	X	28	6	5	5	9	17		70
IT Skills - Microsoft Packages and system training in ecdl/access/excelator/excel spreadsheets etc.,		X			2	12	12	31		57
External and on the job training in establishing and operating new financial management systems coming on-line and new legislation being introduced by DEHLG, DOF and Revenue .	X		2	5	5	9	14	17		52
Report writing skills		X		1	3	2	6	11		23
Customer Service & Dealing with aggressive customers		X		1	2	2	4	5		14
Overall Total			131	50	59	89	108	186	2	625

Information Technology



Information Technology Services

Eighteen (18) units out of a possible thirty-four (34) responded giving a percentage response of 53%.

What business issues are or will be the priority areas that your unit will need to address either currently or in the near future (i.e) 2009, 2010 and 2011?

The business issues highlighted by the Information Technology units centred around the following themes:-

- 1) The implementation and roll out of the CORE HR, Payroll and Superannuation system throughout the organisation.
- 2) Raising the profile of IT within the organisation
- 3) Maximising the use of technology throughout the organisation to deliver on the Corporate agenda and support the business to achieve its goals and targets
- 4) Supporting the provision of timely and accurate management reports to the organisation through enhanced MIS systems
- 5) Maintenance and upgrading of hardware, software, databases, corporate websites, internet capability, intranet etc.,
- 6) To implement the recommendations of the Task Force on the Public Service with regard to the delivery of ICT through shared services
- 7) The creation of a new ICT strategy with Senior Management involvement/support
- 8) Extension of customer service delivery through the use of technology via the internet e.g on-line payments capability etc.,
- 9) Optimise the use of resources – prioritise according to urgency, requirement and necessity

In order to achieve/address this objective/issue will training or development of your staff need to happen?

Sixteen (16) business units (90%) said they would require training or development to deliver on the business issues with just two (2) saying they would not require any training. Respondents listed vendor provided training primarily and cross training to deliver better coverage and increase expertise of staff from 2/3 disciplines to several more. While no mandatory training is required to address the business issues several of the skills required are listed as 'essential' and work could not proceed without them.

A table of learning and development needs (both mandatory and non-mandatory) which the units highlighted as being required by staff is provided at the end of this segment (see Fig 10). It is worth noting that two respondents said they have not yet identified what training will be required for ICT staff while another said they are moving from MS software to Open Source which is free yet offers the same capability. LGMSB/LGCSB also provide training to ICT units on a range of subjects.

In your estimation how will the budgetary constraints and the impact of the downturn in economic activity affect the work of your unit over the next two/three years?

Respondents believe that the lack of resources due to the economic downturn will result in delays in introducing new technologies and/or responding to support requests. One respondent says that budgetary cuts to an already miniscule provision will make it extremely hard to keep up proper ICT standards.

Another respondent says that the downturn will result in increased workload as a consequence of the reduction in the use of external consultants. Equally there will be extra work in ICT due to the adoption of additional services and the increased use of technology to counterbalance the lack of staff in the other sections e.g. billing systems

Lack of funding and reduced staff numbers will greatly affect ICT units and as one respondent says ‘the embargo on recruitment will pose a problem as the skill set required is not available in a small Local Authority’, the solution as in other sections will be a greater focus on cross functional skilling within the unit.

From the user perspective respondents are concerned about the impact of under investment in both hardware and software saying that ‘if hardware is not replaced on a regular basis it is likely that more staff time will be spent carrying out repairs to make old equipment last longer’ while another says that there will be ‘disastrous consequences if ICT budgets are cut as ICT is the de facto enabler of efficiency in so many situations’. Investment in cross training the ICT team is equally important with respondents saying that ‘a reduction in the training budget will impact on staff’s ability to manage and maintain systems and consequently increased overhead costs will be incurred if systems are not upgraded’.

The consequences of under investment in technology are recorded by all respondents with one respondent saying that ‘a disaster recovery plan needs to be in place because if an older server fails there needs to be a temporary solution until a replacement is in place and configured’. Of the potential risk one respondent says ‘ICT sections will continue to try and cover all bases but unless the organisation can adapt it is only a matter of time before there is a major loss or impact on the Information Systems’.

In your estimation will the impact of these changes require staff to develop additional skills?

Two (2) of the respondents said staff will not require further training to address the budgetary constraints with the remaining respondents mentioning the need for training to help staff ‘adapt to a more varied range of work and tighter management of budgets’. Hardware and software troubleshooting skills, network management and configuration skills are all mentioned as is the need for ongoing user training to operate new systems and to be able to resolve more issues for themselves given the overstretched ICT workforce. Another area of potential need is database support and maintenance with one respondent saying ‘technical staff will require more database skills and likewise the database team need more technical skills’.

ICT appears to be a unit where investment is critical and standing still is not an option. However whereas most respondents believe continuous investment is crucial one respondent believes that 'maintaining and consolidating existing assets rather than further investment may bring about a mindset change'.

Future developments in likely to have an impact on staff training & development

In an effort to achieve greater cost savings and efficiencies local authority IT sections may be attracted to open source code and free software options rather than Microsoft packages and operating systems. If this does become the case then IT staff will need to receive detailed training to become proficient in freeware.

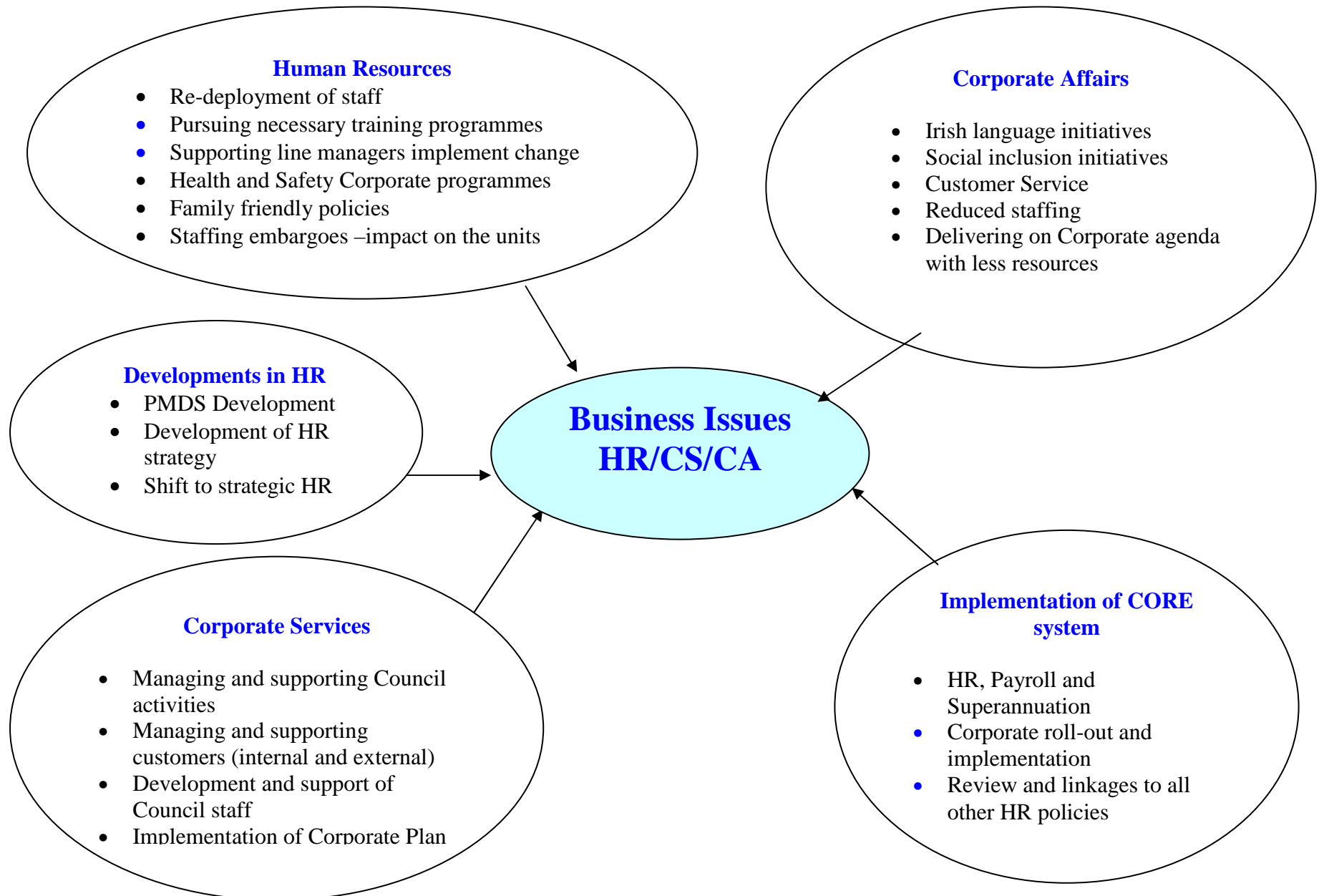
Government shared services initiatives may necessitate IT staff developing skills in the areas of (i) drafting and managing service level agreements; (ii) delivering upon targets set for service delivery, support, disaster recovery, etc and (iii) managing service provision on an outsourced basis.

Fig 10 I.T.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Training/Learning and Development Needs Identified	Nature of training or L&D need		Numbers identified as needing training					
	Mandatory	Effective implementation	SEO	IS PLeader A/AO AO (Gr 8/7)	IS Analyst/ Developer SSO (Grade 6)	IS Tech Support Officer or Analyst/ Prog SO	Senior Prog ASO/Junior pgm CO	Total
IT Server Virtualisation (to meet the new performance indicators for energy/carbon saving ICT technologies) Vmware.		X		11	9	12		32
ICT infrastructure to support both voice and data commuications - pphones (mobile and fixed) VOIP etc.,		X	3	9	6	10		28
Oracle Database Management		X	3	9	6	10		28
Sage Saleslogix		X	3	9	6	10		28
Integra Advanced for Technical/Administrative staff		X	3	9	6	10		28
Business Process Improvement (using ICT)		X	3	9	6	10		28
Technical training for systems implementation and upgrades		X		9	7	11		27
ITIL v3 Framework Training - Foundation and Summary training		X	3				20	23
Implementation of HR/Payroll and Superannuation system		X		4	9	4	2	19
MS SQL 2005 upgrade of key applications and servers for Agresso/Ihouse/Iplan/Ireg.		X		7	1	9		17
Open Source SoftWare (freeware)		X		3	4	5		12
New development architecture e.g. Visual studio development		X		3	1	6		10
Project Mgmt skills (from workflow analysis to implementation)		X		8	1	1		10
Networking and Active directory (for LAN administration)		X			5	1		6
Security/firewall/intrusion prevention/antivirus and spyware		X			5			5
AQL Server 2005 Reporting Services		X			1	2	2	5
Implementation of Finance and Compliance Console		X			1	2	2	5
External & on the job training - operation of new IT Systems		X		1	1	1	1	4
Sharepoint 2007 upgrade of the intranet application .		X		2		2		4
CRM system for managing/tracking customer queries.		X		1	2	1		4
Overall Total		X	18	94	77	107	27	323

Human Resources/ Corporate Affairs/Corporate Services



Human Resources/Corporate Services/Corporate Affairs

Fourteen (14) dedicated HR units out of a possible thirty-four (34) responded giving a percentage response of 41%. Furthermore a number of the Local Authorities combine Corporate Services and/or Corporate Affairs and Human Resources and for that reason these are also being included in this section resulting in a population of twenty-six (26) or 76%.

What business issues are or will be the priority areas that your unit will need to address either currently or in the near future (i.e) 2009, 2010 and 2011?

The most significant business issue highlighted by ten (10) of the fourteen (14) (72%) Human Resource units is the implementation and roll out of the CORE HR, payroll and superannuation system throughout the organisation.

Responding to the impact of the Department of Finance recruitment embargo and maintaining positive working relationships with union representatives, partnership and the business units was also identified as a business issue by ten (10) of the fourteen(14) (72%). Linked to this is the need to provide support for line managers and staff operating in the current challenging economic climate.

Developing a flexible workforce capable of delivering a quality service in very challenging times was identified by seven (7) of the fourteen (14) units. Linked to this for five (5) respondents is the need to ensure value for money from staff training programmes and that they deliver a workforce ready, willing and able to be re-deployed/re-assigned as needed. As one respondent said 'staffing between sections will have to become more mobile and flexible. Severe budget cutbacks means that the organisation will change drastically'.

The review, development and implementation of HR policies was identified by nine (9) of the fourteen (14) respondents. Policies listed ranged from attendance and absence management to dignity at work, social inclusion, and family friendly work practices.

The Health, Safety and Welfare of the workforce while meeting the needs of the organisation was listed by nine (9) of the fourteen (14) respondents (64%). As one respondent said 'the challenge is to look after the welfare of staff in conjunction with the change agenda'.

The challenge of operating under current budgetary constraints was mentioned by seven (7) of the fourteen (14) respondents with the review of contracts both for staffing and procurement of services and the awards of higher education grants mentioned by two (2) of the seven (7) units.

Lastly the development and implementation of a HR strategy, the corporate shift to strategic HR and the continued rollout and embedding of the PMDS process were mentioned by four (4) HR units as business issues.

The most significant business issue affecting the Corporate Service/Corporate Affairs units (in addition to the HR issue discussed above) and mentioned by six (6) respondents (50%) is the delivery of quality and efficient services to both internal and external customers of the Local Authority. Promoting both the social inclusion agenda and the Irish language agenda are business issues for these functions being mentioned by three (3) respondents.

Supporting the work of the Council and the Councillors and facilitating effective working relationships between the executive/staff and elected representatives is a recurring business issue for Corporate Service units.

For Corporate Services the Register of Electors was listed as a business issue by one respondent while emergency planning (which was also discussed under environment and the fire service) was cited as a business issue in one Corporate Affairs unit.

A small number of respondents mentioned the fact that in Corporate Services the work of the unit and by extension the business issues facing the unit are largely determined by the objectives of the Corporate Plan. At the time of the survey the new Corporate Plan is under development and while as one respondent says 'it will probably in the main be a continuation of existing plan' this may not prove to be the case and new issues may emerge for these customer focussed units.

One respondent from a large urban local authority made reference to the fact that business issues may result from the planned proposal to have a directly elected Mayor.

In order to achieve/address this objective/issue will training or development of your staff need to happen?

Three (3) business units out of twenty-six (26) (10%) said they would not require training or development to deliver on the business issues. The remaining twenty-three (23) respondents (90%) said they would need training with ten (10) of the twenty-three (23) (43%) saying that for some objectives training will be needed while for others it will not be needed. One respondent listed IR training for the HR Manager, IT skills for new HR System, Project Vision and Agresso Reporting all being necessary to deliver on the issues while another with a strong Corporate Affairs brief listed customer services training and the implementation of their scéim Gaeilge (with supporting training) as necessary to deliver on the previously identified business issues.

Of the need for further training one respondent said that the requirement for training is not an absolute "yes" because 'in the event that there is no change in personnel assigned to HR then within the capabilities/expertise in the area internal training/mentoring will address training requirements'.

A table of learning and development needs (both mandatory and non-mandatory) which the units highlighted as being required by staff is provided at the end of this segment (see Fig 11).

In your estimation how will the budgetary constraints and the impact of the downturn in economic activity affect the work of your unit over the next two/three years?

Respondents are very concerned about the impact the embargo on staff numbers is likely to have on the unit and overall organisation. As recruitment will be minimal the focus will switch to redeployment of staff and yet with reduced funding the necessary training to allow this to happen may not be available. As one respondent said 'the challenge for the HR section is to be ahead of the changes and know how to implement them effectively'.

Increased IR negotiations and possible industrial action as a consequence of the increased challenges and demands being placed on staff as organisations strive to maintain quality services was highlighted as a possible impact of the downturn in economic activity.

A further consequence of the downturn mentioned by respondents will be an increase in HR activity due to rationalisations etc. and a corresponding increase in tasks such as superannuation calculations as staff weigh up their options and organisations attempt to downsize to reduce costs. One respondent mentions the fact that the bulk of the budget in the HR unit is staff costs and many respondents mention the fact that any reduction in staff will directly affect the level of service available to the rest of the organisation.

With reference to Corporate Affairs functions one respondent is very realistic saying that budget reductions will mean 'that things we would like to do won't get done'.

In your estimation will the impact of these changes require staff to develop additional skills?

Three (3) of the twenty-six (26) respondents (12%) said staff will not require further training to address the budgetary constraints with the remaining respondents mentioning the need for training in negotiation and conflict management in addition to the more frequently requested flexibility, prioritisation and time management. Respondents also mention the need for innovation and creativity and 'finding newer more efficient ways of doing business'. Another says that 'greater productivity will be required from less resources coupled with the capability to multi-task, be flexible and deliver on the Corporate Plan'.

Linking training to service delivery one respondent said that in addition to the "skills" 'there is a real requirement for employees to develop and acquire greater knowledge, to empower them to assume greater workloads and responsibilities as organisations will be operating with fewer employees'. Another respondent said that 'staff will need to develop cross functional skills rather than specializing in one HR area'.

Specifically for those Authorities who mentioned their Irish language programme as a business issue mention is made of the need to develop language proficiency both oral and written in order to comply with the legislative requirements and Council obligations.

Future developments in likely to have an impact on staff training & development

Corporate services staff and once again senior managers in local authorities will need to receive training in how best to achieve value for money and economies of scale in the procurement of goods and services through co-operation with neighbouring local authorities and or by participation in regional tender competitions.

Government shared services initiatives may necessitate HR staff developing skills in the areas of (i) drafting and managing service level agreements; (ii) managing service provision on an outsourced basis.

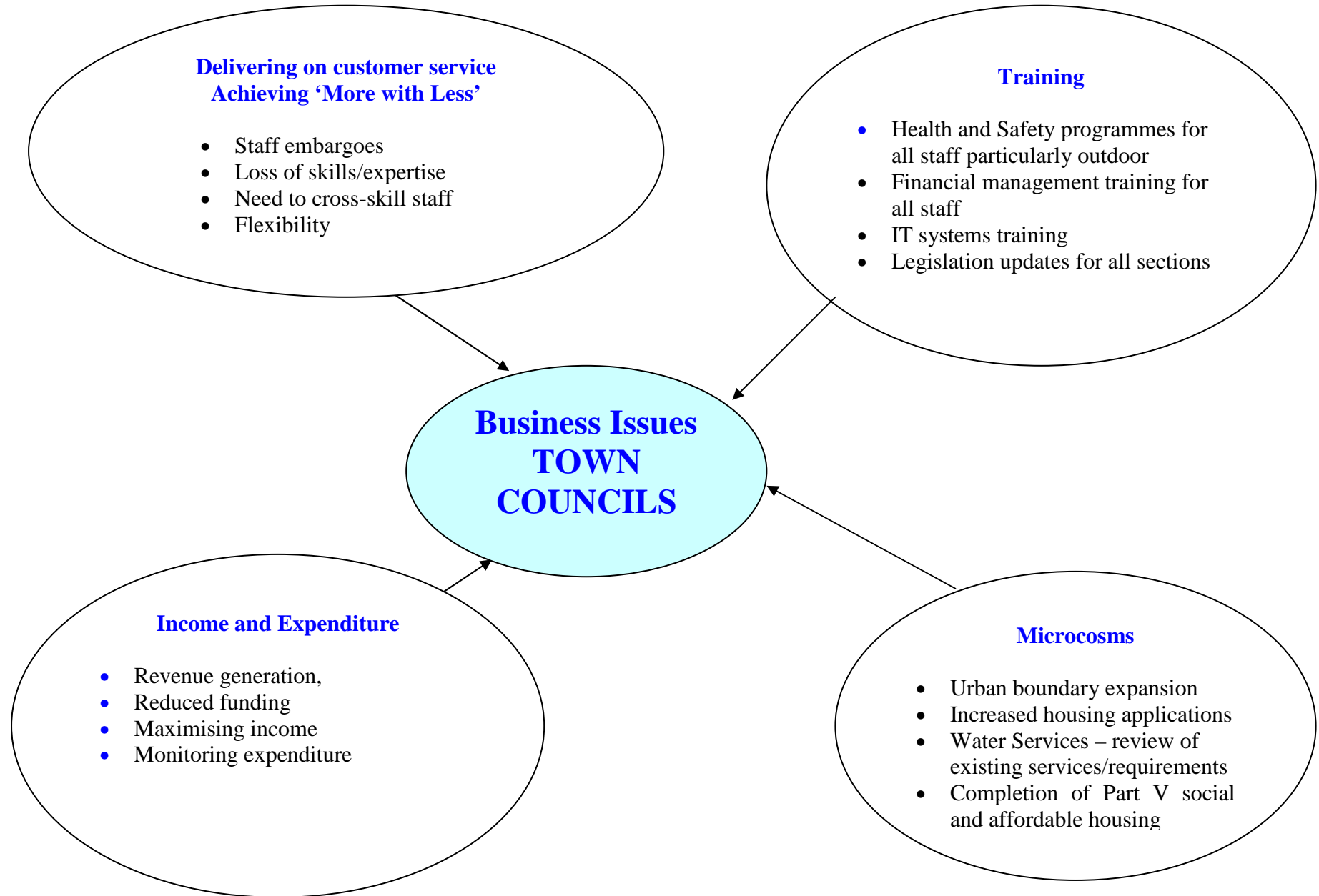
Introduction of the Core HR, Payroll & Superannuation system will (depending on local configuration) necessitate HR staff taking responsibility for some functions previously handled by finance staff (e.g.) making manual adjustments to payroll, increments, etc. This will necessitate HR staff receiving detailed training in the operation of payroll and payroll 'clocks' associated with the completion of payroll groups on various pay frequencies.

