

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Staffing Portfolio Holder

16th September 2008

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REVIEW OF THE WORKFORCE PLAN

Purpose

1. The workforce plan was last approved by Cabinet in December 2006 and by Council in February 2007. The plan (which is attached to this report) has now been refreshed to take into account of developments in the last year; new challenges facing the Council; and updated statistics. The revised plan takes into account the Corporate Objectives of the Council and the workforce issues included in service plans, hence supporting the golden thread. The Action Plan has been completely updated. The Workforce Plan will be reviewed again in March 2009 to bring it into line with the service planning cycle.
2. The purpose of this report is to enable the Portfolio Holder to consider and approve the attached Workforce Plan.

Background

3. The purpose of a Workforce Plan is to ensure that the Council **has the right people, with the right skills, in the right jobs, at the right time** to deliver its priorities and to continue to improve services. This means not only that the Council has an appropriate number of staff in each service, but also that the Council maintains an environment in which staff can maximise the contribution they make. This includes issues such as increasing leadership and management capacity; support in developing customer service and partnership skills and a more diverse workforce reflecting the community and bringing a mix of skills and perspectives.
4. Since the adoption of the current plan last year, a great deal has happened which will impact on the Council's workforce capacity and requirements. The CGI Inspection and the subsequent development and implementation of the Improvement Plan have led to stronger corporate capacity; improved leadership; clearer objectives; and better internal communication. The Council has now committed itself to achieving Investors In People accreditation and to improve its performance on Equalities. A greater focus on partnership working has improved the Council's capacity to tackle the growth areas.
5. The recent CGI Follow Up report also highlights areas which are relevant to the Workforce Plan – for example -
 - the need for arrangements to manage future change;
 - the need to review and strengthen the council's approach to corporate and service area succession planning;
 - the importance of ensuring that improvement is about lasting cultural change
 - the requirement for HR capacity to be commensurate with the demands placed upon it.

6. Other future issues which the Workforce Plan has to take into account are the continuing financial pressure on the Council; the growth areas; and the potential impacts of the Housing Futures project.
7. A great deal has been achieved since the approval of the current Plan. For example, the Council has completed the transition to the new senior management structure of two chief officers and five corporate managers. Work has been carried out to improve management through support of the corporate managers; the development of management competencies; work on a pilot management development programme; and training in key skills such as project management, service planning and absence management. Internal communication has been much improved. Induction has been improved and flexible working strengthened. The Council has received support in much of this improvement activity from the IDeA and Building Capacity East.
8. The revised Workforce Plan also takes account of the issues highlighted in service plans – in particular continuing issues of recruitment for some services; the need for succession planning; the challenges of planning for the growth areas; skills gaps in areas such as risk; decision making structures; and contract management.

Key Issues for the Workforce Plan

9. Taking into account the needs identified in service plans; the areas in the current Workforce Plan which remain to be addressed; and other recent developments, the main areas to be addressed in 2008/09 and reflected in the revised plan are: -
 - a) **Management Development.** Building on the work carried out to develop competencies and the pilot being undertaken with the support of IDeA and BCE, to develop a programme using the £20,000 budget provision.
 - b) **Investors in People.** To put in place the processes and capacities required to meet the Council's objective to achieve IIP status in 2009.
 - c) **Job Evaluation and Equal Pay.** To carry out a job evaluation process in order to give assurance that the Council is meeting equal pay requirements as set out in legislation and its own equality policies
 - d) **Equality and Diversity.** In meeting level 1 of the Equalities Standard the Council gave a number of commitments to actions to promote equality and diversity in its workforce – including:
 - review of recruitment procedures, forms and advertising
 - staff training in equalities
 - an employment equality assessment of the local labour market
 - equal pay policy
 - e) **Supporting services in addressing HR needs arising from service plans** through the development of plans to address recruitment and retention, planning for growth and other matters affecting their capacity for continuing service delivery.

- f) **Succession Planning.** Consideration has been given to more structured approach to resource planning to prepare officers to take over senior or specialised posts, which become vacant.

Following comments in the CGI re-inspection report, succession planning both at senior management level and within services will be an important issue to be tackled. Currently the Council has an informal approach to succession planning with service managers taking a localised approach to developing potential within their services. There is a need to develop a more robust Corporate Policy to ensure the organisation will have the individuals with the drive, knowledge and experience needed to provide strategic direction and handle changes in service delivery.

The Council will undertake a review of current workforce issues and risks and recommend a medium term approach to address the potential lack of managerial and professional successors. Service plans will include an element of workforce and succession planning.

Succession Planning also needs to take account of the potential outcome following a tenant vote on housing transfer. A vote in favour of a transfer would result in the transfer of approximately one third of the workforce. In this scenario, valuable skills, knowledge and experience and management capacity will be lost from the Council.

The age profile of the Council suggests that many of the experienced technical/professional officers and managers will reach normal retirement within the next few years, this is of particular concern in areas such as accountancy. Modern Apprenticeships and sponsored internships should be considered as an effective way to replenish the organisation with new talent.

- g) **Housing Futures.** Significant input is anticipated from all support services as the project gathers momentum.
- h) **Service reviews.** To address the implications of the programme of service reviews, in particular a scheduled review of the HR service. With the pace of change and the improvement programme the Council requires more input and support from its HR section than it can realistically deliver. Increasing demands on the team to support restructuring and corporate initiatives as well as 'business as usual' support to operational managers means that HR resources are stretched. A service review of the HR section will take place during the next year with a view to identifying clearer direction and resource requirements. Part of this review needs to take account of the ongoing HR systems support and development requirements in order to maximise potential of the Resourcelink system.
- i) **Growth Areas.** Working with partners and using external resources as far as possible, to ensure the necessary skills for the planning and development of the growth areas and future service planning to match workforce requirements with the service needs of the growing population

Implications

10. There are new financial implications arising from the revised plan. Plans to undertake a review and to strengthen succession planning will have financial consequences. The introduction of an apprenticeship scheme would initially incur additional expenditure but once a programme has been established it could be cost neutral. Staffing implications are addressed throughout.
11. The delivery of the Action Plan will very much rely on the capacity of the HR team, Corporate Managers and other senior officers and managers. An additional post has been approved for the HR team and a new member of staff started in August. Progress on the delivery of the plan will be kept under review with the Portfolio Holder.

Consultations

12. Policy Development Committee was consulted at the outset of the revision of the plan and drew attention to the need to address succession planning. The Committee has also been consulted on the attached revised plan and its comments will be reported at the meeting.

Effect on the Corporate Objectives

13. The purpose of the plan is to ensure capacity to deliver the Corporate Objectives and this is specifically addressed in Section 4 of the Plan.

Recommendations

14. Cabinet is recommended to approve the attached revised Workforce Plan and to request the Action Plan to be built into service plans and implemented by the officers concerned. In particular, a review of the workforce and succession planning to ensure a corporate approach to this issue.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- Workforce Plan
- Local Government-the place to be, the place to work (LGA, LGE, I&DeA)
- CIPD – Succession Planning

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