

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Policy and Development Committee 12 March 2008
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REVIEW OF WORKFORCE PLAN

Purpose

1. Cabinet approved the current workforce plan in December 2006 and by Council in February 2007. The purpose of this review is:
 - a) To review the action plan and identify what has been achieved
 - b) To revise the plan for 2008/09 to ensure that it meets the needs of the organisation.
 - c) To prepare for a fuller review (next year) to produce a new plan for 2009/10 onwards.
2. This is a key decision because it raises new issues of policy, or is made in the course of developing proposals to amend the policy framework and is included in the Forward Plan.

Summary

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 continuously improving services.
4. The Workforce Plan no longer reflects the Council's objectives and priorities. Service areas have developed their service plans for 2008 and a review of the plans has indicated that the Workforce Plan requires updating to reflect the issues affecting the Council. It is proposed that the updating of the plan should reflect the issues and priorities outlined in this report.

Issues for consideration by Policy Development Committee

5. Issues which the Committee may wish to address include –
 - a) Has this report correctly identified the issues which the revision of the Workforce Plan should address?
 - b) Are there workforce related issues which the Committee would wish to follow up in more detail?
 - c) Do the proposals in paragraph 6 for the Workforce Plan address the Corporate Objectives and other priorities of the Council?
 - d) Is the Council placing the right emphasis on the development of the workforce?

Background

6. 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 – including:

- a) The publication of the CGI Inspection report and the development and implementation of the Improvement Plan. In particular, the Council approved additional staff resources to strengthen a number of areas of the Council i.e.: equalities, scrutiny, performance, HR, communications, strategic partnerships. This has significantly enhanced corporate capacity.
- b) The establishment of joint planning arrangements for the Growth Areas
- c) The decision to develop a proposal for the disposal of the housing stock
- d) The decisions to seek IIP status and to carry out a job evaluation programme to address equal pay requirements
- e) The adoption of new Council Objectives and Values.
- f) The achievement of Level 1 of the Equalities Standard and approval of a commitment to work towards Level 2.
- g) The enactment of the Local Government and Involvement in Health Bill; the development of the LAA mechanism; and the new national indicator set. These developments increase the need for the Council to engage with the partnership agenda and place greater emphasis on the skills to do so.
- h) A difficult financial position arising from the Financial Settlement and decision of the Minister not to recognise the special pressures on this Council arising from its historic level of Council Tax and the growth areas.

Considerations

7. What have we achieved?

Much has been achieved since the adoption of the current plan both from the Action Plan and as a result of other developments – highlights include:

Enhancing leadership and management and communication

- a) The completion of the senior management structure including the appointment of the five Corporate Managers and development programme. The implementation of the BCE bid for leadership and top team development.
- b) The development of management competencies; the establishment of a pilot management development programme with the assistance of the IDeA and BCE focusing on the management of strategic partnerships; and the inclusion of £20,000 in the budget for 2008/09 to deliver general management learning in line with the competency framework.
- c) A significant improvement of internal communication – including the initiation of a Corporate Briefing process; staff briefings from the Leader and Chief Executive; greater use of the “street area” for communications; continuation of the Chief Executive’s weekly email; and the re-introduction of the staff magazine.
- d) The involvement of over 170 staff in away days to develop service plans.

Enhancing skills and motivation to meet the changing work environment

- e) Delivery of corporate training to all service areas to boost staff management skills:-
 - 35 supervisors and team leaders have attended supervisor training
 - 80 managers/team leaders have attended absence management training
 - 24 managers/team leaders have attended project management training
- f) All service managers have attended workshops to improve service planning and the engagement of staff in the process.
- g) Improved induction process for new starters including informal 'coffee morning' with the Chief Executive and Executive Director.

Flexibility and the ability to achieve organisational change

- h) Introduction of flexible working practices (e.g. compressed hours, annualised hours and review of core hours) to aid diversity and recruitment/retention. Reinstatement of flexitime.
- i) Identification of generic/core skills (competencies) for different posts within the Council for use at recruitment, appraisal and supported by a rolling training programme.
- j) Introduction of a new policy for 'Duty to Consider' requests to work beyond normal retirement date.

Work towards a staffing complement and structure which reflects the Council's objectives and future needs

- k) Improved corporate capacity through the funding made available for CGI improvements
- l) Improved capacity through the joint arrangements for the growth areas
- m) Service reviews of all service areas commencing with Planning and sustainable Communities and Policy, Performance and Partnerships and ICT.

8. Issues arising from Draft Service Plans

For the first time service plans have included an overview of workforce issues affecting each service. The main issues identified for 2008/09 are: -

- a) Recruitment and Retention. Retention is not so acute a problem as previously. Turnover has reduced from 20% to 9.4% in 2006/07 and estimated to be 11% in 2007/08. However, recruitment is proving difficult in some specialised areas such as: housing development officers; Urban Design; Ethos; HGV drivers; street cleaning operatives; senior planning officers. Many of these are in important priority areas such as growth or essential for the provision of front line services. Services are addressing the issues through schemes such as "grow your own".
- b) Succession Planning – issues of future retirements in EH, Planning and Finance.

- c) Housing Futures – including the secondment of staff to prepare for stock transfer and the implications of the necessary changes on the whole organisation if it does proceed.
- d) Implementation of reviews and change proposals – affecting Development Control; Community Services; Land Charges; ICT; HR and Waste Management in 2008/09
- e) Planning for growth areas – in particular managing of the growth of staff to meet growing service demands (referred to in EH service plan)
- f) Development of the extended Policy and Performance Team and the end of the secondment of the Improvement Manager
- g) Skills/training - needs identified in areas such as risk; contract management and decision making structures
- h) Services are developing their own plans – EH to prepare a Workforce Plan and Finance to do a plan to address succession problems.

9. What are the main issues to be addressed in 2008/09?

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 are seen to be: -

- 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 succession, recruitment and retention, planning for growth and other matters affecting their capacity for continuing service delivery.
- f) **Improved Reporting** of HR information through the HR system and through reporting on the Heartbeat PIs to improve HR management within services

- 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, including a scheduled review of the HR service.
- i) **Staff Survey.** To complete the staff survey currently undergoing fieldwork; report on it and agree a programme of actions to address the results.
- j) **Other.** Shared services agenda, competitive tendering of services, partnership working.

Options

- 10. In view of the significant developments in the last year, the Workforce Plan (November 2006) no longer reflects the Council's Corporate Objectives and Service Priorities therefore the plan is not 'fit for purpose'. It is not an option to continue with the current plan without review.

Implications

- 11. None at this stage. However, the identification of additional posts, training and development activity or other actions requiring financial commitment will have budgetary implications.

Consultations

- 12. Executive Management Team have been consulted.

Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

13.	Affordable Homes	A review of the corporate Workforce Plan will reflect the new Corporate Objectives and Service Priorities.
	Customer Service	
	Northstowe and other growth areas	
	Quality, Accessible Services	
	Village Life	
	Sustainability	
	Partnership	

Recommendations

- 14. The Policy Development Committee endorses the priorities for action for the corporate Workforce Plan.

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)

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