Fig 11 HR

HUMAN RESOURCES/CORPORATE SERVICES/CORPORATE AFFAIRS

Training/Learning and Development Needs Identified	Nature of training or L&D need		Numbers identified as needing training							
	Mandatory	Effective implementation	SEO	A/AO AO	SSO	SO	ASO	CO III	all staff (no grade specified)	Total
Implementation of HR/Payroll and Superannuation system		X	2	6	3	10	12	15	64	112
Legislation - initiatives, policies and procedures e.g. attendance management		X	1	3	1	3	4	5	26	43
Customer Service				1	2	4	12	23		42
IR training such as negotiation, mediation, unions etc.,		X	4	5	4	3	2	6	8	32
HR and Employment Law		X	4	7	5	1	4	8		29
Training and implementation of new circulars and schemes		X							26	26
Formal HR training for HR staff		X	1	1	1	1		4	18	26
Strategic Planning, Change Management			5	5	4	2	3	4		23
Budgetary Control		X		1	2	4	3	7		17
Agresso training on all modules		X				1			15	16
Cross skilling of HR roles & functions		X							15	15
HR Seminars - Pensions, HEG, FOI/DP				2	2	4	6			14
Irish Language training - Sceim Gaeilge							4	10		14
Franchise training			1	2	2		3	4		12
H&S training	X		1	1	1	3	3	1	8,	10
Overall Total			19	34	27	36	56	87	172	431

Town Councils



Town Councils

Twelve (12) Town Councils from seven (7) different counties provided data for the survey with three (3) counties submitting multiple responses from their Town Council network.

What business issues are or will be the priority areas that your unit will need to address either currently or in the near future (i.e) 2009, 2010 and 2011?

The main business issue for all of the Town Councils is how to provide core quality services in the current economic climate with reduced budgets and staff. The impact of the staffing embargoes on service delivery and also the departure of trained experienced staff through the incentivised scheme for early retirement are also significantly affecting service delivery.

Revenue collection, maximising income and monitoring expenditure are all business issues as the finance is needed to complete the agreed programme of work. Another linked issue is prudent financial management and the need to draw down promptly the funding due to the Town Council from central funds to ensure it can be used locally. Health, Safety and Welfare of the workforce particularly the outdoor staff is listed as a business issue and linked to this is sourcing the funding to undertake the training.

Town Councils being microcosms of larger Councils highlight a range of business issues that relate to housing, planning, environment, water services illustrated below:

- Urban boundary expansion
- Increased housing applications
- Water Services – review of existing services and requirements
- Completion of part V social and affordable housing
- Reduction in anti social behaviour
- Traffic management
- Maintenance programmes for roads and pathways
- Litter awareness programmes for schools and business
- Environmental compliance and protection and implementation of schemes

One respondent was very succinct saying the business issue ‘is the ability to complete the business and works plan for the current and future years without full staff resources and budget constraints’. Following on from this issue another respondent said of the need for flexible staff that traditionally in Town Councils ‘there is one person to one job and the absence of this person can lead to serious issues but now (with the embargo) staff are constantly being asked to change from one job to another to cover vacancies’. Multi-skilling staff for day-to-day work is a key business issue.

In order to achieve/address this objective/issue will training or development of your staff need to happen?

Nine (9) Town Councils identified training needs both mandatory and non-mandatory. One said in-house training would suffice while another says that the on-going laboratory training programme will suffice. Another said that training needs will be re-assessed as time progresses and the economic climate continues to deteriorate. One reply listed skills training for housing, planning and enforcement tasks. A table of

learning and development needs which the Town Councils who responded to the survey highlighted as being both legally required and beneficial for effective implementation is provided at the end of this segment (see Fig 12). Given the small number of respondents it is unclear if extrapolating the figures will provide a national picture.

In your estimation how will the budgetary constraints and the impact of the downturn in economic activity affect the work of your unit over the next two/three years?

Respondents are very concerned about the impact the embargo on staff numbers and reduction in funding is likely to have on the Council. One respondent says the budgetary constraints will greatly affect capacity to meet the heightened expectations of the public in the delivery of services while another says 'it will have a devastating effect'. The respondent says 'there will be few, if any, capital projects, budgets and income will be severely reduced which will impact on services'.

One respondent commented that the cutbacks are already having an effect saying that non replacement of staff coupled with the continued introduction of various new systems and procedures will and has already been impacting'.

The budget constraint will also limit the amount of training being provided with 'statutory training/job requirement training taking priority over desired training and development needs'. This is likely to impact on the cross skilling programme for staff.

It is also expected that infrastructural deficits will not be addressed and work activity will be reduced resulting in reduced customer services provided. Planned maintenance will also be reduced. Furthermore it is expected that capital improvement works will be severely curtailed and as one respondent said 'the decline in available funding allied to any reduction in overall staff numbers will make it very difficult to meet members' and public expectations'.

In your estimation will the impact of these changes require staff to develop additional skills?

All but one of the respondents (92%) believe staff will require further training to cope with the uncertainties of the current economic downturn – most significant is the reference to time management and budgetary management. Several respondents also cite the need for 'a greater understanding of the legislative, regulatory and budget frameworks particularly in relation to planning and housing legislation'.

Future developments in likely to have an impact on staff training & development

The Report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes (2009) contains recommendations on the rationalisation of the number of local authority structures by the creation of a single tier of local government. If this proposal is to go ahead then Town Council staff may need retraining if any changes are made to their areas of responsibility.

Fig 12 Town Council

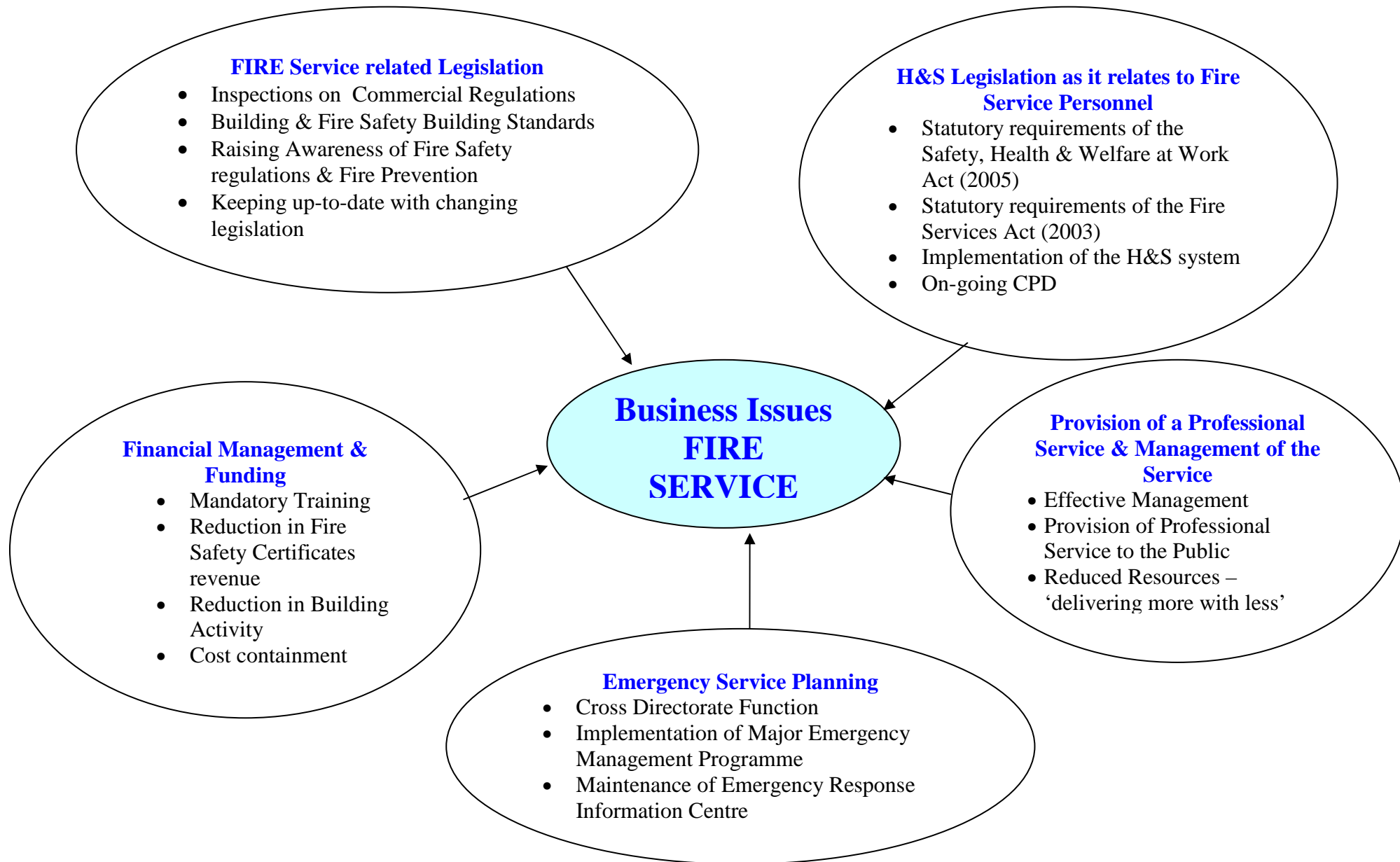
TOWN COUNCILS

Training/Learning and Development Needs Identified	Nature of Training or L&D need		Numbers identified as needing training										
	Mandatory	Effective Implementation	all staff	town clerk	AO/SSO	SEE/AE/EE	ASO/SO's	Revenue/CO	Ex/Asst planner	Out door staff	Tech-nicians	Clerk of Works F/man	Total
Llegislative and regulatory framework	X	X	220				12				12		244
Health and Safety	X		170				3	2		7		1	183
I.T training for system implementation (e.g. CORE)					2	10	24	19				5	60
General Appraisal Training		X	23										23
Customer Service		X						22					22
Flood Risk Management				1	2	1	2		2	2	2	6	18
Supervisory management							6					6	12
Financial management training					1		6	4					11
Audit Training		X			4		3	1					8
Public Works Contracts Tendering procedures	X			1	2	3						1	7
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)						2				2	2		6
Media & marketing/advertisng/PR training		X		1	1	1	1		1				5
Development planning				1		1			2				4
Management skills					1		1						2
HR Training		X			1								1
Total			413	4	14	18	58	48	5	11	16	19	606

The following courses were also identified – however no staff numbers were provided:-

- Agresso – Preparation of Budgetary Reports
- Public private ventures
- Traffic Management
- Town Centre regeneration
- Co2 reduction
- Energy conservation
- Communication training

Fire Service



Fire Service

Eleven (11) units out of a possible thirty-four (34) responded giving a percentage response of 33%.

What business issues are or will be the priority areas that your unit will need to address either currently or in the near future (i.e) 2009, 2010 and 2011?

The business issues specified were drawn directly from the operational plan(s) and the common themes that emerged were:-

- 1) The importance of having up to date knowledge and understanding of all fire service related legislation e.g. building safety etc.,
- 2) Health and Safety legislation as it relates to the fire service personnel and on-going CPD for all fire service staff
- 3) Financial management, the need to secure funding and to identify efficiencies that can be made in the service being delivered
- 4) The provision of a professional, quality driven service to the public given the decrease in funding available and the management of that service to maximise the return on the investment
- 5) Emergency Service Planning

1) Fire Service related legislation

Nine (9) of the respondents (82%) cited familiarity with legislation as the most significant business issue as without it the fire service staff are unable to carry out inspections on commercial properties or large residential dwellings such as nursing homes and possible hazards could go undetected with perhaps fatal consequences. The fire service also have a brief to give information - to engage with businesses to advise them on fire safety and explain what the building regulations and fire safety building standards require. This naturally depends quite a lot on what shortcomings are detected and how serious and potentially life threatening they might be.

Moving away from commercial inspection and enforcement the fire service also have an awareness brief to work with communities, schools, and the general public to highlight best practice in relation to fire safety and fire prevention. Keeping up to date with changing legislation and fire safety standards enables all the above to continue.

2) Health and Safety legislation as it relates to the fire service personnel

Continued improvements in the Health and Safety of Fire Service Personnel is identified by eight (8) respondents (73%) as a major business issue with the need for on-going CPD for fire service personnel mentioned by six (6) respondents (54%). Within this issue consideration is given to the statutory requirements of the Act most likely to be in relation to numbers at incidents, equipment required, protective clothing etc., Mention is also made to obligations under the Fire Services Act in addition to the Safety, Health, Welfare at Work Act (2005) and any future amendments made to it. Reference is made in some cases to the implementation of the Health and Safety Management System presumably a technical support system that assists with this issue. Two respondents make reference to the importance of being

able to recruit staff to fill any vacancies that may arise and given the importance of adequately resourcing this essential service it is possible that the embargo might not apply to it.

3) Financial management and Funding

Securing adequate funding to pay for necessary and continuous training is seen as a key business issue by six (6) respondents . Similarly the loss in revenue from the reduced number of Fire Safety Certificates being requested (due to the reduction in building activity) will negatively impact on the financial resources available to the service. Assuming essential training requirements cannot be reduced and revenue continues to fall the only option would seem to be cost containment – achieving more with less and prudent budget management.

4) The provision of a professional, service and the management of the service

The effective management of the service with ever reducing resources is viewed as a major business issue for the majority of Local Authorities and this is linked to another business issue – the provision of a professional service to the public. Most units are eager to investigate how to maximise the available resources to achieve optimum efficiency and effectiveness from them.

5) Emergency Service Planning

Emergency Service Planning appears to be a cross directorate function with mention of it in the responses from Environment, Infrastructure and Water Services business units in addition to the Fire Service. Respondents in fire services describe the business issue as ‘the need to protect life and property from fire and other emergencies by effective control of emergency incidents and the need to minimise any potential consequential environmental hazard’. A linked business issue refers to the implementation of a major emergency management programme and the maintenance of the emergency response information centre although some business units may not have one of these given their size and the catchment area they serve.

In order to achieve/address this objective/issue will training or development of your staff need to happen?

All business units identified both mandatory and non-mandatory training needs.

A table of learning and development needs which the fire service units who responded to the survey highlighted as being necessary to address the previously identified business issues is provided at the end of this segment (see Fig 13). Even with the relatively small number of respondents it is possible to extrapolate that all fire personnel require both new and refresher training in all areas of fire fighting and rescue techniques to enable them to remain confident and competent of their skills and ability and this is necessary irrespective of the budgetary cutbacks. Senior staff provided very accurate details of staff numbers which can easily be aggregated upwards to form a relatively accurate national picture.

In your estimation how will the budgetary constraints and the impact of the downturn in economic activity affect the work of your unit over the next two/three years?

In the field of fire prevention, there is already a noticeable reduction in the number of fire safety certificates to be assessed due to the reduction in commercial building activity and considerably reduced revenues are expected as a consequence of this. On the other hand the reduced number of fire safety certificate applications frees up additional time to carry out building inspections where in the past staff were more deskbound completing the necessary fire certificate paperwork etc.,

Looking at the situation from a societal perspective, respondents believe there is likely to be less money available for fire safety in buildings, with the potential to increase the risk of public fire safety hazards. This will in turn put greater pressure on fire officers to carry out building inspections. There may also be the potential for an increase in the number of fires due to increased unemployment and more people being at home for longer. There may also be a reduction in the amount being spent by families on fire safety (e.g.) not purchasing a smoke alarm etc. An increased number of fire call-outs impacts directly on the fire service budget as allocations for fire fees will be spent to quickly, with no possibility of a supplementary budget allocation being provided. Respondents say this is a factor totally outside the control of fire service management and impossible to calculate at this time.

Despite the budgetary constraints mandatory training will need to be maintained at least at current levels to retain the skills and knowledge currently in the service. If sufficient funding is not provided, current levels of service cannot be maintained and the service could be in breach of the requirements of the Safety, Health, Welfare at Work Act (2005). The service remains obliged to execute its statutory function and equally important is the need to replace and/or repair equipment to correct standards.

With reference to equipment maintenance etc., it is noteworthy that no training needs were identified in relation to the third core component of the business plan namely:- 'ongoing provision of new and refresher training in the maintenance of equipment and vehicles - required in order to comply with H&S legislation and Fire Services Acts'.

Respondents are concerned about the impact of reduced staff numbers and leaving vacancies unfilled, saying that 'if vacancies are not filled then more brigades will be called to incidents to make up the numbers and provide supervision for junior officers'. This could result in extra workload, an overextended workforce with potential for accidents, mistakes, work related stress claims or staff going on extended sick leave which would be a very costly outcome and impact negatively on resources.

In your estimation will the impact of these changes require staff to develop additional skills?

In addition to new/additional technical skills to keep abreast of improvements in fire-fighting techniques reference is also made to needing additional skills to:-

- Review operating practices
- Modernise how business is conducted

- Review procurement practices
- Enable staff to demonstrate greater business flexibility.
- Adopt a willingness to research alternative more efficient ways of managing the function and maximising efficiency.

Future developments in likely to have an impact on staff training & development

The future development likely to have the greatest impact on staff training and development will be complying with health and safety legislation and regulations as they relate to the fire service.

Fig 13 Fire Service

FIRE SERVICE

Training/Learning and Development Needs Identified	Nature of training or L&D need		Numbers identified as needing training								
	Mandatory	Effective Implementation	CFO	SACFO	ACFO /AFO	Fire Fighter	Station Officer/ Sub Station Officer	Brigade/ Fitter/ Driver Mechanic	Executive Tech /Engineer	Admin Grade BC/ME/C DO	Total
Ongoing provision of new and refresher training in all areas of Firefighting & Rescue Techniques, Health and safety, Dynamic Risk Assessment and associated areas – required in order to comply with H&S legislation & Fire Services Act 1981 & 2003	X		7	15	21	415	72	13	2	3	548
Breathing Apparatus & CFB refresher		X				49					49
Development of current level of knowledge and competence to deal with various Fire Safety and Building Control Matters – required in order to effectively implement the Monitoring & Enforcement role under Fire Services Act 1981 & 2003 and Building Control Act 1990 & 2007	X		5	13	22				2	3	45
Training for Open Sky Building Control Management system		X	1	3	4				1	5	14
First Responder		X				14					14
Operational Refresher		X				4					4
Sen officers instructor training		X		4							4
Junior officer development		X					4				4
Haz Mat		X					4				4
Driver training		X						3			3
Major emergency training		X								1	1
Overall Total			13	35	47	482	80	16	5	7	690

Section 2

Training Priorities for Local Authorities including Cross Functional Generic Training Requirements

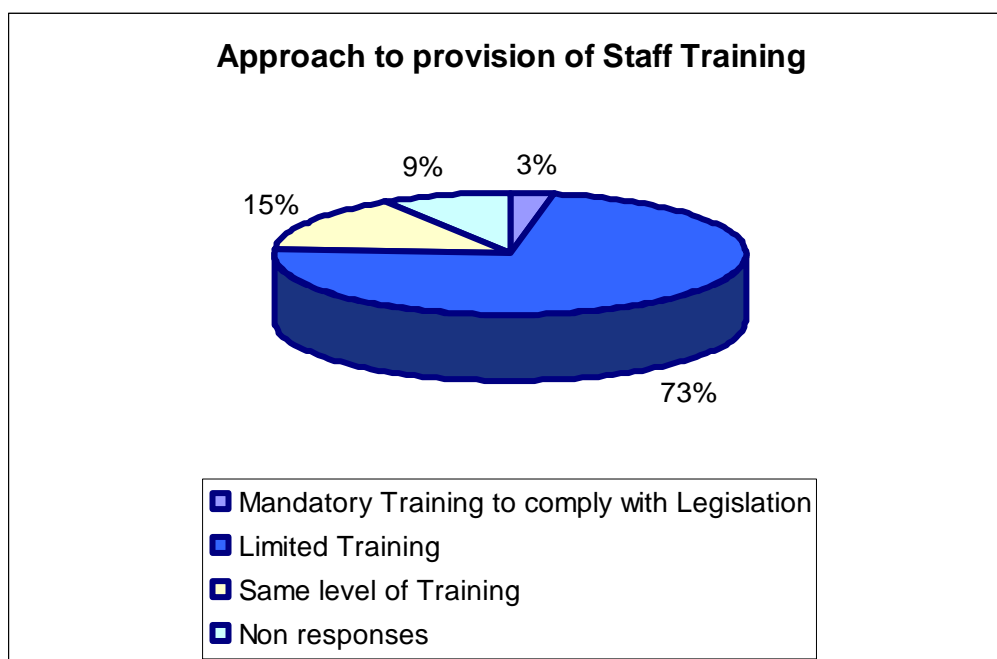
Section 2

1. Please identify which of the following statements best reflects the approach your local authority will be taking to the provision of staff training and development in the next two to three years?

The survey asked respondents to select from three (3) possible statements (see below) the one which best reflects the approach the local authority will be taking to the provision of staff training and development in the next two to three years

The results for the thirty-four (34) who responded are summarised below

We will only be providing mandatory training that is required to comply with legislation	1 (3%)
We will be limiting training to mandatory training plus other training for which a clear link can be made to achieving business goals.	25 (73%)
We expect to provide roughly the same level of staff training and development subject to close monitoring of the budgetary situation.	5 (15%)
Non response or Local Authority has not yet decided	3 (9%)



(G1) Approach to provision of staff training

2. Will budgetary constraints affect how you provide educational assistance to your staff?

With reference specifically to educational assistance the survey asked whether budgetary constraints will affect how the assistance is provided to staff. Twenty-seven (27) of the thirty-four (34) respondents (79%) said it would affect how it is provided with four (4) (12%) saying they had not yet formally decided what changes they would make. With three (3) non-responses to this question (9%) this means that all of the respondents expect to have to implement changes to their educational assistance programme as a consequence of the budgetary constraints.

2 (a) If yes or not formally decided yet please state what alterations you will be making to your educational assistance scheme

The thirty-one (31) respondents were asked to elaborate on what alterations (if any) they will be making to their educational assistance scheme. Below is a selection of the responses:-

- No change to education support levels but reduced support for travelling and subsistence
- No further applications for funding for educational assistance will be approved in 2009
- Priority will be given to those who have already commenced but not yet completed courses. Those currently doing a 3rd level course will be allowed to continue with current funding. Others may be asked to contribute half or all of the funding for courses they wish to pursue
- We will review each application in light of cost, availability of finance, benefit to the organization and previous level of assistance provided to that staff member
- No changes to be made to our staff education scheme and staff can still apply via PDP process. However approval for funding/part funding will only be given to specific courses which have organisational wide benefit e.g Cert in Local Govt studies, Health & Safety etc., or courses the staff member needs to operate effectively
- Reduction will apply but not determined yet if it will result in lower level of staff participation or lower levels of individual funding
- Focus to continue on Local Government related study programmes to primary degree level
- The Education Assistance budget is likely to be reduced in line with payroll deductions
- Decision taken to reduce funding from 80% to 20% for educational assistance
- We have reduced the 2009 budget for educational assistance. we have not changed the scheme but may have to operate on a first come first served basis before year end.
- Course types will be limited to those which are specifically relevant to people's jobs.

3. Will your local authority be prioritising any cross functional area training over the next two years?

Respondents were asked whether their Local Authority would be prioritising any cross functional area training over the next two (2) years and twenty-eight (28) (82%) said they would. Three (3) (9%) said they did not plan to and there were three (3) non-responses (9%)

3 (a) If yes then please specify the type of cross functional area training that is being considered and estimate the types and quantities of staff that you envisage availing of this training.

Respondents were asked to specify the type of cross functional area training that is being considered and estimate the types and numbers of staff that it is envisaged will avail of it. A table elaborating on the previous answer and providing this data follows (see Table 2).

Note:- It is important to record a number of caveats in the responses received.

- A small number of Local Authorities did not provide any of the information requested to complete this table
- A small number of respondents just said ‘all staff’ rather than specifying actual numbers
- A small number of respondents specified very large numbers e.g. 1000 staff or 200 staff which may have the effect of negatively skewing the numbers being reported.

Table 2: Cross Functional Training Needs (under consideration)

Course detail	No LA's	Grades	No's (estimated)
Health & Safety, inc More detailed knowledge of legislation and management responsibilities Safe Pass renewals Manual Handling CSCS (1 day) Occupational First Aid Safety Representative training VDU assessor training SSWPs	13	All grades will require different courses for different aspects of health & safety Senior & line management Eng & technical staff Clerical/admin staff Outdoor staff	 136 90 434 1990
People management skills, inc Performance management Motivating staff People management Coaching Line management development	12	Different categories of managers and supervisors will require different levels of training Senior managers Middle/line managers (inc analogous) Supervisors/Team leaders	 40 321 384
Financial Management/Budgetary Control/Value for Money	4	Technical & Admin Middle and Senior management Budget holders Senior/Middle management	50 20 30 10
Change Management	2	Senior Management Line mgmt staff (consisting of grade V to VII admin staff and analogous engineering/technical) Senior & Middle Management	20 90 170
Social Inclusion & Equality,	4	All staff	1000
IT training, inc Systems related training General IT training	3	Technical & Admin	691
Team working, inc Working in teams Managing teams	3	Senior managers Line managers (inc analogous) Clerical/Admin staff Outdoor staff	32 90 90 90
Project Management	3	Senior staff Technical & Admin Technical, Professional & Admin	10 12 20

Course detail	No LA's	Grades	No's (estimated)
Communication skills	2	Senior Management Line mgmt staff (consisting of grade V to VII admin staff and analogous engineering/technical) Assortment of grades	20 90 327
Procurement	4	Technical & Admin General employees Technical, Professional & Admin	20 10 30(approx)
Water caretaker function.	1	Engineering and General	18
Risk management	2	Technical, Admin & Outdoor	25
Returning to learning		General employees	10
GIS	2	General employees Technical staff	10 2
Local Government studies	1	Indoor staff	5
Executive MBA	1	Technician Admin	1 2
Night classes	1	Outdoor staff	10
Multiskilling - emphasis on developing competent autonomous working groups in env and roads	1	Outdoor staff	12
CPD related programmes	2	Technical/Professional staff	900
Business Continuity Planning (i.e. Dept. cross-skilling of staff)	1	Outdoor staff	100
Competency Framework	1	DOS, SEO's and SE's	30
ORACLE	1	Assortment of grades	65
Organisational awareness	1	Assortment of grades	90
Personal Development	1	Assortment of grades	379

Table 2 Cross Functional Area Training (under consideration)

The following additional courses were identified by respondents but without any staff numbers or grades being specified

- Customer Service *
(especially for critical services - reception, motor tax, environment, planning)
- Leadership Development
- Policy awareness e.g. induction, incremental, probation, attendance management, child protection, dignity at work, grievance & disciplinary
- Time and Stress Management
- Effective meetings
- Business team planning
- Local Government legislation
- Areas affecting corporate performance, delivery of corporate objectives etc.,

* Three (3) Local Authorities listed customer service as an area for cross functional training even though they did not elaborate on this by providing details of grades or estimated numbers of staff.

4. What objective on your Corporate Plan are these cross-functional area training initiatives aimed at addressing?

Respondents were asked to identify what aspect of their Corporate Plan the proposed cross functional training was intended to address. The responses can be aggregated under the following four aspects,

- To maximise high quality services by becoming more efficient and effective in how we do things.
- The objective of encouraging and assisting our staff in developing their full potential as valued employees of the Council and thereby enhancing the capacity of the Local Authority to achieve its corporate objective in a changing environment
- Achieve reduced costs for the organisation in targeted areas by means of more effective co-ordination across organisation.
- Achieve greater staff flexibility so as to facilitate short term redeployment and re-assignment.
- Establishing good internal and external communications strategies
- To enable staff potential to flourish through ensuring a healthy and safe work environment for all our staff and customers.
- The implementation of Government Policy and management of resources

5. As a Senior Managerial team what areas of staff training and development would you like to see the LGMSB prioritising for the coming years?

The survey asked respondents (the Senior Management Team) to identify the areas of staff training and development they would like to see the LGMSB prioritising in the coming years. A selection of the responses (directly quoted) is provided below followed by a list of the courses that were requested multiple times by respondents. As with other questions many respondents gave more than one answer and the information has been divided out for the purposes of analysis.

- Leadership and Motivation. In the current climate staff will need to be motivated and organised in their work practices.
- HR Management and HR best practice for line mgrs (middle mgrs) to include awareness for all staff of all HR/organisational policies. Focusing on areas such as attendance management, performance reviews, value for money etc.,
- Developing managers at all levels to manage employees effectively with the clear objective of efficiently achieving corporate goals.
- Essential training relevant to new legislation, guidance and circulars etc.,
Updates on legislative training for new HR/Superannuation/Payroll system
- Training relevant to PMDS/process appraisal and training needs analysis
- Training to realise true potential of IT LGMSB to get more involved in sourcing value for money IT courses
- A continuation and broadening of the emphasis on statutory training i.e. Health and Safety, Environmental Development etc., particularly for roads and water services and thereafter encompassing all functional areas where customer service and value for money are key
- Management of performance in times of reduced finance and human resource initiatives designed to maximise the use of in-house capacity/expertise to deliver training/development
- Training and development to assist managers and staff with significant limitations in resources. The strategic context should be set by the transforming public service agenda and the requirement of new legislative/regulatory changes.
- Management of change in the context of contracting resources. Change management specific training in setting objectives and targets relevant to the organisation and also setting appropriate measures for assessing same.
- Guidelines for developing and implementing corporate plans, annual reports and other relevant reports.

- Competency Framework - behavioural approach to employee development
- Training aimed at increasing flexibility to manage re-assignments, transfers and redeployments. Upskilling all staff particularly outdoor staff to ensure flexibility in the current economic climate
- Training to improve Local Authority skill sets
- LGMSB to work to get adjoining Local Authorities to work more closely together in relation to training at lower academic levels e.g. FETAC 2,3 & 4
- Increased use of peer learning within and between neighbouring authorities
- LGMSB to concentrate on low cost, high quality, short training courses (0.5day)
 - Devising case studies illustrating good practice in the areas of cross functional co-operation, Local Authority co-operation and inter agency collaboration
 - Increased use of peer learning within and between neighbouring authorities other than using outside expertise
- In addition to the above comments/suggestions and subject areas respondents listed the following for particular attention, with several being identified a number of times – where available the number of times is provided in brackets
 - Change management (5)
 - Leadership (5)
 - Project Management (3)
 - Financial management and Budgetary control (3)
 - Legislation skills (2)
 - Public Procurement - including changes in legislation (2)
 - Water Service related courses (2)
 - Health & Safety (2)
 - Resilience, Innovation & Creativity (2)
 - Heritage training in relation to planning (1)
 - Motivation (1)
 - GIS (1)

Particular mention is made to the following education programmes but respondents did not elaborate further in their answer

- Local Government studies
- Certificate/Diploma (IPA)
- Executive MBA

Future developments likely to have an impact on cross functional staff training & development

It should be noted by local authorities that the Transforming Public Services – Citizens Centred – Performance Focussed report published by the Dept. of the Taoiseach in late 2008 clearly identifies a need for staff involved in the design and delivery of services to the public to receive specialised training in areas such as the following,

- ◆ Systems analysis
- ◆ Business engineering
- ◆ Procurement
- ◆ Project management.

Section 3

Impact of Budgetary Constraints

Section 3

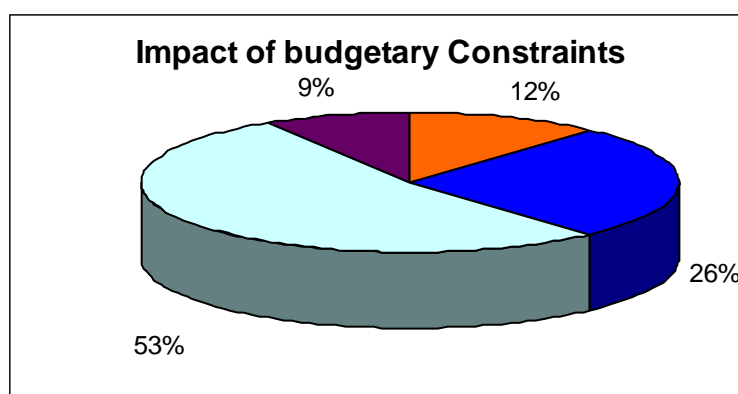
1. Does control and responsibility for the training budget in your local authority reside with the training section?

Respondents (Training Officers) were asked whether control and responsibility for the training budget reside in the training section or whether it is a mixture of both central and dispersed budgetary control. Twenty-two (22) of the thirty-four (34) respondents (65%) said control resides in the training section with twelve (12) (35%) saying it was a mixture of central and disposed budgetary control. There is no local authority who said control did not at least partially reside in training section. One local authority mentioned that in the past many Departments held a small budget for attendance at seminars etc., but this practice has now reverted to the training officer while another mentioned that full costing is in operation with training costs and related expenses being charged fully to each of the individual codes. The survey also asked those who had said it was a mixture of centralised and disposed budgetary control to elaborate on this by identifying to what extent the responsibility for the training budget was dispersed amongst the business units but none of the respondents supplied this data.

2. Please indicate which of the following statements applies to the agreed or proposed organisational training and development budget for your local authority in 2009

The survey asked respondents to select from six (6) possible statements the one which best reflected the amount by which training budgets have been cut in 2009.

Budget has been cut by 75% – 100%	0 (0%)
Budget has been cut by 50% – 75% .	4 (12%)
Budget has been cut by 25% – 50%	9 (26%)
Budget has been cut by 0% – 25%	18 (53%)
Budget has remained the same as it was for 2008	3 (9%)
Budget has been increased	0 (0%)



G2 - Impact of Budgetary Constraints

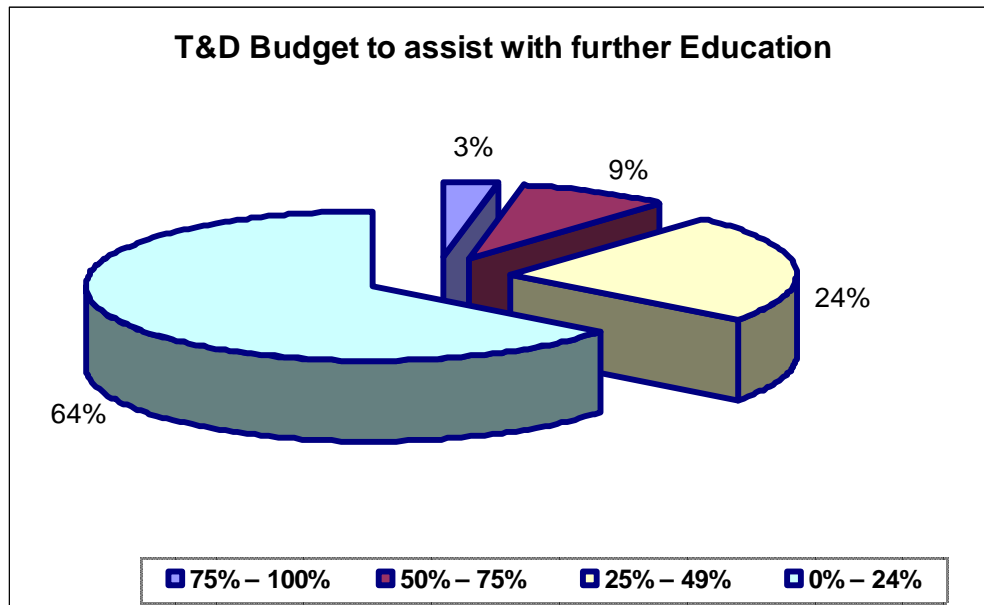
No further detail was given by any of the respondents to this question.

3. In percentage terms how much of the overall 2008 staff training and development budget was spent on assisting individuals to avail of further and/or higher education courses?

The survey asked respondents to select from four (4) possible percentage amounts (see below) the figure which best reflected how much of the overall 2008 staff training and development budget was spent on assisting individuals to avail of further and/or higher education courses

The results of those who responded are summarised below

75% – 100%	1 (3%)
50% – 75%	3 (9%)
25% – 49%	8 (24%)
0% – 24%	22 (64%)



G3 - Training & Development budget to assist with further education

4. **Up to 2008 what has been the most popular courses for which educational assistance has been awarded? Please indicate (in percentage terms) the degree to which each of the following levels of educational qualifications contributed to the overall approved spend in 2008 on educational assistance? PHD; Masters; Degree; Diploma; Certificate.**

The survey asked respondents to indicate (in percentage terms) the degree to which each of the following five (5) levels of higher education qualifications contributed to the overall approved spend in 2008 on educational assistance. The responses from the thirty-four (34) respondents have been clustered together for statistical purposes as each respondent recorded different percentages in response to each of the five (5) categories of higher education.

PhD

20% and over	0 (0%)
19% – 15%	1 (3%)
14% – 10%	0 (0%)
9% – 5%	3 (9%)
4% – 1%	1(3%)
0%	28 (82%)
No response	1(3%)

Masters

35% and over	1 (3%)
34% - 30%	1 (3%)
29% – 25%	3 (9%)
24% – 20%	4 (11%)
19% – 15%	0 (0%)
14% – 10%	8 (24%)
9% – 5%	13 (37%)
4% – 1%	3(9%)
0%	0 (0%)
No response	1(3%)

Degree

50% and over	1 (3%)
49%-40%	1 (3%)
39%-30%	5 (15%)
29% – 20%	10 (28%)
19% – 10%	8 (24%)
9% – 1%	6 (18%)
0%	2 (6%)
No response	1(3%)

Diploma

40% and over	2 (6%)
39%-30%	7 (21%)
29% – 20%	6 (18%)
19% – 10%	12 (34%)
9% – 1%	6 (18%)
0%	0 (0%)
No response	1(3%)

Certificate

70% and over	2 (5%)
69%-60%	2 (5%)
59%-50%	6 (16%)
49%-40%	5 (13%)
39%-30%	4 (11%)
29% – 20%	9 (23%)
19% – 10%	2 (5%)
9% – 0%	3 (8%)
No response	1(3%)

The survey then asked respondents to quantify up to 2008 and for each of the five (5) different categories of higher education the most popular courses for which educational assistance had been awarded. Four (4) of the respondents provided this information and the aggregated detail is provided below.

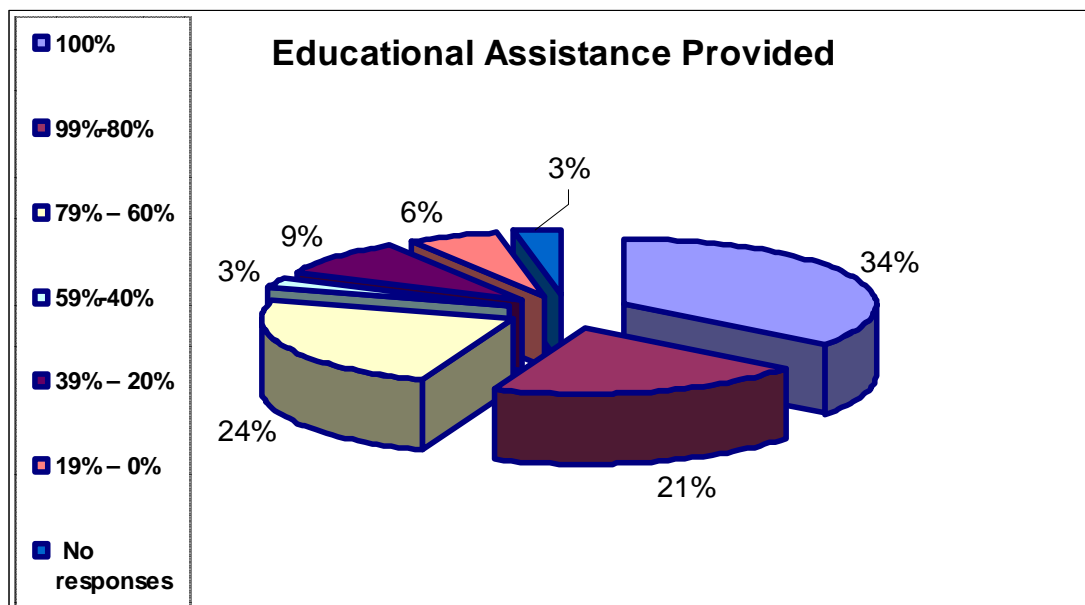
Masters	DCU Department of Environment sponsored MSc Spatial Planning MSc Health & Safety IPA/NUI MA in Local Government IPA/NUI MA in Public Management MA in Library and Information Services
Degree	IPA/NUI BA in Local Government IPA/NUI BA in Public Administration
Diploma	IPA/NUI Diploma in Local Government Studies Diploma in Safety, Health & Welfare
Certificate	IPA/NUI Certificate in Local Government Studies IPA Certificate in Management Development Certificate in Composting Certificate in Safety, Health & Welfare

Note:- Mention was made by some respondents that other courses which are funded do not come under any of these categories and the examples given were supervisory skills for the general services staff and the IPA Leadership in Local Government programme.

5. Please indicate the average level (in percentage terms) of educational assistance that your local authority has provided to staff in the past?

Respondents were asked to indicate the average level (in percentage terms) of educational assistance the local authority has provided to staff in previous years. Although this information was provided as just one figure by the respondents e.g. 95%, the data provided has been clustered into the following scales for analysis purposes.

100%	12 (34%)
99%-80%	7 (21%)
79% – 60%	8 (24%)
59%-40%	1 (3%)
39% – 20%	3 (9%)
19% – 0%	2 (6%)
No responses	1 (3%)



G4 - Percentage of Educational Assistance Provided

Statements from respondents accompanying the figures are recorded below:-

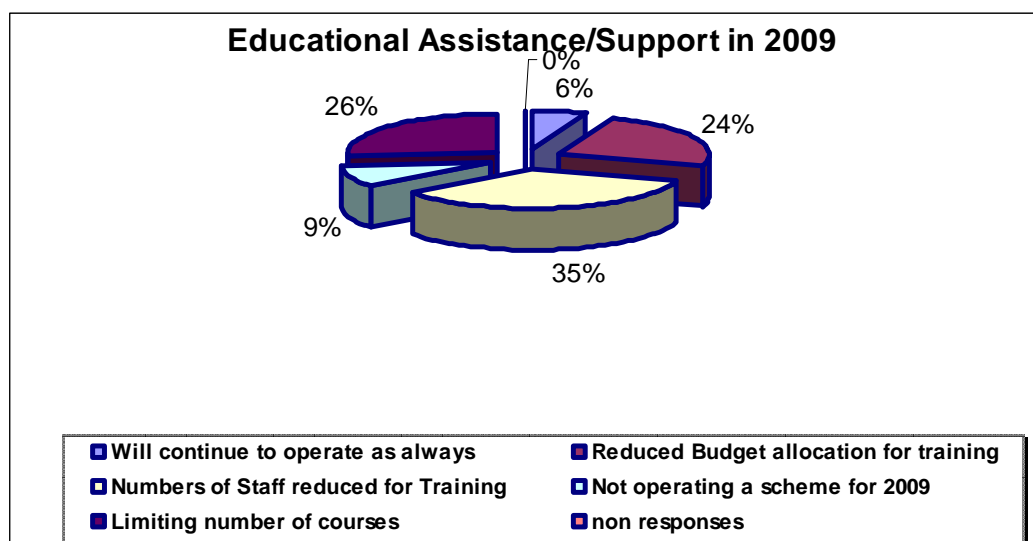
- All applications approved for education support receive a full refund (100%) upon successful completion of study
- Based on requests from PDPs essential training gets 100% funding. Further education courses will attract funding up to 75% of total fees
- Funding ranges from 25% to 100% depending on the course and its relevance
- Generally 75% (extra may be given in certain cases) - study leave is also given

Note:- Respondents appeared to interpret the questions about educational assistance in a variety of different ways, many giving the answer as a percentage of the overall training budget (this provided a very small percentage e.g. 0.5%) while others gave the percentage of staff members who applied for or availed of a scheme. Where possible contact was made with the respondent(s) who then provided the percentage of the overall workforce (rather than the percentage of the training budget) as required.

6. Please indicate which of the following statements most closely reflects your local authority’s approach to providing educational assistance/support in 2009?

The survey asked respondents to select from five (5) possible statements (see below) the one which most closely reflected the respondents approach to providing educational assistance/support in 2009. The results are recorded below:-

We will continue to operate the programme of educational assistance support the same as we always have.	2 (6%)
We have reduced budget allocation which will be achieved through reducing the level (%) of educational assistance being made available.	8 (24%)
We have reduced budget allocation which will be achieved through reducing the number of staff that will be approved to attend 3 rd level courses.	12 (35%)
We will not be operating a scheme of educational assistance/support for 2009.	3 (9%)
We have reduced budget allocation which will be achieved through limiting the number of courses that we will provide educational assistance/support for	9 (26%)
Non-response	0 (0%)



G5 – Approach to providing education assistance/support in 2009

7. Please indicate what (if any) courses you are likely to give priority to when deciding whether to provide educational assistance/support?

Respondents were asked to indicate what (if any) courses they were likely to give priority to when deciding whether to provide educational assistance/support. The responses provided are listed below.

- IPA Degree, Certificate & Diploma in Local Government Studies
- IPA Leadership in Local Government
- IPA Certificate in Management Development
- IPA BA in Public Mgmt
- Degree in Engineering / Degree in Law
- Euro Certificate in Irish
- Post Graduate Diploma in Environmental Studies
- Executive MBA (Corp) - DCU
- BER and similar courses
- Diploma in Library & Information Studies ,
- Any Health & Safety type course that is business related
- Any statutory courses
- Work related courses that are recommended/requested by the Local Director of Service or a Senior Manager

Respondents also described the criteria they will be using when allocating funding – a selection of the responses provided are recorded below:-

- On-going provision of educational assistance in respect of elective 3rd level courses will be limited to where there is a direct correlation between course requirements and its applicability to the applicant's role and the business goals
- Priority will be given to courses that are most closely aligned to the business needs, this has always been the case and is not a consequence of cutbacks
- No new approvals for 2009 except to assist in meeting statutory obligations regarding Health & Safety, and environmental issues
- We will continue to support those undertaking the second or subsequent years of a course, where we have supported the first year but no new applications
- In relation to new applicants priority given to first come first served and courses must be relevant to applicants line of work
- Courses which have relevance to the person's job as identified in PMDS

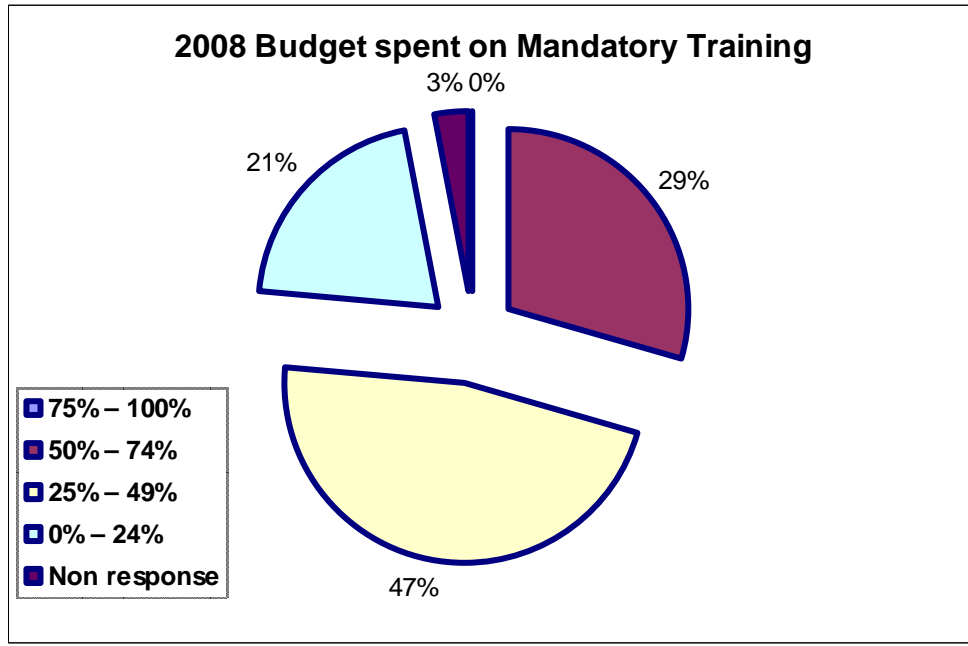
The IPA Degree, Certificate & Diploma in Local Government Studies were mentioned by eighteen (18) of the thirty (30) respondents (60%) either as part of a longer answer to the question or as the full response. One respondent said that priority will be given to the Certificate in Local Government Studies as it is 'the most commonly requested course'. Most respondents said that each situation will be looked at on a case by case basis with organisations operating a scale of financial contributions.

Note:- Several respondents indicated that they will continue to support fully those undertaking a course who have already had funding in previous years but are unlikely to accept any new applications and will not offer full funding.

8. What percentage of your 2008 staff training budget was spent on mandatory training required to comply with legislation as opposed to discretionary spending in order to improve staff performance?

The survey asked respondents to select from four (4) possible amounts (see below) to state what percentage of the 2008 staff training budget was spent on mandatory training required to comply with legislation as opposed to discretionary spending in order to improve staff performance. The responses from the thirty-four (34) respondents to this question are recorded below.

75% – 100%	0 (0%)
50% – 74%	10 (29%)
25% – 49%	16 (47%)
0% – 24%	7 (21%)
Non response	1 (3%)



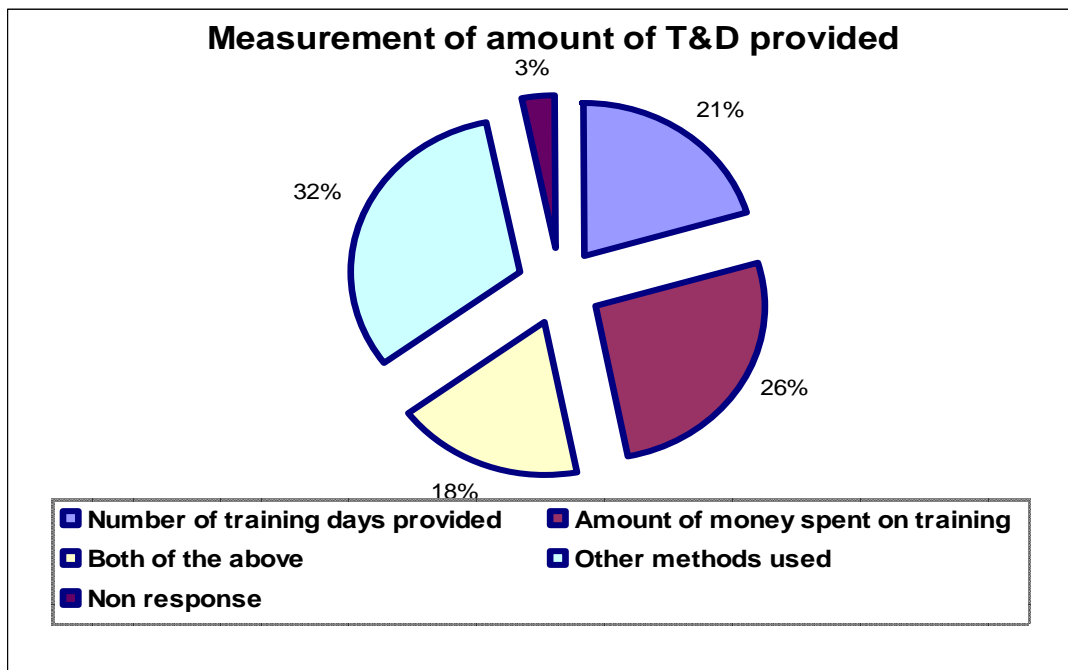
G6 - Budget spent on mandatory training 2008

9. Please outline how you currently measure the amount of staff training and development that is being provided by your local authority (i.e.) number of training days provided, amount of money spent etc.,

The survey asked respondents to outline how they currently measure the amount of staff training and development that is being provided i.e. number of training days provided, amount of money spent etc., The responses are recorded below.

Measurement of amount of Training being Provided

Number of training days provided	7 (21%)
Amount of money spent on training	9(26%)
Both of the above	6 (18%)
Other methods used	11 (32%)
Non response	1 (3%)



G7 - Measurement of Training & Development Provided

Supporting statements were submitted by a number of respondents particularly those who said they used ‘other methods’ to measure the level of training and development activity.

In general the following statements hold for each of the three responses,

- Number of training days are being recorded where a local authority has an existing training database or HR system (e.g.) Sage, in place.
- Amount of money spent on training is being captured through Agresso or other FMS. The calculation of the National Service Indicator (NSI) C.2 has ensured that local authorities have been capturing the amount spent on staff T&D as a percentage of total payroll.
- Other methods used would include measuring courses delivered against the actual annual training plan and the numbers that attended.

Conclusions

- 3.1 The majority of local authority respondents (i.e.) 22 (65%) have a centralised training budget only. The other 12 respondents indicate that they have a mix of centralised and dispersed training budgets.
- 3.2 53% of respondents cut their training budget for 2009 by between 0-25%. A further 9 respondents (26%) cut their budget by between 25-50%. 4 respondents (12%) cut their training budget by between 50-75%. While training budgets have been cut by less than 25% in 53% of the respondents it is likely that the training budget in these local authorities will be cut again in 2010. Traditionally training budgets are regarded as discretionary spending and as such are seen as areas where savings can be made.
- 3.3 In 2008 26 out of the 34 respondents spent between 25% - 74% of their staff training budget on mandatory training (see responses to Q.8). The remaining 7 local authorities spent less than 21%. This would suggest that if there is the same level of need for mandatory training in 2010 there will be little room for further savings for those local authorities that have already cut their training budget by between 50-75%. It should be noted however that while it is anticipated that there will be reduced demand for some mandatory training (e.g.) Signing, Lighting & Guarding at Roadworks, there will be increased demand for mandatory training in water services and environmental services staff. The anticipated savings may very well not be realised.
- 3.4 30 out of the 34 respondents indicate that up to 50% of their staff training budget is spent on educational assistance. 22 of these 30 local authorities spend up to 25% on educational assistance. For these 22 local authorities it may not be possible to make any further savings beyond 2009 if they have already reduced their budget allocation for educational assistance (see responses for Q.6).
- 3.5 The majority of local authorities (19) spend the bulk of their educational assistance spend on certificate level courses. Diploma courses are supported by the majority of local authorities a rate slightly ahead of the amount of support for Degree programmes. Overall the support for certificate, diploma and degree programmes shows strong support amongst local authorities for developing existing staff without existing undergraduate degrees.

- 3.6 While financial support for PhDs is very small the number of local authorities supporting staff financially to obtain Masters level qualifications is quite significant (i.e.) 24 local authorities (60%) spend up to 14% of their overall spend on educational assistance on Masters level courses.
- 3.7 Up until 2009 19 (55%) local authorities provided between 80%-100% educational assistance with 12 of those 19 offering 100% educational assistance. In addition a further 8 respondents (24%) provided an average of between 60-79% of funding. This would indicate that there may be some scope to reduce the overall spend on educational assistance by reducing the levels of financial support available for any one course. It should be noted however that only 8 local authorities have already (for 2009) reduced the overall level of educational assistance made available to individuals. Most respondents are choosing instead to either reduce the number of courses that will be entitled to education assistance or the number of staff who will be approved to attend 3rd level courses or perhaps a combination of both (see q 6).
- 3.8 3 out of the 34 respondents have indicated that they have discontinued their scheme of educational assistance for 2009.
- 3.9 13 (39%) of respondents indicate that they are currently able to measure staff training and development by the number of training days being provided. When combined with the open text field response supplied by those respondents that chose to supply an answer of 'other methods used' it would seem to indicate that the majority of Training Officers already possess the ability to capture and maintain accurate data on training provision other than the data required to complete the National Service Indicator (NSI) C.2. this would suggest that the introduction of the training module of the Core HR, payroll & Superannuation system will, for the 17 local authorities participating in the national project, be building upon existing business processes and stored information rather than introducing any additional data gathering workload.

Section 4

Skills gaps identified through the PDPs

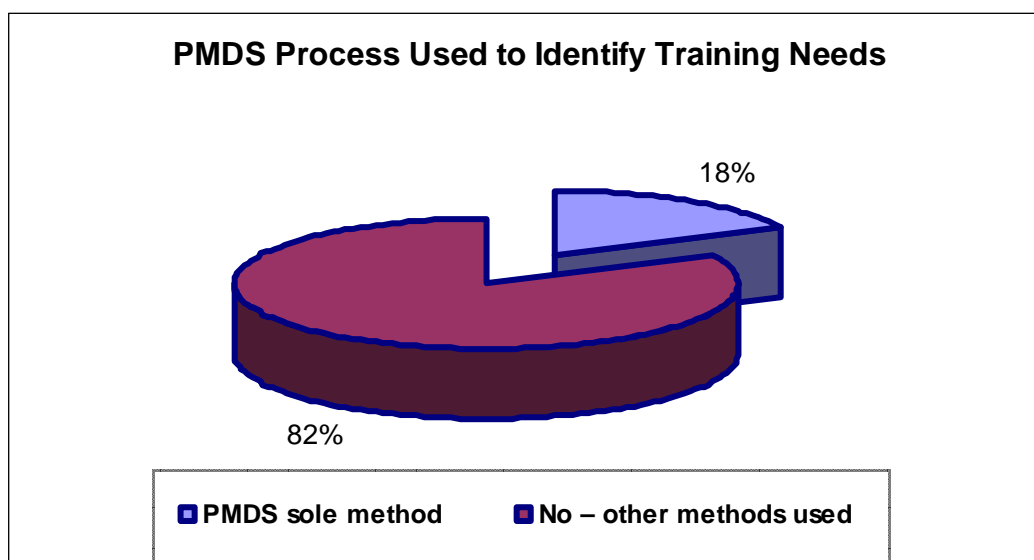
Section 4

Identifying the current skills gaps identified in the Personnel Development Plans

1. Are training needs currently being identified solely through the PMDS process?

The survey asked respondents to say to what degree the PMDS process is the sole method used to identify training needs or to what extent are other methods also used in conjunction with the PMDS process. The responses are :-

Yes - PMDS sole method	6 (18%)
No – other methods used	28 (82%)



G8 - Process used to identify training needs

1. (a) If no please indicate what other methods are being used?

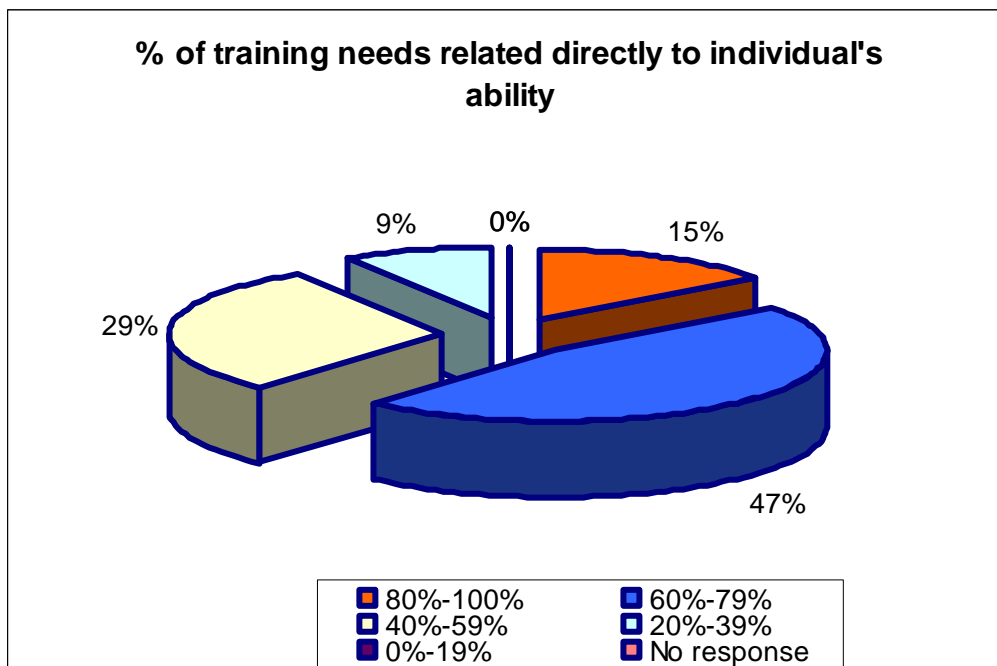
The twenty-eight (28) respondents who said they used other methods (to supplement the PMDS process) were asked to say what other methods they used and this information is recorded in the table following. Where the same answer was given by a number of Local Authorities this has been recorded for statistical purposes. In addition to this, several respondents listed a number of methods within the answer they gave and these have been separated out and recorded separately. The population used is the twenty-eight (28) who said PMDS was not solely used.

Other Methods/Approaches Used	No's.
Legislative requirement e.g. Health and Safety is scheduled as required regardless of whether or not it is requested on the PDP.	8 (29%)
Senior Management, have the opportunity to provide detail or make suggestions on training and development from an Corporate perspective.	5(18%)
Corporate training requirements may be identified for all staff e.g (Diversity)	2(7%)
Management are notified of new courses/conferences and nominate staff	1(4%)
Mandatory training needs, particularly those for Health and Safety are identified by using the training matrix, and ongoing cross functional consultation with Section Heads and Senior Management Team	3(11%)
Directorates and Business Units can make direct contact with training section (through the network of training representatives) and request a training support/intervention	3(11%)
As a result of changes to legislation, to support organisational policies and procedures or the introduction of new equipment all of which may require specific training. Such requests for training are examined and a decision is made on the basis of suitability of the course and financial costs associated.	3(11%)
Direct identification of training needs by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Line managers/Supervisors • Senior management • Health and Safety advisor • Training officer (through monitoring of training needs) • Staff themselves through emails/phone calls. (New staff or transferred staff may approach the training officer directly to request a course they need to meet statutory requirements for the post). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff/Team meetings 	7(25%) 1(4%) 1(4%) 1(4%) 5(18%)
Induction training	3(11%)
Induction training	1(4%)
Direct identification of training needs through the following forms:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increment forms • Probation • Risk assessment report forms • Exit interview forms • Review Forms 	4(14%) 2(7%) 1(4%) 1(4%) 1(4%)
Some exceptions are section/job specific courses – these are identified throughout the year as the need arises and not only at the time of PMDS	2(7%)
Training needs are assessed on an ongoing basis, sometimes needs may arise that were not identified on the TNA forms or in the Training Plan.	3(11%)

2. Based on your experience of the training element of the PDPs that have been submitted to the training section what percentage of training needs relate directly to an individual's ability to do their current job as opposed to individuals seeking to develop themselves for future promotional/career reasons?

Training officers (the respondents) were asked to say (based on their experience of the training element of the PDPs that have been submitted to the training section) what percentage of training needs relate directly to an individual's ability to do their current job as opposed to individuals seeking to develop themselves for future promotional/career reasons? The results of the thirty-four (34) respondents are below:-

80%-100%	5 (15%)
60%-79%	16 (47%)
40%-59%	10 (29%)
20%-39%	3 (9%)
0%-19%	0 (0%)
No response	0(0%)



G9 - Training needs related directly to individual's current role

3. Based on your experience of the PDPs that have been submitted to the training section what are the most identified skills and/or knowledge gaps identified for the following groupings/grades of staff? Where possible please identify the following for each grouping; (i) two skills/knowledge areas; (ii) the estimated number of staff that had requested it and (iii) whether the request is a generic request from the staff across the organisation or whether it is specific to a business unit?

Respondents were asked (based on their experience of the PDPs that have been submitted to the training section) what are the most identified skills and/or knowledge gaps for each of the following seven (7) grade groupings:-

1. Senior Managers – (ie) SEO/SE
2. Line Managers
3. Supervisors of Outdoor Staff
4. Clerical/Administrative
5. Engineering Staff
6. Outdoor General Operatives
7. Technical/Professional Staff

Where possible they were also asked to identify for each grade grouping;

- (i) two skills/knowledge areas;
- (ii) the estimated number of staff that had requested it and
- (iii) whether the request is a generic request from the staff across the organisation or whether it is specific to a business unit

The following seven (7) pages represent the aggregated results of the top fifteen (15) responses generated by each respondent in answer to the questions detailed above. The PDP requests for each location and the associated number of requesters (response to answer (i) and (ii)) were collated for each grade grouping to generate a national picture. The responses to the (iii) point whether the request is a generic request from staff across the organisation or whether it is specific to a business unit proved largely inconclusive as the vast majority of responses were organisation wide.

Firstly the number of respondents who listed a course was recorded and also the priority that was given by the training officer to this request (if any was) for that particular grade grouping. For the purposes of the table only, a priority of 8 or less was recorded as a high priority and this was further refined to identify the respondents who gave the course a priority of 1,2 or 3 for the grade grouping.

The net result is a table of the fifteen (15) most frequently requested courses through the PDP process by grade grouping and the associated priority which the training officer/organisation has given to each request.

Note:- It is important to record a number of caveats in the responses received.

- A small number of respondents did not assign any priorities to the PDP requests or gave multiple requests the same priority (i.e. several no. 1 priorities)
- A small number of respondents did not provide any employee numbers for the courses listed
- A small number of respondents mentioned that no PDPs had been returned for some of the grade groupings most often the Technical/Professional or SEO/SE's.
- A small number of respondents provided significantly more than two (2) courses per grade grouping

Table 3: Most frequently requested courses through the PDP process by grade grouping

Rank	Skill/Knowledge –Senior Managers (ie) SEO/SE	No. PDPs	No. Local Authorities	No. who gave High (1-8) priority	Of which the no. who gave a priority of 1/2/3
1	Managing people and Strategic Management	79	12	8	6
2	Financial Management/Budgetary Control/Agresso	59	3	3	2
3	Legislative updates / Management Briefings	55	4	2	0
4	Project Management	41	4	3	3
5	General Ledger/Browser Training	33	2	2	1
6	IT Skills - e.g. GIS, Agresso, MS Powerpoint etc.,	31	4	3	2
7	Public Procurement	31	2	2	0
8	Mentoring	29	2	2	1
9	Leadership in Local Government / Motivation	27	6	5	3
10	Media skills and public relations	19	3	0	0
11	Health & Safety and other statutory training needs	18	2	2	1
12	Employment investigation skills training	15	1	0	0
13	Time management	13	4	1	0
14	Interpersonal skills / emotional awareness	10	1	1	0
15	Change management	9	3	0	0

Rank	Skill/Knowledge – Line Manager	No. PDPs	No. Local Authorities	No. who gave High (1-8) priority	Of which the no. who gave a priority of 1/2/3
1	Supervisory Management *	567	18	15	3
2	Agresso, budget management, management reporting	172	8	7	1
3	Time/Organisational mgmt and Stress mgmt	106	5	2	2
4	HRM training including G & D & Dignity at work	102	4	4	1
5	Project Management	90	3	0	0
6	Legislation for functional area	81	3	3	0
7	Health & Safety and other statutory training needs	78	2	2	2
8	Financial management /Audit management	64	4	3	2
9	Meeting Facilitation/Minute Taking	60	2	1	0
10	Customer Care/Difficult customers	55	2	2	0
11	IT skills	41	4	3	2
12	Coaching/Mentoring	40	2	1	0
13	Conflict/confrontation/Communication	40	2	1	0
14	General Ledger/Browser Training	30	1	1	0
15	Change management	28	1	0	0

Notes

* One local authority wished to see policy development included as part of this skill/knowledge area

Rank	Skill/Knowledge – Supervisor of Outdoor Staff	No. PDPs	No. Local Authorities	No. who gave High (1-8) priority	Of which the no. who gave a priority of 1/2/3
1	Health & Safety (mandatory) & specific safety programmes	936*	11	10	9
2	Signing, Lighting & Guarding Roadworks (3 days)	267	13	12	12
3	Supervisory skills **	151	7	4	0
4	Safepass	145	2	2	2
5	Working in Teams	90	2	1	0
6	Line management programmes for outdoor staff **	82	3	3	1
7	Location of underground services	66	3	3	3
8	Computer skills /ECDL e.g, Introduction to PC etc.,	61	6	3	0
9	First Aid	34	3	3	2
10	Legislation for functional area	28	1	1	0
11	Plant operator training	20	1	0	0
12	Manual Handling	20	2	2	1
13	Risk assessment	15	1	1	0
14	HR Grievance & Disciplinary	15	1	1	0
15	MS Outlook	14	1	1	0

Notes

* One county = 600 with No. 1 priority

** One local authority wished to see policy development included as part of this skill/knowledge area

Rank	Skill/Knowledge – Clerical/Administrative	No. PDPs	No. Local Authorities	No. who gave High (1-8) priority	Of which the no. who gave a priority of 1/2/3
1	Computer skills ECDL/word/outlook/excel (+adv)	1161	22	13	4
2	Agresso, adv agresso, PO, In & exp, /payroll/ reporting	948	16	9	4
3	Customer Care/Difficult people	472	10	7	0
4	Dealing stress/mg violence/aggression i.e. handling conflict	118	3	2	0
5	Child protection awareness sessions	100*	1	1	0
6	Courses relating to personal and professional development	76	3	1	1
7	Working in teams	60	1	1	0
8	General Ledger/Browser Training	51	1	1	0
9	Minute taking/report writing	49	2	1	0
10	Interview preparation skills	47	2	0	0
11	Time Management	39	2	2	0
12	Communications skills	28	2	2	1
13	First Aid	28	2	2	1
14	Certificate/Diploma in Local Government	12	1	1	1
15	Legislation for functional area	3	1	1	0

Notes

* One county = 100 with No 4. priority

Rank	Skill/Knowledge – Engineering	No. PDPs	No. Local Authorities	No. who gave High (1-8) priority	Of which the no. who gave a priority of 1/2/3
1	MapInfo	154	6	2	0
2	Project Management	121	11	4	2
3	AutoCAD	102	6	2	0
4	Public Procurement/Contract documents/ Construction Contracts	114	11	4	2
5	Health & Safety mandatory training and other stat training needs	83	4	3	2
6	Updates knowledge/legislation to meet changing demands	80	3	2	0
7	Management/Supervisory skills *	74	7	5	1
8	GIS	52	2	1	0
9	3rd level e.g IPA Cert/Diploma/Degree in Local Govt or Law	43	3	1	1
10	Technical report writing	25	1	0	0
11	Agresso for budget holders inc managing/tracking income and expenditure	20	1	1	0
12	Project vision	20	2	1	1
13	MXRoads	18	1	0	0
14	Financial Management and value engineering	12	1	1	1
15	Change management	11	1	0	0

Notes

* One local authority wished to see policy development included as part of this skill/knowledge area

Rank	Skill/Knowledge – Outdoor General Operatives	No. PDPs	No. Local Authorities	No. who gave High (1-8) priority	Of which the no. who gave a priority of 1/2/3
1	Health & Safety at roadworks, other statutory training needs	1191	14	12	12
2	Specific safety skills	700*	1	1	1
3	Signing, Lighting & Guarding at roadworks	511	8	8	8
4	Computer skills, /ECDL / basic measurements	414	9	4	1
5	Safepass	392	4	3	1
6	Manual Handling	345	3	2	0
7	Location of underground services	252	3	2	1
8	Safe systems of work practice (SSWP) (1day)	115**	1	1	1
9	First Aid	108	7	5	4
10	Abrasive Wheels	96	3	3	0
11	Mini digger training	62	3	1	0
12	Operating a Chainsaw	58	2	1	1
13	Power Tool training	45	1	1	0
14	Dealing with Difficult people	40	2	2	0
15	Confined spaces	27	2	1	0

Notes

* One county = 700 with No 1. priority

* One county = 115 with No.3. priority

Rank	Skill/Knowledge - Technical/Professional	No. PDPs	No. Local Authorities	No. who gave High (1-8) priority	Of which the no. who gave a priority of 1/2/3
1	Autocad skills	194	9	4	1
2	MapInfo	174	9	3	1
3	GIS	97	3	3	1
4	Contract Law/Planning Law	65	2	2	0
5	Project management	60	3	2	1
6	Adobe Photoshop	58	2	1	0
7	Management and Supervisory training *	47	4	4	0
8	Legislation update/training for functional areas	47	4	2	0
9	Specific computer package e.g. Agresso/computer skills	42	5	4	3
10	Expert witness (incl courtroom skills)	42	4	3	1
11	EPA Site suitability assessment for waste water treatment	33	4	1	0
12	MX Roads	33	1	0	0
13	Health & Safety mandatory training	31	2	2	1
14	Inspection skills	29	2	0	0
15	Building Energy rating/ Building control/ regulations	30	4	2	0

Notes

* One local authority wished to see policy development included as part of this skill/knowledge area

4. **In your opinion which of the staff training and development needs identified in question 3 above will be or has been given priority in 2009 or 2010? Please rate each of the potential 14 courses listed in the answers you provided to question 3 in scale of 1 – 14 with 1 being the course that you think will receive (or has received the highest priority).**

Respondents were asked (irrespective of grade grouping) to prioritise each of the fourteen (14) courses previously listed (2 courses for each of the 7 grade groupings) on a scale of 1 – 14 with 1 being given to the course or courses that they think will receive (or have received) the highest priority.

The responses received back identified the following courses as being those that have (or are likely to be) given priority in 2009/2010:-

Health & Safety training, of which the following courses are the highest priority (please note the number of local authorities indicating that this was a priority is shown in the brackets)

CSCS training (18)

SLG at Roadworks (15)

1 day H&S at Roadworks (6)

First Aid (including defibrillation) (5)

Location of Underground Services (5)

Safe Pass (3)

People Management/General management skills, of which the following courses are the highest priority (please note the number of local authorities indicating that this was a priority is shown in the brackets)

People Management/Management Development skills (7)

Leadership (3)

Supervisory skills (2)

Financial management for line managers, of which the following courses are the highest priority (please note the number of local authorities indicating that this was a priority is shown in the brackets)

Agresso (5)

Financial management/cost control (4)

General IT skills (5)

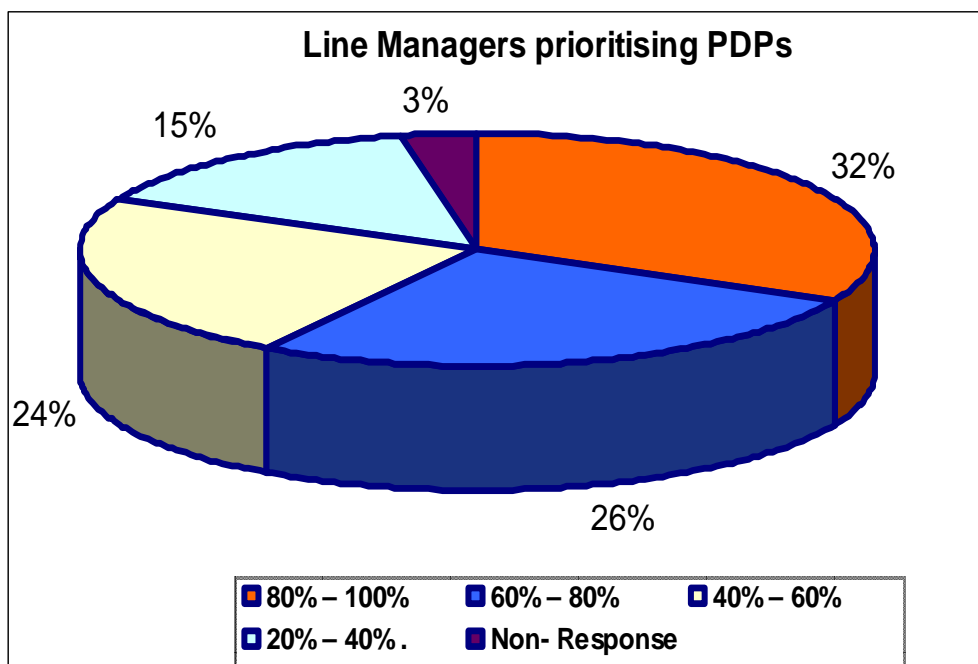
Project Management (3)

Educational Assistance – Cert & Dip in Local Government (3)

5. In your opinion which statement below best describes the extent to which line managers in your local authority that are involved in conducting PDPs are prioritising individual training and development needs for their staff.

Respondents were asked to say which of the statements below describes the extent to which line managers who are involved in conducting PDPs are prioritising individual training and development needs for their staff. The responses of the thirty-four (34) respondents are recorded below

80% – 100% of line managers prioritise the individual training and development needs of their staff.	11 (32%)
60% – 80% of line managers prioritise the individual training and development needs of their staff.	9 (26%)
40% – 60% of line managers prioritise the individual training and development needs of their staff.	8 (24%)
20% – 40% of line managers prioritise the individual training and development needs of their staff.	5 (15%)
Non- Response	1 (3%)

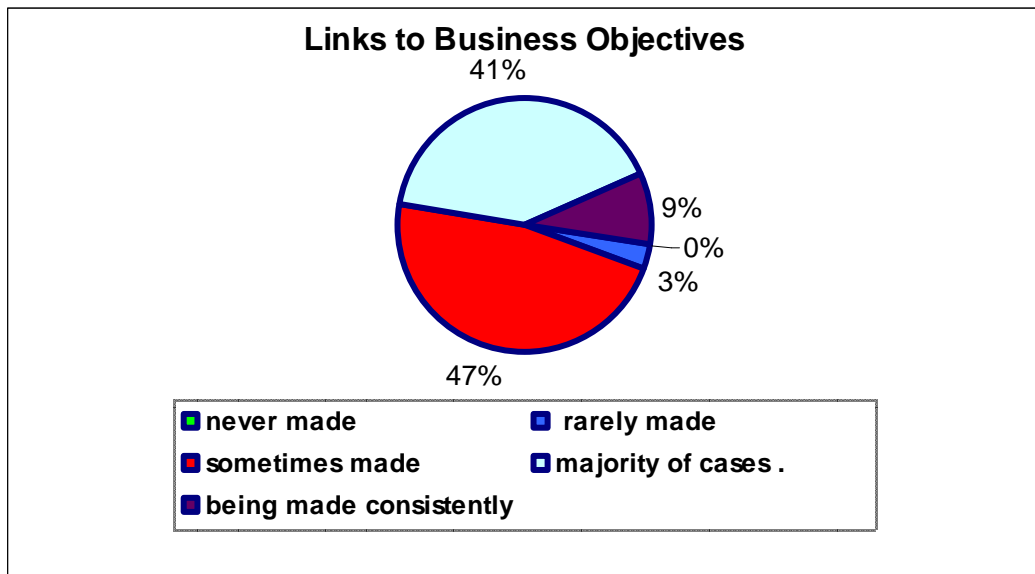


G10 - Line Manager prioritising individual training needs

6. Based on your experience of the PDP process in your local authority are line managers clearly linking staff training and development needs to the business objectives of their units sections. Please select which of the following statement best reflects the situation in your local authority.

Respondents were asked to select from five (5) possible statements (see below) the one which (based on their experience of the PDP process in their locality) identified the extent to which line managers are clearly linking staff training and development needs to the business objectives of their units/sections. The responses are recorded below :-

Links are never made	0 (0%)
Links are rarely made	1 (3%)
Links are sometimes made	16 (47%)
Links are made in the majority of cases .	14 (41%)
Links are being made consistently	3 (9%)

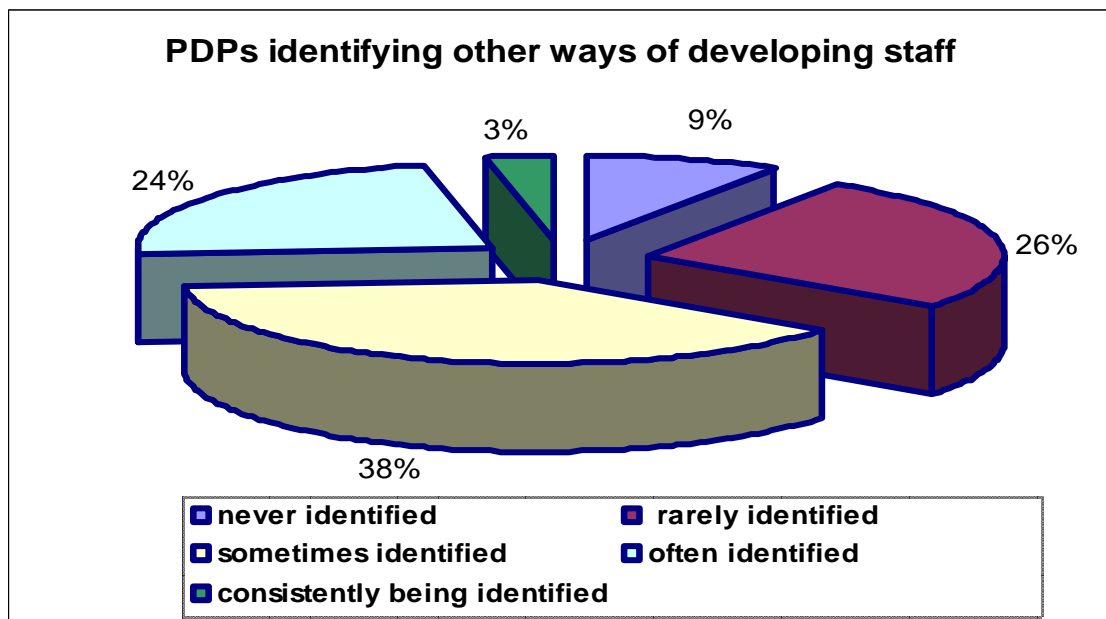


G11 – Linking staff training to business objectives

7. To what extent are PDPs identifying other ways of developing staff other than by formal training and educational courses? Please indicate which statement best reflects the situation in your local authority

Respondents were asked to select from five (5) possible statements (see below) the one which best identified the extent to which PDPs are identifying ways of developing staff other than by formal training and educational courses. The responses are recorded below:-

Other ways of developing staff are never identified	3 (9%)
Other ways of developing staff are rarely identified	9 (26%)
Other ways of developing staff are sometimes identified	13 (38%)
Other ways of developing staff are often identified	8 (24%)
Other ways of developing staff are consistently being identified as an alternative	1 (3%)



G12 - Identifying other ways of developing staff

8. Please outline the method (if any) used to convey to individuals and line managers the status or outcome of requests for training/education course.

Respondents were asked to outline the method (if any) used to convey to individuals and line managers the status or outcome of requests for training/education courses. The responses of the thirty-four (34) respondents follow. Where the same response was made by several respondents this has been recorded for statistical purposes.

Outcome of requests for courses	Nos.
Individual selected for course based on PDP requests are notified either by email or letter. Their line manager is also notified at that time.	7 (21%)
Separate individual and/or departmental requests for information are replied to but no formal method exists. Individual training reports are available on request – otherwise staff are not notified	4 (12%)
Training officer makes contact with individual or their supervisor in the case of indoor staff and with general services supervisor for outdoor staff	2(6%)
For education assistance courses staff are always directly contacted and line manager is also advised of the outcome. Reports of training and development provided on request to staff members and line managers.	2(6%)
Discussed at the 6 monthly/ half year review of PDPs	2(6%)
No method used to convey to individual and/or line manager the status or outcome of request for training/education identified through PMDS.	2(6%)

Below are additional answers provided to the above question which demonstrate the range and diversity of methods being used to inform staff of the outcome of their training and development requests. Particular attention is drawn to the e-solutions being used.

- Employee receives a letter confirming the course they have identified on their PDP has been organised. Letter includes the aims, objectives, venue, date and time etc., However approval is needed from line manager before he/she can attend.
- Formal correspondence is issued for all applications received. Direct contact is also made with each individual to discuss/clarify all applications.
- Staff are notified by a calendar request in outlook express or by post if they are successful in getting a place on a course
- Status of training request can be viewed by both line managers and staff members on the empowerment computer system (indoor staff) Reports for the outdoor staff can be generated on request to supervisors.
- Corporate training plan updated regularly on intranet
- Training schedule is presented to management team every quarter. Line managers are advised and delegates are identified 3 weeks before commencement of course
- Staff member and line manager are both notified via email when the training course has been scheduled. There is no formal structure in place (mainly due to resource issues) to reply to PDP requests where the courses are not being provided in the short term. Notification is only sent when the course is scheduled.
- The Training Officer acknowledges receipt of the training and development portion of the PDP and advises the staff member of the status of their request outlining the budgets under which the various training will be considered.
- Individual/line manager notified when managerial approval is given
- Inclusion on the various section, area or organisation training plans.
- Meeting with line manager to outline key training requests received and where the training office will be able to provide training
- As requests for training are received through the PMDS process training is organised based on demand and staff are notified to attend the session
- Staff are contacted (via letter/email) and advised if they are allocated a place on a course. Information is not conveyed until the relevant course is scheduled.

8. (a) Please indicate what percentage of line managers/requesters would be notified of the status of their training request in advance of their next PDP review meeting.

Respondents were asked to indicate what percentage of line managers and/or requesters would be notified of the status of their training request in advance of their next PDP review meeting. The responses of the thirty-four (34) respondents are recorded below. As each answer given was an absolute number or a range of numbers e.g. 40-45%, the responses have been clustered in the following table for analysis purposes.

100%	8(23%)
99%-80%	0 (0%)
79% – 60%	2 (6%)
59% – 40%	4 (12%)
39% – 20%	2 (6%)
19%-1%	1(3%)
0% or None	14(41%)
No response	3 (9%)

The large number of zero responses is largely due to the fact that many organisations do not appear to record this information centrally as is illustrated by the following statements which accompanied the zero responses.

- Hard to quantify, the line manager as a rule is only notified in cases where the requested training is going ahead or where they asked to be notified.
- There is no direct link between notification of status of training request and PDP meetings, so it would be difficult to give a percentage here
- This information would not be available corporately. Each business unit has responsibility for its own area but they do not keep this type of data
- We have a policy in place where line managers keep a log of the training received by their employees. About 10% of staff would request details of the training they received during the year. Units also have read only access to our training database.

One the other hand organisations who were able to say that 100% of staff would be notified explained that it was possible because as one respondent said ‘all staff receive their up-to-date training record (outlining the training they received in the previous 12 months) from the line manager at the beginning of each year in advance of their PMDS/PDP’.

9. Based on your experience of the training element of the PDPs already submitted what percentage of staff within your locality would have all or part of their training requests met before their next PDP review meeting?

Respondents were asked (based on their experience of the training element of the PDPs already submitted) to indicate what percentage of staff within the organisation would have all or part of their training requests met before their next PDP review meeting. The responses provided are recorded below. As each answer given was an absolute number or a range of numbers e.g. 40-45%, the responses have been clustered in the following table for analysis purposes.

100%	1(3%)
99%-80%	2(6%)
79% – 60%	5(15%)
59% – 40%	15(44%)
39% – 20%	6(17%)
19%-1%	1(3%)
Difficult to say	4(12%)
No response	0(0%)

A number of supporting statements (see below) were also provided:-

- We are hoping because of the information provided to line managers that training discussed with staff as part of this years PDP will be reflective of the current economic climate and help us to see where the main skills/knowledge requirements are. With this in mind we are hoping to be able to provide a part of all PDP requests by means of a combination of external and internal training and on the job coaching.
- We aim to give one course per staff member for all returned PDP forms
- Staff are asked to prioritise their requests and list three (3) courses. While we would aim to provide a greater percentage of the training requested there appears to be a pattern where staff fail to include mandatory or Health and Safety training in the PDPs.
- The majority of training has been provided to outdoor staff who have not submitted PDPs at this stage.

Conclusions

- 4.1 Evidence supplied by respondents in Section 4 corresponds to the evidence supplied by business units in section 1 in that the majority of local authority business units identify training needs through a combination of PDPs and by means of team planning and staff meetings. Only 6 respondents (18%) identify training needs through PMDS alone. Of the other 28 local authorities who use 'other methods' the Training Officer responding has indicated that in addition to input directly found from managers of business units it is mainly training individuals on foot of directions from the Senior Management Team and/or a result of new external event (eg) introduction of new legislation.

62% of the respondents state that over 60% of training needs identified in the training portion of their PDPs relate to the skills the requester needs to do their current job as opposed to possible future career/job needs. This is a high level of response and would suggest that training towards a 'resource led' system of staff training and development based on clearly identified business needs/goals (see response to Q.1 in section 2) is achievable .

- 4.2 The response to Q 6 in this section would suggest that the links between staff training and development needs and business needs/goals are not being as consistently made as they should be if a true 'resource led' system of staff training & development provision is to be achieved. While the figure of 50% of respondents indicated that links are either in the majority of cases or consistently being made we need to move more respondents from the 'sometimes made' category (47%) up towards the 'consistently being made' category' (9%).
- 4.3 The response to Question 5 of this section would also indicate that a third of all local authorities (39%) could improve upon the extent to which line managers are prioritising requests for training and development. While nearly a third of respondents (32%) indicate that prioritisation is occurring 80 – 100% of the time there is another third where line managers are only prioritising less than 60% of the time. Reduced training budgets all mean that there will be much less training and development being provided. Staff will need to know this up front during their PMDS meeting and therefore only vital requests should be included in the completed PDP form.
- 4.4 The responses received from individual local authorities for Q 3 in section 4 allow for further conclusions to be drawn as to the likely need for specific courses for specific grade groupings. While a detailed survey might need to be conducted if a detailed breakdown of numbers and specific grades within the groupings used here is required in the future, the details supplied here should be current enough for the next 2 years to gauge what types of courses are required by individual grade groupings.
- 4.5 The prioritisation given by Training Officers in response to Question 4 of this section is almost identical to the prioritisation for cross functional training given by the SMTs in section 2 of the survey. The top 5 priorities identified by the Training Officers are all within the top 6 priorities identified by the

SMTs. It can be concluded from this that the following five areas of cross-functional training should be the priority over the next couple of years:-

- ◆ Health & Safety training including CSCS courses
- ◆ People management/Management Development skills for line managers/supervisors
- ◆ Financial management for line managers i.e. Agresso
- ◆ General I.T skills training
- ◆ Project Management

While the fact that 9 of the respondents (27%) indicate that ways of developing staff other than by formal training are either often or consistently being identified on PDPs it should be noted that the majority (73%) are either only sometimes (38%), rarely (26%) or never (9%) being identified. If formal training opportunities will decrease as a result of the budgetary situation other options of staff development will need to be availed of. The responses received here indicate that the majority of local authorities will be starting from a very low level with these alternative forms of staff development.

- 4.6 The responses received to Q 8 of section 4 would indicate that individuals and their line managers are only being notified of the outcome of their training request where they have been successfully placed on a course. It seems that the outcome of requests for educational assistance are usually responded to in each individual case and that updates on outcomes are provided on request by individuals or line managers but no formal process seems to exist for notifying individuals in the majority of local authorities..
- 4.7 It should also be noted that in 21 authorities (62%) line managers will receive notification of the outcome of a training request before the next PDP less than 59% of the time. In 14 of these 21 local authorities notification is never made before the next PDP. However it is also noted that in 8 local authorities the status of PDP requests is known in advance of the PMDS review meetings 100% of the time and for all staff.

64% (22) of all responding local authorities indicated that 59% of their staff members have to date gotten all or part of their training requests met.

Section 5

Training Interventions Being Employed

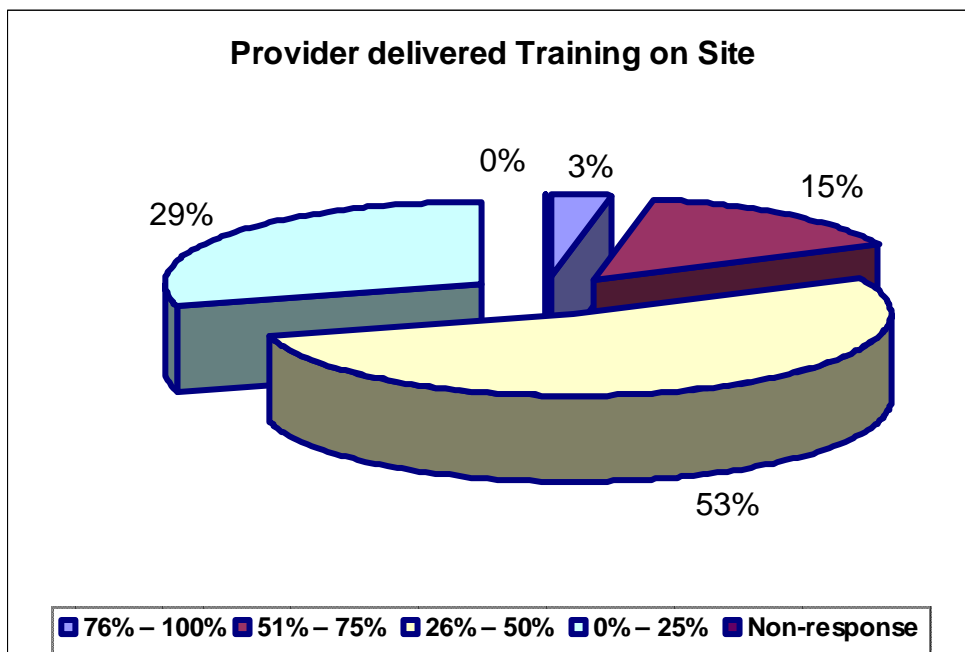
Section 5

- Please estimate what percentage of all of the training and development delivered in the recent past would have fallen into each of the categories outlined below**

Respondents were asked to estimate for each of the six (6) categories outlined below what percentage of the training and development delivered in the recent past would have fallen into each category. The responses for each category have been clustered to provide more meaningful data for analysis purposes.

a) Bought in training providers to deliver the training on site

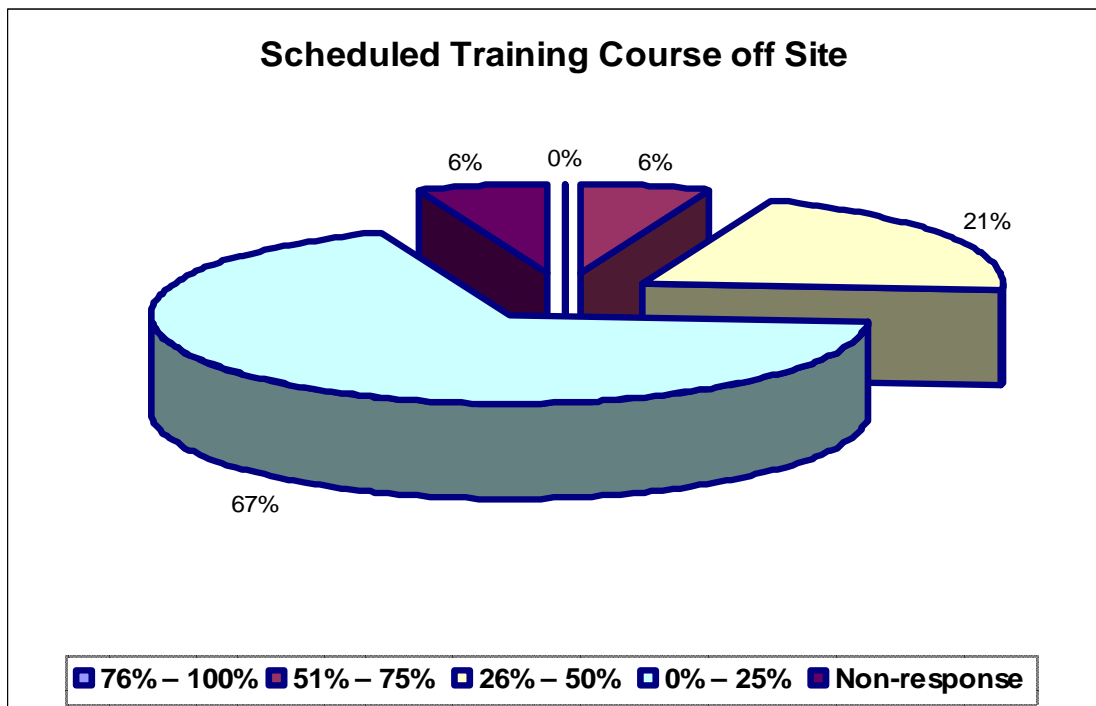
76% – 100%	1 (3%)
51% – 75%	5 (15%)
26% – 50%	18 (53%)
0% – 25%	10 (29%)
Non-response	0(0%)



G13 – On-site training delivery

b) Sent staff to attend a scheduled training course off site

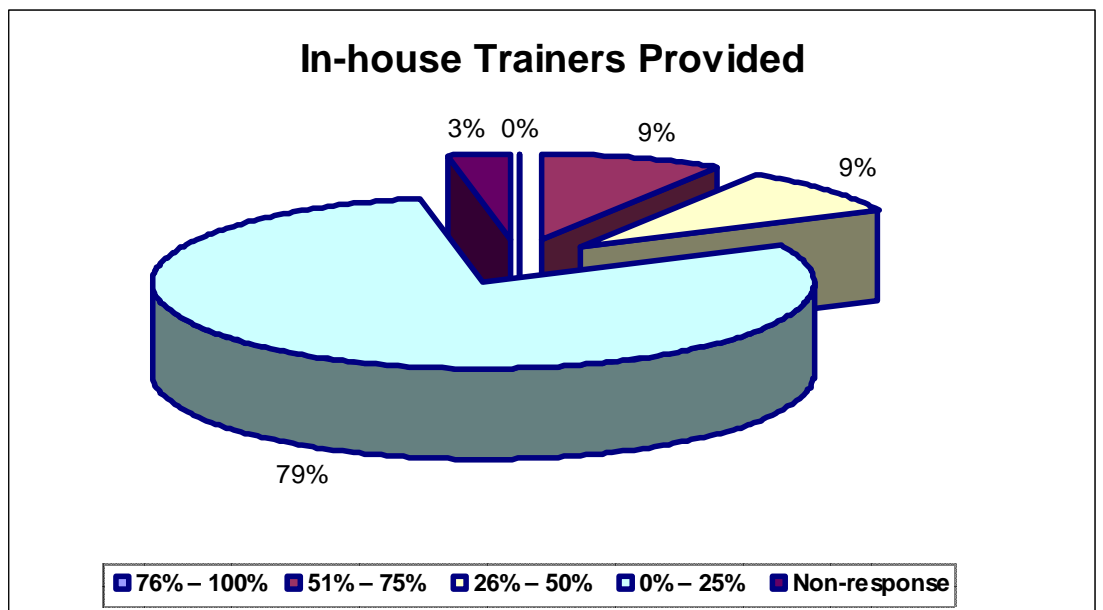
76% – 100%	0 (0%)
51% – 75%	2 (6%)
26% – 50%	7 (21%)
0% – 25%	23 (67%)
Non-response	2(6%)



G14 – Off-site training delivery

c) Used in-house trainers to provide training to staff

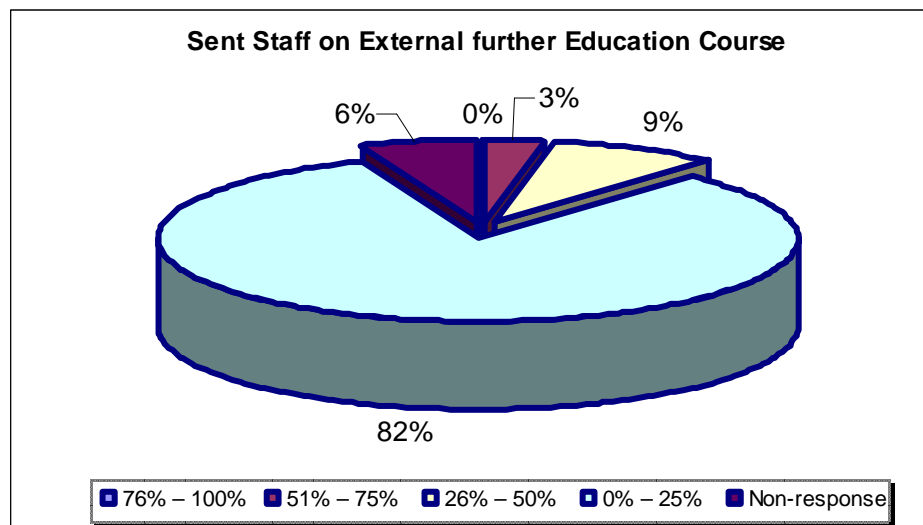
76% – 100%	0 (0%)
51% – 75%	3 (9%)
26% – 50%	3 (9%)
0% – 25%	27 (79%)
Non-response	1 (3%)



G15 - In-house trainers delivery

d) Sent staff on an external further/higher education course

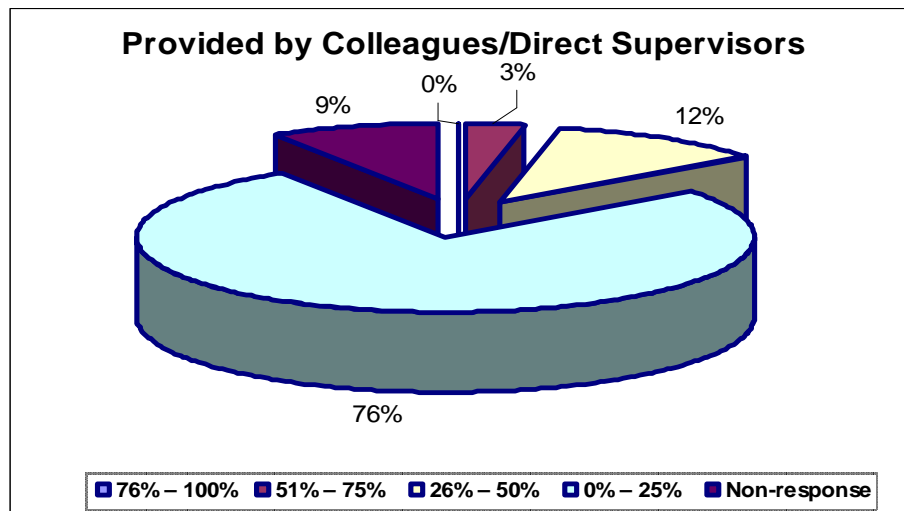
76% – 100%	0 (0%)
51% – 75%	1 (3%)
26% – 50%	3 (9%)
0% – 25%	28 (82%)
Non-response	2(6%)



G16 - External Assistance Further Education Courses

e) **On the job training provided by colleagues and/or direct supervisors**

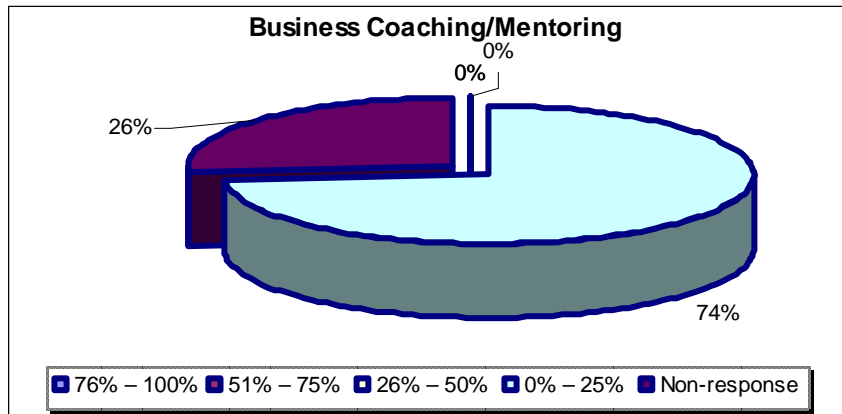
76% – 100%	0 (0%)
51% – 75%	1 (3%)
26% – 50%	4 (12%)
0% – 25%	26 (76%)
Non-response	3(9%)



G17 - Training Provided by Colleagues/Direct Supervisors

f) **Business coaching and/or mentoring**

76% – 100%	0 (0%)
51% – 75%	0 (0%)
26% – 50%	0 (%)
0% – 25%	25 (74%)
Non-response	9(26%)



G18 - Business Coaching/Mentoring

2. Who organises ‘the on-the-job’ training that take place in your local authority?

Respondents (training officers) were asked to say who organises ‘the on-the-job’ training that take place in the organisation selecting from the following:-

Direct line manager	28 (82%)
Training Officer	4 (12%)
Other	2 (6%)
Not applicable	0 (0%)
Non-response	0(0%)



G19 - Who organises on-the-job training

2. (a) If other please state who organises the ‘on-the-job’ training

Following on from the answers provided in the previous question respondents who answered ‘other’ were asked to elaborate on who organises the ‘on-the-job’ training in their organisation . One respondent said it is a combination of the line manager and the training officer while the other said that while it is mainly the training officer some Departments may organise some specialist training themselves e.g. Finance Dept and I.T Dept. In addition to this they went on to say that the Fire Service typically organise virtually all its own training presumably because of the specialist/technical nature of the courses they require.

3. If on-the-job training is provided in your local authority please indicate what form it will take and which categories of staff are the main beneficiaries?

Respondents were asked to consider if on-the-job training is provided in the organisation what form it takes and what categories of staff are the main beneficiaries.

A selection of answers provided (directly quoted) are listed below :-

On the job training and its beneficiaries
Newly appointed staff (either recruited or transferred) are the main beneficiaries. It usually takes the form of one to one coaching by the employee that previously held the post (outgoing staff will train incoming). The Council transfer policy endeavours to arrange a 1-2 week cross over period to allow this training to occur.
Senior/more experienced staff provide job specific training on a one to one basis with recently recruited/reassigned/promoted staff
Induction - all new staff are provided with induction packs and in house training takes places bi-annually.
In-house trainers provide on the job training to staff - can be a mixture of grades/levels and subjects e.g. aggresso, intranet publisher etc., Takes place in training room or class room type environment, may be followed by written or practical assessment as appropriate. Beneficiaries are both indoor and outdoor.
Responsibility for existing staff communications (either one to one or in groups) of new policies/procedures, practices legislation etc., to new/existing staff. All staff at some stage benefit from on the job training.
On the job training is usually provided by the staff member's colleague or line manager or can be provided by the 'in house expert' in that field e.g. one to one training on website updating, mapinfo etc., all categories of staff benefit, but new or transferred staff would account for a large percentage of the training
Coaching by experienced members of staff in specific areas. Library i.e. local history - those staff involved in public information services. All sections - agresso finance organised by Finance - Fire service deliver on the job training. The main categories of staff that benefit are Library Assistants, Assistant Engineers and Technicians. Delivered to both indoor and outdoor staff also.
On the job training is provided across the organisation for all grades of staff, particularly in the climate where more cross functionality is a requirement.
It depends on the nature of the Business Unit. In some units it is highly organised and formal e.g. Motor Tax, CSC where work is process orientated.
No formal method exists to capture the extent of on the job training at present, it does take place but it is very hard to quantify – it is informal, as the need arises and is not formally recorded.

4. Does your local authority have staff that have been identified as an in-house training resource?

Respondents were asked if they had staff working as in-house resource(s)

YES	33 (97%)
NO	1 (3%)
Non-response	0(0%)

Further to this, respondents were asked to elaborate on the sections where in-house training is active and the types of training being delivered this way.

Below is a table of the main business units within the Local Authorities delivering in-house training, the courses being delivered in this way (not every section deliver every course), and the number of times a particular area of training was specified or reference was made to having in-house instructor(s) for that subject. Many local authorities appear to have many instructors, one respondent saying that there are in-house trainers operating throughout the organisation and another saying that there are 12 manual handling instructors working throughout the organisation. The numbers below represent the number of Local Authorities who specifically mentioned they deliver the corresponding course using in-house instructors though it may not exclusively be for the unit mentioned i.e. they may have an organisational wide remit.

Table 4: Sections in the Local Authorities delivering in-house training

Section/Business Unit	Training Provided	No of Local Authorities
Roads/ Transportation and Infrastructure	Manual Handling * (delivered by many other units)	17
	CSCS Signing, lighting and guarding at roadworks	16
	Health and safety at roadworks (1 day)	9
	Safe Pass	5
	CSCS Location of underground services	2
	Non-national Roads	2
	Roads maintenance unit (on outreach from RTC)	1
	Winter maintenance	1
	Abrasive wheels	1
	Other tool-box type talks	1
	Surface Dressing	1
	Safe Systems or Work Practices	1
	Confined spaces	1
	Driving instruction	1
Corporate Services Human Resource / Employee Relations	Induction	7
	PMDS (also delivered by other units)	6
	Equality	1
	Absence management	1
	Flexi time	1
	Grievance and Disciplinary	1

	Industrial Relations training	1
Finance	Agresso (delivered also by staff not in Finance)	14
	PPP Public Procurement	2
	ORACLE financial systems procedures	1
	Corporate Risk Management	1
I.T.	Mapinfo	3
	GIS Basic (delivered throughout the organization)	3
	Workplace assessment training	1
	Web based training	1
	Project Management	1
	Internet and Intranet	1
	Contact Management	1
Civil Defence	Occupational First Aid	3
	Defibrillator Refresher	1
	Critical incident	1
Health & Safety Unit	Health & Safety awareness/induction training	10
	Health & Safety legislation training	1
	Risk assessment (for outdoor staff)	2
Fire Service	Fire Safety Awareness Training	5
	Fire Service Training	1
	Fire Warden Training	1
	Fire Brigade Training	1
Corporate T&D	Generic skills e.g.	1
	Clerical Officer & Grade IV Personal Development	
	Management Development	1
	Modular training on specific subjects eg. Teamwork	1
	Time Management	1
	Telephone Techniques	1
	Letter writing	1
	Minute taking	1
	I.T. training	1
Customer Care	1	
Motor Tax	Customer Service Centre Motor Tax Processes	1
Library	Frontline training (commencing shortly)	1
Water Services	Water Services training	2
Housing unit	Housing training	1
Environmental Sciences	Environmental Sciences Training	1

5. If your local authority uses in-house trainers do they generally possess a training qualification?

Respondents were asked if the in-house trainers have training qualifications

YES	30 (88%)
NO	4 (12%)
Non-response	0(0%)

The 30 respondents were then asked to state the most common qualification(s) of the in-house trainer(s) – the responses are provided below. Many training officers listed several qualifications and they have been recorded accordingly to give the clearest national picture possible. It is interesting to note the different levels and colleges in-house trainers have attended and the various qualifications they have achieved.

One respondent makes the point that no qualifications are available for those providing in-house Agresso training while another respondent makes the point that though most of the in-house trainers have been trained as trainers (presumably through the basic train the trainer programme) they have no formal qualifications for delivering in-house courses.

Qualification	Nos.
Instructional Courses	
Train the Trainer (basic competency qualification)	12
Train the Trainer (FETAC Level 6 – 3 day course)	5
Train the Trainer (IPA – 6-8 day course)	1
Train the Trainer (FAS Certified or NUI Maynooth)	1
NUI Certificate in Training and Continuing Education	2
CIPD Certificate in Training	2
Certificate in Adult Guidance (NUI)	1
Technical Courses	
FETAC Manual Handling Instructor Course	5
Trainer/assessor - CSCS Signing, Lighting & Guarding at Roadworks.	4
Safe Pass instructor course	2
FETAC Level 5 Certificate in Health and Safety	1
UCD Certificate and UCD/DCU Diploma n Health and Safety	1
Managing safely in construction (train the trainer) - (CIF approved)	
RoSPA Abrasive Wheels	1
Workplace assessment instructor training	1
BSc Economics, Diploma in Safety Health & Welfare at work (Health and Safety Officer)	1
Library services Frontline training instructor	1
Presentation skills (accredited by ILM)	2
ECDL Certificate in training professional	1

6. Does your local authority provide business coaching to your management staff?

Respondents were asked whether the local authority provided business coaching to the management staff

YES	9 (26%)
NO	22 (65%)
Non-response	3(9%)

6 (a) If yes how many management staff benefit from this type of coaching.

Respondents were then asked to elaborate on this answer and state how many management staff benefit from this type of coaching – while some people reported that all staff had received business coaching a list of the directly reported supporting responses is provided below.

- I believe all management have completed this kind of coaching over the years
- Six (6) staff have already benefited and a new coaching initiative is currently being introduced into the management programme -there are approx 40 staff who will be given option to avail of business coaching
- One or two staff members attend the IPA Leadership in Local Government course each year and it has an element of coaching /mentoring included.
- Business coaching was provided to the senior management team in 2008 but this practice has now ceased due to budget cutbacks.
- Some senior managers have received coaching as part of management development courses they attended and individual courses of study they pursued.

7. If yes to Question 6 then is the business coaching provided by internal or external business coaches?

The nine (9) respondents who said they offered business coaching were asked to say whether it is provided by internal or external business coaches or a mixture of the two.

Internal	0 (0%)
External	5 (56%)
Mixture of the two	4(44%)
Non-response	0(0%)

8. Does your local authority provide career mentoring to any of your staff?

Respondents were asked whether the local authority provided career mentoring to any of the staff

YES	15 (44%)
NO	19 (56%)
Non-response	0(0%)

8(a) If yes what types of staff benefit from career mentoring in your organisation?

Respondents were then asked to elaborate on this answer and state what type of staff benefit from career mentoring in the organisation - a list of responses (directly quoted) is provided below.

- Engineering, Technician and Technical staff through graduate mentoring programmes
- It is not a formal process but all staff benefit from mentoring/coaching from their supervisory staff
- At present it is open to all administrative staff – we hope to roll it out to outdoor staff later this year
- This is currently being developed in conjunction with an application for CPD and will be aimed at Professional/-Technical staff. The new competency framework will include mentoring for all grades of staff
- Technical and Engineering staff and it is proposed to roll out to administrative staff
- Engineering and technical staff through CPD - all staff through the PMDS system.
- The CPD programme has a significant mentoring process and the main beneficiaries are the professional staff
- There is no regularised process in operation at the moment, it is informal only

Note:- Reference to career mentoring being used as part of the engineering and technical CPD programmes was recorded nine (9) times and being used for administrative staff was recorded five (5) times.

9. Does your local authority currently use a competency development framework/matrix to identify what training is required by specific grades/sections of staff?

Respondents were asked whether the organisation currently use a competency development framework/matrix to identify what training is required by specific grades/sections of staff

YES	10 (29%)
NO	24 (71%)
Non-response	0(0%)

9 (a) If yes please identify the specific grades/sections of staff for which these competency frameworks/matrices have been developed?

The ten (10) respondents were asked to elaborate and identify the specific grades/sections of staff for which these competency frameworks/matrices have been developed. The responses (directly quoted) are listed below.

- Health and Safety training matrix was provided by LGMSB and is being adapted for use
- Outdoor staff, all roads, housing and environmental services staff. Courses for all outdoor staff are identified in consultation with local management and trade unions under the partnership process
- We are developing a competency based training infrastructure for all our operational staff and it will be rolled out shortly.

10. Does your local authority currently possess an I.T. training room?

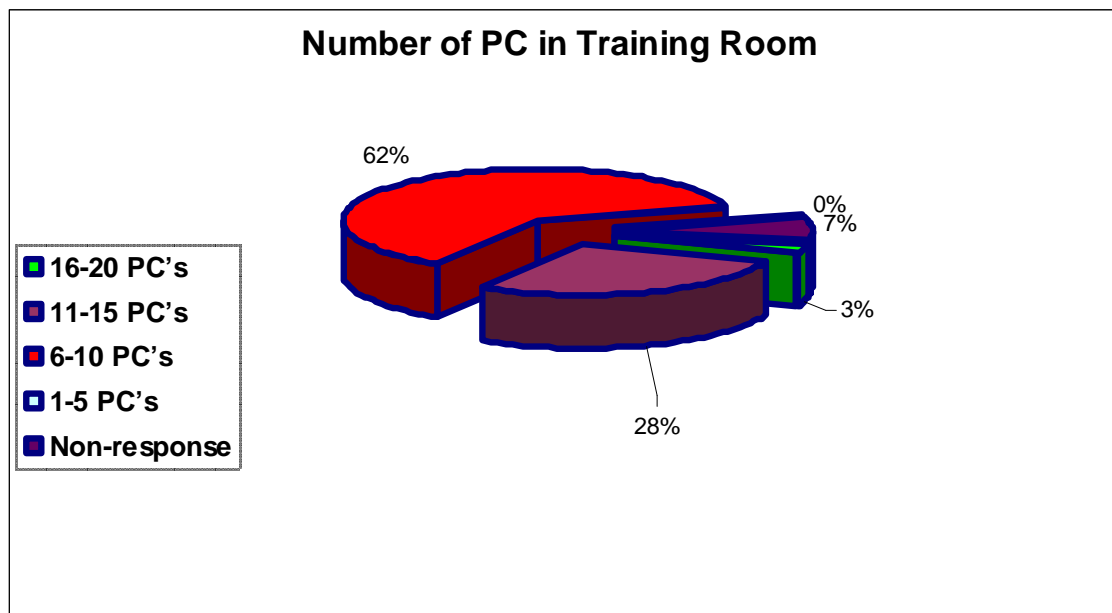
Respondents were asked whether the local authority have an I.T. training room

YES	29 (85%)
NO	5 (15%)
Non-response	0(0%)

10 (a) If yes how many PCs are contained in the training room?

The twenty-nine (29) respondents who said they have an I.T. training room were then asked to say how many PC's are available in the training room for training purposes.

16-20 PC's	1 (3%)
11-15 PC's	8 (28%)
6-10 PC's	18 (62%)
1-5 PC's	0 (0%)
Non-response	2(7%)



G20 - Number of PC in training room

Conclusions

- 5.1 The function of buying-in-training continues to be the most popular option for Training Officers in response to an identified training need.
- 5.2 27 respondents (79%) state that they use the option of using in-house trainers less than 25% of the time. This would indicate that for the majority of local authorities there is (i) a very low base level of this kind of training activity or (ii) a low level of recording this type of training.
- 5.3 26 respondents (76%) state that they use on the job training options less than 25% of the time. As in the case above for in-house trainers a conclusion could be drawn that either there is (i) a very low base level of this kind of training or (ii) a very low level of recording of this type of training activity.
- 5.4 25 local authorities (74%) indicate that they use the business coaching and/or mentoring option less than 25% of the time. In response to Q 6 of this section it can also be determined that 22 local authorities don't provide any business coaching to their management staff. Once again it should be noted that this is a very low base level of activity for this training option.
- 5.5 Where on-the-job training is taking place it is being organised by the staff members' own direct line manager in the majority (82%) of local authorities rather than the training section. Where it is being availed of the principle of it being the responsibility of the line manager to organise seems to be embedded.
- 5.6 33 of the 34 respondents have indicated that they possess in-house training resources. In addition to this it should be noted that 30 out of the 34 indicated that their in-house trainers have training qualifications. This is a very high level and indicates that the majority of local authorities have access to qualified in-house trainers. The breadth of courses identified in table 4 of this section as being delivered in-house is very broad.
- 5.7 19 respondents indicated that they do not provide career mentoring to any of their staff. It should be noted that there were 15 respondents who indicated that they are providing career mentoring to all or some staff. 9 local authorities use career mentoring as part of their CPD with Engineers Ireland but it should also be noted that 5 respondents also have introduced CPD programmes for their administrative staff.
- 5.8 Only 10 respondents indicated that they were currently using a competency development framework to identify what training is required by specific grades/sections of staff. The responses supplied seemed to indicate that competency frameworks, where used, seem to be primarily in place for outdoor operational staff.
- 5.9 The vast majority (29) of local authorities (85%) possess an I.T. training room. Of these 29 respondents 9 authorities approximately one third (31%) have between 11 and 20 PCs. In addition 18 other respondents indicated that they have between 6 and 10 PCs. These are valuable resources to have.

Section 6

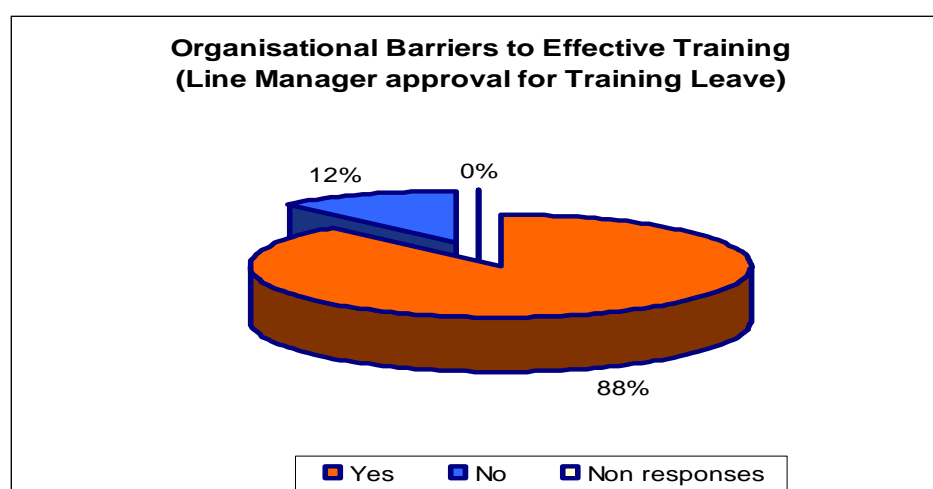
Organisational Barriers

Section 6 **Organisational barriers to effective training**

1. Does your local authority currently require line managers to approve a request for training leave in advance of staff attending a training course?

Respondents were asked whether the organisation require line managers to approve a request for training leave in advance of staff attending a training course

YES	30 (88%)
NO	4 (12%)
Non-response	0(0%)

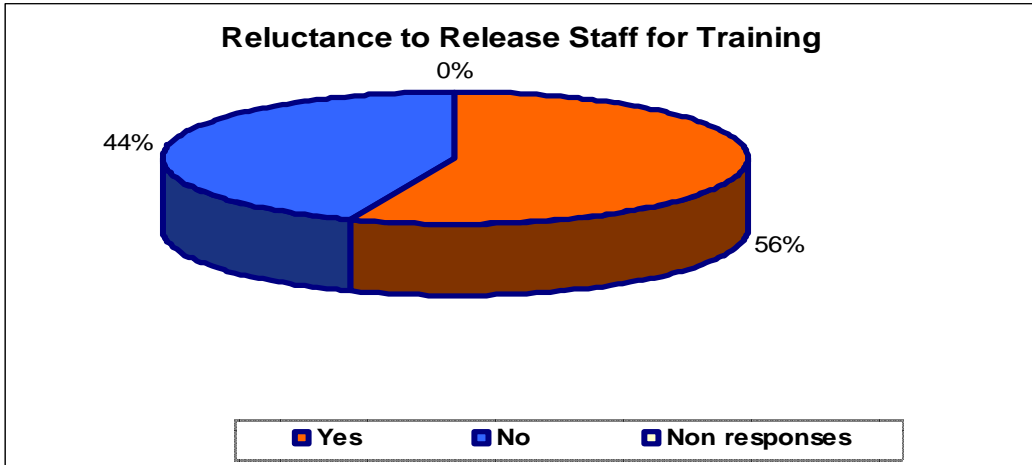


G21 – Approval for training leave in advance of staff attending

2. Would you identify the reluctance to release some staff for scheduled training to be an issue in your local authority?

Respondents were asked whether there is a reluctance to release some staff for scheduled training and whether it is an issue in the organisation.

YES	19 (56%)
NO	15 (44%)
Non-response	0(0%)

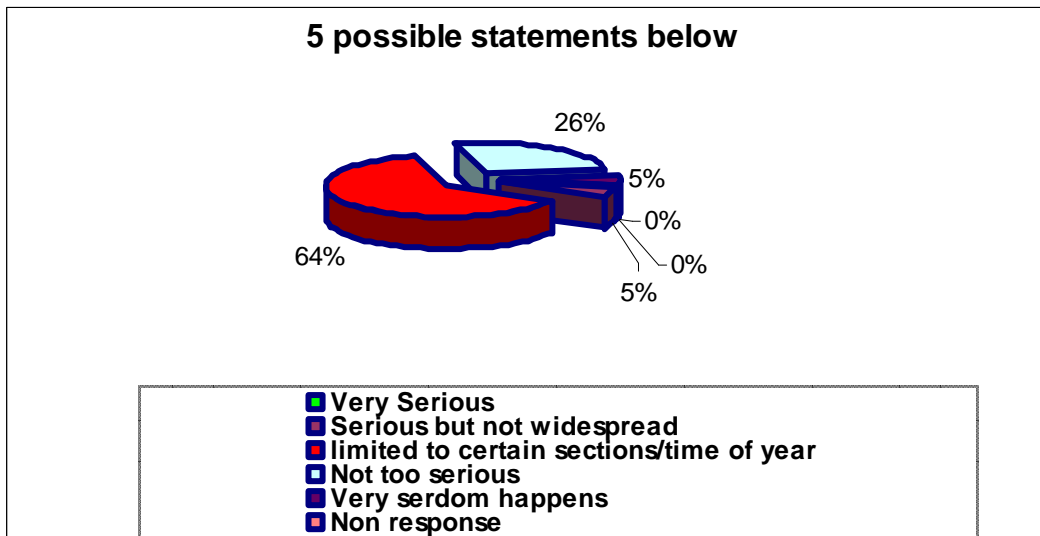


G22 - Reluctance to release staff for training

3. If you answered yes to question 2 how would you rate its seriousness? Please choose one of the following statements

The nineteen (19) respondents who said there was a reluctance were asked to rate the seriousness of that reluctance by selecting from the five (5) possible statements below.

Very serious. It is a widespread occurrence	0 (0%)
Serious but it is not widespread	1 (5%)
It is limited to certain sections and/or certain times of the year	12 (64%)
Not too serious. It happens occasionally	5 (26%)
Very seldom happens	1(5%)
Non-response	0(0%)



G23 – Degree of reluctance to attend training

4. Based on your experience of staff training courses provided or arranged by your local authority over the last 2 to 3 years what would be the average (%) rate of ‘no shows’ that would apply to all courses?

Respondents (training officers) were asked (based on their experience of staff training courses provided or arranged by the organisation over the last 2/3 years) what would be the average percentage rate of ‘no shows’ that would apply to all courses. The range of answers is recorded in the table below.

20% – 15%	9 (26%)
15% – 10%	14 (41%)
10% – 5%	8 (23%)
5% – 0%	3 (9%)

5. In your opinion what would be the single greatest contributor to staff not making themselves available for training courses organized by your Council?

Respondents (training officers) were asked to list the single greatest contributor in their organization to staff not making themselves available for training courses. A table of the thirty-four (34) responses is recorded below and where the same reason was given a number of times this has been recorded for statistical purposes.

Reason for ‘no show’ at training courses	Numbers
Work load and work commitments on the day – time constraints	16(47%)
Insufficient staffing numbers to cover absence – section unable to release staff due to busy periods e.g. motor tax. Managers not in a position to release staff due to work schedules/workloads	8(24%)
Sick leave/annual leave/special leave on the day	4(11%)
Family and personal commitments	3(9%)
Anxiety – literacy concerns – lack of confidence	3(9%)

Other reasons (directly quoted) that were provided by respondents were:-

- The relevance of the training may not be apparent to the nominated participant. This usually happens when courses are arranged (e.g. customer service) and a line manager nominates staff members to attend without consulting with them.
- Staff in the same post for a number of years don’t see the need for training. They feel that they know all aspects of the job.
- The course may not have been requested by the staff member but the manager thinks it is necessary for them. Staff member has no interest in attending.
- The high level of training activity in the last 5 years.
- Shortage of relevant staff work related programmes

6. Based on your own experiences please mark on a scale of 1 – 11 the following potential barriers to training take up. A ranking of 1 should be assigned to the barrier that has the greatest impact on the take up of training opportunities to in your local authority. A ranking of 11 should be assigned to that barrier that has the least impact

Respondents were asked to rank on a scale of 1-11 (one being the greatest impact and eleven being the least impact) the following 11 potential barriers to training:-

1. *Staff are too busy at work when it comes to the actual training day*
2. *Family and personal commitments prevent them from attending*
3. *Staff think the training that is offered is not directly relevant to them*
4. *Staff are not sufficiently motivated to take up training opportunities*
5. *In general the training provided in the past has been of poor quality*
6. *Training is often provided at inconvenient locations and venues*
7. *There is a resistance from some line managers to release staff*
8. *There is a perceived culture within my authority that training is not important*
9. *Training can be irrelevant as it often difficult to transfer the skills/knowledge learnt due to lack of interest amongst managers and peers*
10. *Budgetary constraints limit the amount and range of training we provide*
11. *Staff feel that they have done enough training and aren't interested in attending any more for a while*

It is difficult to generate findings from this question except to say that the following statements got the highest number of low order rankings (1-6) - therefore there is significant evidence that the greatest impact to training is

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are too busy at work when it comes to the actual training day 	14 out of 34 rank 1 (41%) 10 out of 34 rank 2 (29%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff think the training that is offered is not directly relevant to them 	8 out of 34 rank 3 (24%) 5 out of 34 rank 4 (15%) 5 out of 34 rank 6 (15%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budgetary constraints limit the amount and range of training we provide 	8 out of 34 rank 1 (24%) 5 out of 34 rank 2 (15%) 5 out of 34 rank 3 (15%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training can be irrelevant - it is often difficult to transfer the skill/knowledge back to the workplace due to lack of interest amongst managers and peers 	6 out of 34 rank 5 (18%)

Similarly the following statements got the highest number of high order rankings (7-11) so we can say there is significant evidence that the least impact to training is:-

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In general the training provided in the past has been of poor quality 	11 out of 34 rank 11 (33%) 7 out of 34 rank 9 (21%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training is often provided at inconvenient locations and venues 	9 out of 34 rank 10 (26%) 5 out of 34 rank 11 (15%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a perceived culture within my local authority that training is not important 	9 out of 34 rank 11 (26%) and 5 out of 34 rank 9 (15%) and 5 out of 34 rank 8 (15%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family and personal commitments prevent them from attending 	5 out of 34 rank 11 (15%) and 5 out of 34 rank 8 (15%)

Conclusions

- 6.1 30 respondents already implement a system whereby line managers are requested to approve training leave in advance of a staff member attending a training course. This suggests that the introduction of the nationally configured training modules of the Core HR Payroll & Superannuation system should not entail any change to current work procedures for line managers.
- 6.2 Just over half the respondents (56%) felt that the reluctance to release some staff for scheduled training is an issue for their local authority. However analysis of responses shows that it is not a serious issue and for the majority (64%) of those that indicated it was an issue that it is limited to certain sections and/or to certain times of the year.
- 6.3 25 (72%) of the respondents indicate that the average incident of no shows is less than 15%. It should be noted a 'no show' rate of 15% if applied to a course with 12 participants amounts to between 1 and 2 people per course. A rate of 10% amounts to 1 person in 12. 26% of respondents (ie) 9 local authorities report an average 'no show' rate of between 15 – 20%. This equates to approximately 2-3 people missing from a course of 12. 2 people missing from each course is a significant cost when calculated over a year.
- 6.4 The most frequent reason given for a 'no show' is time constraints given the work load of individuals within their section/units on the given day (71%).

Closing Summary

The objective of this survey is to attempt to quantify the national picture of staff training and development in Local Authorities and Regional Assemblies from three (3) distinct perspectives:-

1. The Senior Management Team and the County Manager
2. The Senior Managers and Directors of the Business Unit
3. The staff members through the training requests they made in their PDPs

While acknowledging that the responses generated by the survey are not as perfect as one would wish in terms of accuracy, depth or completeness the results do nonetheless provide a starting point for further discussions and should greatly aid and enhance future decision making.

Each segment of the report has produced its own distinct findings, where possible these results have been cross referenced to the findings from, the other populations to determine if the messages from the three different sets of respondents complement or clash with each other.

There is no doubt that we are living and working in a new reality and this is reflected in the findings of the survey. The impact of the Department of Finance staff embargo on recruitment and reduced funding coupled with reduced revenue generation is recorded by all the respondents. The buzzword is 'flexibility' – organisations need to be able to 'deliver more with less' and they need staff who are willing and able to multi-task.

Local training needs (both mandatory and non-mandatory) have been recorded and collated to produce a national picture for all business units (irrespective of function or grade). In addition to this individual PDP requests have been collated to form a national priority list both by business unit and by grade. Furthermore there may be corporate wide training initiatives driven by County Managers to respond to specific initiatives in the Corporate Plan and these requests must also receive an allocation from an ever-diminishing budget.

Below is a list of the requests for non-mandatory training which arose repeatedly in the survey-

- People management skills
- Financial Management and Budgetary Control skills e.g. Agresso for all levels of staff
- Change Management skills
- Project management skills
- Time Management and Organisation skills e.g. prioritisation and workflow
- I.T. Skills (various forms)
- Innovative ways of working and achieving more with less e.g. flexible working, redeployment of staff, alternative methods to work distribution etc.,

The need for staff to have a deeper knowledge of the legislation underpinning the work they are doing is a key requirement for all respondents. Without this knowledge

of the legislative and regulatory framework transfer of staff to units experiencing significant staff shortages will not be possible. Similarly re-deployment of staff within a unit in order to address a shift in emphasis or focus due to changes in the external environment or new initiatives (e.g.) shifting focus in the planning Department from processing planning applications to enforcement, will not prove to be effective without staff receiving a detailed understanding of the legislative/regulatory framework underpinning the work.

Themes that emerged in the research in addition to the need for staff to be well-trained and highly flexible is an acknowledgment by managers that staff are working in very difficult circumstances and that many are likely to experience stress if the situation is not managed correctly. The challenge for units of trying to maintain quality service delivery with ever reducing staff numbers and ever reducing budgets resonates throughout the report. Line managers - the lynchpin between senior managers (anxious to deliver on the strategic goals and objectives of the Corporate Plan) and frontline staff (dealing with the public on a daily basis) in many cases are experiencing the greatest pressure. Questions need to be asked as to whether Local Authorities reduce the number of services they offer or reduce the quality of the services they currently provide – either way change is inevitable.

Health and Safety training which is both mandatory and essential for the many thousands of staff working in potentially dangerous situations e.g. on non-national roadways, with chemical pollutants, etc., figures very prominently throughout the report. Major investment of resources has been made over the years but it appears that it is a never ending cycle and respondents frequently mention Health and Safety Training as an annual event. The range of Health and Safety related courses available to staff is extensive and annual investment in this specific field must be considerable. However when the research shows that over 50% of the respondents have had the training budget cut by up to 25% and almost 10% by up to 50% (with further cuts expected by many) it is hard to know how this investment can continue to be funded in the current economic climate. Linked to this is the fact that several respondents mentioned that because Health and Safety training is mandatory in some organisations it is not listed by the staff on the PDP request form but rather is seen as a separate requirement with a dedicated ring fenced budget. The research showed that almost 50% of the training officers spent up to 50% of their budget on mandatory training to comply with legislation as opposed to discretionary spending in order to improve staff and organisational performance.

Staff who perceive that they are not having their training needs met (because they see PDP requests are not granted) over time may become demotivated as they believe their psychological contract is not being honoured. However they are completely forgetting about the wealth of work based on the job learning that they are receiving but perhaps for whatever reason place little value on. While almost 80% of the respondents use in-house trainers it is for less than 25% of their training needs with the same numbers being recorded for on the job training, so clearly there is still a strong cultural dependence on 'live education' rather than technology or work based solutions. However with the numbers of staff continuing to decline this is likely to shift considerably over the next few years. Equally necessary will be the continuing cultural shift from training to learning and the recognition that learning can take place in all sorts of different ways and it may not always necessitate time off work. The

shift to targeted shorter interventions which are often just as effective and do not require the person to be off work for a whole day will please all managers/supervisors.

The research was very positive about the impact that the training is making on the organisation and the fact that staff in the main appreciate very much the investment being made in them. Although sixty-four (64%) reported that they do have no-shows they are limited to certain sections and certain times of the year and on average are less than 10%. The main reason for 'no shows' was given as work load and work commitments on the day' which is particularly interesting as it may link back to the need for time management and the ability to prioritise our time and our work commitments and scheduled training could be one of them. The organisations who charge back training courses to the local units record little if any 'no-shows'. The research further tells us that occasionally staff feel the training they are scheduled for can be irrelevant as it often difficult to transfer the skills/knowledge learnt on the course back into the workplace due to lack of interest amongst managers and peers. This finding is particularly important as the link between learning and the achievement of business goals is essential and without this transfer of learning to the workplace the investment will not yield long term benefits or enhance productivity.

In conclusion, this report is likely to raise many more questions than it answers given the breadth of information that was sought but this in itself is a positive outcome and a necessary and valuable exercise particularly in the challenging economic climate we are operating in. Despite the necessity to reduce discretionary spending across the board in local authorities training and development of staff will still continue. Even if the staff T&D budget is reduced to an absolute minimum for the next couple of years there will still be a need to be a budget allocated for mandatory training so that local authorities are compliant with the requirements of legislation and/or regulations. It should also be remembered that local authorities have consistently met (and in most cases greatly exceeded) the target spend of 3% of productive payroll on staff training and development. Staff recognise that local authorities have a commitment and track record in developing them as individuals and employees. The focus for Training Officers and all people involved in training provision across the sector will be achieving maximum value for money by the employment of innovative and cost effective methods both of training delivery and of transfer of learning to the workplace.

Recommendations

The general recommendations resulting from our analysis of the survey findings are presented here under 6 main themes,

- Distribution of the report
- Training will continue despite budgetary constraints
- PMDS
- Using alternatives and supplementary approaches to formalised classroom training
- Making greater use of in-house resources
- Maximising training budgets
- Achieving greater value for money for the sector

Distribution of the report

- ◆ Copies of the report once endorsed by the Managers should be distributed to the relevant committees and bodies charged with overseeing the training requirements for various programme areas (e.g.) Roads Training Group, Water Services Training Group, Environmental Training Group, the Library Council, National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management etc., in addition to being distributed to all individual local authorities. It will be for these bodies/committees to consider the report and undertake any actions that they feel relate to their area of operation. It will be for the County & City Managers and their senior management teams to decide how best to address the prioritised cross-functional training identified in the report and the training needs for those business units for which there is no dedicated committee/body overseeing training delivery.

Training will continue despite budgetary constraints

- ◆ The requirement for all staff to do more or at least the same with less resources coupled with the introduction of pay and pension levies will inevitably lead to demotivation of staff. The role of line managers in keeping staff motivated and ensuring that the usual levels of high performance are maintained within their sections will be critical. The training of line managers in the practical skills of managing staff, maintaining good performance and tackling under performance is an area of training that will be critical if the sector is to deliver upon its business goals irrespective of the fact that it is not mandatory training.
- ◆ If the current recruitment embargo continues for the next couple of years it will be important to recognise that all current and future work activities will be carried out by existing staff resources. In order to ensure that flexibility and ability to multi-task become the norm some front line staff will need to engage in learning new skills. Experience has shown that the provision of and successful participation in workplace skills training by some frontline staff will depend upon ongoing basic education and personal development training and support. The ongoing financial support of LANPAG towards the provision

of workplace basic education programmes will be crucial. It should be recognised that the successful LANPAG Return to Learning (RtL) initiative may have already reached the majority of those staff that required or wished for assistance with basic literacy. Successive evaluations of the RtL programmes have highlighted the need to develop progression routes to mainstream training for staff that have already completed phase 1 of RtL. These progression opportunities should seek to prepare employees with lower than required levels of basic educational skills for the demands of mainstream work related training courses that they will be required to complete (e.g.) mandatory health & safety, customer service, required workplace skills training, etc.

- ◆ The principle of establishing a qualifications framework so that operational staff in certain business units (e.g.) water services, environmental services, roads can gain formal recognition for the single module training courses that they are being asked to complete as well as being able to use those qualifications towards obtaining higher level qualifications is one that should be supported by all bodies/committees involved in the provision of staff training in the sector. As the various regulatory bodies operating in these programme areas attempt to move towards a quality assurance model of licensing for some activities (e.g.) waste facility operation, provision of drinking water, etc., there will be an increasing need for operational staff and/or technical staff to obtain accredited training. Efforts should be undertaken by the various committees and bodies engaged in co-ordinating training provision for the sector to ensure that local authority staff can combine the various single module/minor award qualifications that staff are asked to complete into either a combined certificate or can get formal recognition/credit towards a higher nationally recognised qualification. It should be noted that a sub-committee of the WSTG has already commenced deliberations with a view to approaching FETAC and/or HETAC on this matter. It is therefore recommended that the National Training Group should oversee the development of an overarching framework agreement with FETAC/HETAC for the sector as a whole rather than asking individual committees/bodies to conduct their own discussions on combining of minor awards into major awards. Once again this framework for awards recognition could be built into an overall competency framework for staff in these sections. It should be noted however that agreement on a framework with FETAC/HETAC may take a number of years. In the meantime a number of courses will still need to be developed within a shorter timeframe to meet current regulatory needs. Therefore every development of new modules in these operational areas should consider where it fits in to an overall major award as part of their initial design stage.

PMDS

- ◆ Details of the conclusions and recommendations on the identification of training and development needs by means of the PMDS/PDP process should be forwarded to the PMAMG. The main recommendations to the PMAMG are as follows:

- the extent to which training and development needs identified by individual staff members at PMDS meetings are being prioritised and clearly linked to business goals and organisational goals needs to increase
- line managers conducting PMDS meetings should become more knowledgeable about other methodologies/approaches to addressing development needs/opportunities (e.g.) job shadowing, job swapping, on the job coaching, peer learning, self directed study, rather than relying on classroom based training courses. This will become increasingly important if the number of opportunities to attend training courses is reduced in line with reductions in the training budget.
- ensuring a more ‘resource led’ as opposed to ‘demand led’ system of staff training and development would support the introduction of a competency framework for staff doing particular jobs. This would help to achieve targeted provision of mandatory (i.e.) required by regulation/legislation training and training with demonstrable links to business needs/goals. The introduction of a competency framework would assist line managers in prioritising training needs discussed with staff.
- where development and training is provided to staff in formats other than classroom training this needs to be formally recorded. Business units that initiate their own staff development events must record the details and ensure that the individuals training records are updated. It is anticipated that existing training record databases or the proposed training module of the Core HR, Payroll & Superannuation systems should be able to capture this data.
- individual staff members and their line managers need to be informed of the outcome of all training requests in advance of PMDS review meetings. The practice of only notifying individual staff members if they have been placed on a training course may contribute to a lack of confidence in PMDS as a development tool. The anticipated reduction in the number of courses being registered and recorded in PDP forms should reduce the number of responses to be made. Methodologies for automating the response process either through existing technology or in the training module of the Core HR, Payroll & Superannuation system should be explored and where practicable employed by Training Officers
- the identification of individual training and development needs as part of the PMDS/PDP process needs to continue despite less resources being available to ensure training and development requests are being delivered upon. The survey contains evidence that the business units are able to identify organisational training needs through a mixture of PDPs and team meetings. However if the practice of conducting PDPs with each individual staff member dwindles as a result of

disengagement with the PMDS process it will become increasingly difficult for Training Officers to identify which individual staff member is required to go on which course even the mandatory ones. PMDS therefore needs to be re-energised in areas where disengagement difficulties exist to ensure that it remains the primary mechanism for determining the training needs of individual staff members. If this does not happen and the practice of conducting PDP's is discontinued, TO's will have to resort to meeting with section heads to determine which staff require what training in order to determine the numbers and names of staff involved. It has to be recognised however that whilst this would satisfy the requirement of achieving a targeted 'resource' led approach to training provision, it would not be as effective as using the existing PMDS/PDP process.

Using alternatives and supplementary approaches to formalised classroom training

- ◆ Training Officers and section heads should actively work to promote peer learning. Individuals attending external training or development opportunities should be required to share the learning with their colleagues at team meetings upon their return. Peer learning is a very cost effective way of disseminating learning for a wider audience. The practice of using existing intranets to post up and to download materials, documents and presentations obtained from training courses conferences, CPD sessions, briefings etc., should be encouraged. Directing staff and colleagues to the existence of these resources by means of a knowledge/learning centre section on the intranet would greatly improve peer learning and self directed opportunities as well as information dissemination. Local authority training officers should engage with their colleagues responsible for maintaining the intranet to ensure that an online knowledge/learning centre section is established and that procedures are put in place for the uploading of training materials, documents and presentations.
- ◆ Greater consideration should be given by all parties involved in procuring training for local authorities to organising more concentrated training events that are held closer to the workplace. Condensed modular training should focus on specific subjects of direct relevance to prospective attendees. The objective of shorter concentrated sessions is to place greater emphasis on imparting the key essential messages relating to the topic. Co-ordinated modular training sessions (2-3 hours maximum duration) could be delivered by in-house resources, by staff returning from an external training event or by bought-in external providers.
- ◆ The ongoing impact of decreased staffing levels will require that local authority staff will have to continue to be flexible and that line managers/supervisors will have to be more innovative in how staff are assigned to handle the required work. The ability to multi-task and be subject matter experts in a variety of areas will become the norm rather than the exception. It will be difficult to train staff in how to be flexible and creative. These skills are more attitudinal and are best developed by one-to-one coaching and team or individual based problem solving rather than taught

classes. Approaches will need to be developed in order to give staff opportunities to develop the newly required skills and attitudes.

- ◆ On the job training is widespread across the sector and where it is happening it is being organised by direct line managers rather than by the Training Officers. The survey indicates that the majority of this type of training occurs either in the Fire Service or as part of induction of new staff or when new equipment is introduced. In the absence of any clear requirement to complete a formal training course in order to demonstrate competency and where it is appropriate to the job/activity being learned more use should be made of this training and development approach. Strategies on how this approach can be more effectively used and the areas where it can most effectively be applied will need to be developed and identified by the LGMSB.
- ◆ Greater use of development opportunities other than formal 'off-the-job' training courses will necessitate an improved awareness amongst line managers and individual staff members that these activities still need to be recorded and added to the training records of individuals. All training and development activities undertaken should regardless of whether 'off', 'on' the job or 'self-directed' in nature should be recorded. While it may prove to be difficult to tie informal development activities into formal qualifications there should be recognition for completing non formal development activities within an overall competency framework. Informal training and development should not be used as a replacement for formal training nor should it be seen as piecemeal. It should be part of an overall integrated development pathway for individuals in certain jobs. Ensuring that informal development is completed before application/recommendation for specific formal courses of training and/or education could be one way of linking development activities into a competency development framework.
- ◆ All local authorities should consider introducing coaching as a way of addressing the developmental needs of some staff. Where a very specific and/or unique training or development need has been identified for an individual staff member through their PDP consideration should be given to addressing that need through some form of formalised coaching with either internal or external resources. The structured provision of coaching can be successfully employed to ensure that staff can, amongst other things, be guided towards addressing their own perceived skills gaps or to develop business solutions for specific, pressing business problems. As a form of informal training it can prove to be very effective when used to address either of these two areas. The use of trained and experienced senior staff to provide coaching to more junior staff has been successfully employed to date by a number of local authorities and has been proved to be a very cost effective approach to action based learning. In order to promote the use of coaching across the sector the TOs in all local authorities should be exposed to the lessons learned by those local authorities that have and continue to employ coaching using either internal, external or a mixture of both resources as an option for staff development.

- ◆ Greater consideration should be given by local authorities Training Officers to delivering training content (either wholly or as part of a blended approach to course delivery) using computer based training (CBT) packages, either on-line or in CD-ROM format as a cost effective alternative to tutor led classroom training. Some training activities will lend themselves ideally to CBT format and will certainly be a more effective way of delivering some aspects of training (e.g.) self-directed study of underpinning theory, compared to classroom based learning. It should be noted that where there is sufficient demand for certain course content or CBT package(s) there will be economies of scale to be had by securing outright purchase or licensing of products for the sector as a whole rather than on a local authority by local authority basis. In order to promote the use of CBT or blended learning approaches across the sector the TOs in all local authorities should be exposed to the lessons learned by those local authorities that have and continue to employ CBT as one of many methods for delivering staff training.

Making greater use of in-house resources

- ◆ Local authorities currently possess quite a number of resources that could be more fully utilised in order to deliver more cost effective training. The following resources have been identified by the survey as already being in place across the sector,
 - Qualified in-house trainers
 - A network of local authority regional training centres with a tradition and proven track record of organising training on an outreach basis
 - Dedicated IT training rooms in the majority of local authorities

Strategies should be devised by the National T&D steering committee of the LGMSB in cooperation with the other committees/bodies involved in training provision across the sector in order to maximise the benefits accruing to the sector from their use of these existing resources.

Maximising training budgets

- ◆ In order to maximise the business impact of the spend on educational assistance it is recommended that local authorities should concentrate on providing assistance to individuals applying for certificate, diploma and degree courses. For the duration of the economic downturn educational assistance for Master level courses should only be provided where a link to carrying out current work duties is made by staff members or where a staff member has already completed a considerable amount of the course time.
- ◆ In order to minimise the negative impact on the centralised training budget and in order to achieve maximum value for the spend on bought-in or external training courses, Training Officers should instigate (if not already doing it) charging individual business units/sections for staff that fail to attend for training courses for which they were booked.

- ◆ The major compliance responsibilities placed on local authorities as a result of (i) an increasing legislative and regulatory framework; and (ii) the transposition of EU Directives into Irish legislation, has placed and will continue to place a major financial burden on local authorities particularly in areas such as water quality, waste management, health and safety, etc. Existing local training budgets will not be able to bear the burden of training for staff in sections where these new regulations are to take effect. Staff training costs need to be factored in by central government to any financial support being made available to local authorities to implement/address their new responsibilities.

Achieving greater value for money for the sector

- ◆ In order to ensure that bought-in training more closely reflects the specific needs of the individual local authorities purchasing the training, Training Officers should engage to a greater degree with external training providers. More engagement pre-delivery at the course design stage should increase the relevance of the material delivered by training providers and ensure the specific needs of the purchasing local authority are addressed more effectively.
- ◆ Local authorities are and will continue to be (in the future) employers and active recruiters of qualified graduates. This is especially true for engineering, technical and professional posts. In order to ensure that future graduates are equipped with an understanding of some of the cross functional issues currently affecting the work of local authorities efforts should be made to convince universities, colleges and places of further education to incorporate material (where appropriate) on some or all of the following areas in their undergraduate courses (both part-time, full-time)
 - Social inclusion
 - Sustainable development
 - Green procurement
 - Promoting accessibility to services
 - Managing information

It is recommended that the LGMSB should co-ordinate, on behalf of the sector, the approaches to be made to the universities, colleges and places of further education.

- ◆ In tandem with the above point it is recommended that the various designated bodies that provide ongoing competency development programmes (e.g.) Engineers Ireland, the Planning Institute, etc for their members should be approached in order to incorporate material (where appropriate) on some or all of the areas already identified. In addition the designated bodies could incorporate the following into their CPD programmes
 - financial management and budgetary and cost control
 - working in multi-disciplinary teams

- managing staff performance
- updates on legislation and their potential impact
- more effective use of I.T.
- developing leadership

Once again it is recommended that the LGMSB, on behalf of the sector, should co-ordinate the approaches to the various designated bodies that provide CPD frameworks.

- ◆ In order to further reduce the spend on travel and subsistence associated with staff attending off-site training events local authority Training Officers should be encouraged to make greater use of courses/events organised on a shared or regional basis. The current practice of determining whether any demand exists for shared training opportunities either through the regional training centre network or directly should become more widespread. Where a local, regional demand has been identified the Training Officers should take advantage of current market conditions to achieve greater reductions in costs/charges due to economies of scale afforded by larger numbers of potential attendees. Where regional or clustered events are being planned for consideration should be given to choosing locations and venues served by public transport. External training providers and staff travelling to events should be actively encouraged to avail of cost effective public transport whenever possible rather than incurring high mileage costs which draw heavily on an ever reducing training budget.
- ◆ LGMSB should co-ordinate approaches to FÁS, Coillte et al on behalf of the sector in order to improve the local authority specificity for some existing Construction Skills Certification Schemes (CSCS) courses. Aspects of these courses where changes might be made include durations, assessment criteria both for initial and renewal certifications and overall course content.
- ◆ In order to take maximum advantage of current market conditions a national framework of suitably qualified training providers should be put in place for the most urgent of those cross functional generic training requirements identified in Section 2 of the report. With prices for bought in or external courses at a lower level than in the past couple of years it would be prudent to attempt to lock in training providers to these low levels of fee's for at least 18 months – 2 years. The various committees and bodies that currently organise tender competitions for the procurement of training and/or consultancy services (e.g.) WSTG, Regional Training Centres, An Chomhairle Leabharlanna, the LGMSB should examine the option of establishing (where required) multi-annual panels or frameworks of suitably qualified providers at the lowest possible prices.



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