South Cambridgeshire District Council
Workforce Plan - 2005/6 to 2008/9

Context – Current and future changes

A1.   The Plan has been developed to take into account a number of factors – such as:-

    a) The growth of SCDC workforce in recent years.

    b) The changing nature of local government and changes in the skills required – including: a greater range of service provision and management models; more project based; more partnership; greater change; more cross-cutting work; mobile working and working from home.

    c) The national agenda for greater efficiency which will involve different procurement models and possibly greater co-operation with other councils, together with the Council's own Medium Term Financial Strategy objectives to achieve savings. The implications of Council Tax capping.

    d) The challenge of the development of Northstowe and other major settlements, both in terms of the skills required to ensure appropriate development and to meet the increased service provision needs of the new population.

    e) The national agenda on pensions, retirement, work-life balance, health and child friendly policies.

    f) Housing stock options appraisal.

SCDC Workforce – Current Issues

A2.   The issues in the following paragraphs have been identified as a result of:-

- Discussions with Directors.
- The results of the recent staff attitude survey
- Information giving the breakdown of staff by department, a summary of which is given in Appendix 1.
- The results of staff exit interviews.

A3.   **Number and allocation of staff between services**. No serious shortfalls have been identified by Directors in terms of the numbers of employees – apart from:-

    a) Community Services, where the service is under continuing pressure to meet growing expectations from national and local agendas in areas such as community safety, community planning, health and the new settlements.

    b) Capacity for corporate projects/joined up working/community strategy. Also seen as an issue by the CPA team and Peer review.

    c) Travellers – continuing pressures in such areas as enforcement, community development; and co-ordination.

A4.   **Workforce composition.** Statistics such as numbers of staff by department by age, gender, ethnicity and disability are summarised in Appendix 1 and have been discussed with Directors. Some of the key issues identified are:-

    a) Analysis shows a workforce profile with disproportionately more staff in the older age ranges, with fewer younger people joining the Council. This reduces diversity and may lead to future skills problems. The Planning service is addressing this issue successfully by a policy of "grow your own".

b) There are a number of specific areas where the Council is likely to lose senior officers in the next 2-3 years – eg: senior management; Development Services; Accountancy.

c) There may be concerns about lack of diversity in the workforce in some services. Diversity is valuable because it enables individual services and the organisation as a whole to benefit from the different perspectives and ideas that diversity brings to the provision of services.

A5. **Succession Planning**. Consideration has been given to more positive planning to prepare officers to take over senior or specialised posts which become vacant. There would be problems involved with identifying specific officers for specific posts and overall it has been concluded that it is better to continue to develop the potential of employees through appraisals and personal development plans to enable them to be in a better position to compete for posts becoming available in the Council.

A6. **Recruitment**. Turnover has reduced from its previous high level and recruitment is currently not the problem it was. This is primarily the result of the pay and grading review undertaken by the Council in 2003. But problems remain in a limited number of areas – such as senior, experienced planning posts. There has also been difficulty in recruiting to fixed term posts. Over the medium to long term recruitment is likely to continue to be an issue which the Council needs to keep under review because of:-

a) National shortages in areas such as planning and environmental health

b) High housing costs in the area and the fact that key worker definitions do not help the Council.

c) Competition in the area – eg from housing associations; other councils; health sector etc. Other organisations may leap frog SCDC recent restructuring in the medium term.

d) The possible impact of capping and CPA reassessment.

A7. The Council will continue to monitor recruitment and retention closely and review the pay scale and indexing arrangements on a regular basis.

A8. A number of current staff are **on fixed term contracts**. Also there is a reliance on Planning Delivery Grant.

A9. **Efficiency agenda**. The Council will be under pressure to find efficiencies in the period of this workforce plan both to meet Gershon requirements, the effects of capping and its own Medium Term Financial Strategy projections. The Council's substantial investment in ICT together with business re-engineering could potentially achieve savings in a number of areas, with consequent impact on staff. There may also be scope to find efficiencies following the bringing together of services into one office at Cambourne.

A10. **Services facing service peaks**. A limited number of services are under pressure at certain times of the year – eg Elections; Accountancy; Planning Policy. The possibility of moving staff to help out in these areas has been considered, but there are constraints in this approach in that the services under pressure are specialised in nature. Annual hours or some other flexibility is considered to be a possibility.

A11. **Training and Skills**. Directors expressed no concerns about the level of professional skills. The Council spends a considerable amount on training and in the recent staff survey 66% agreed that the Council ensures that their training needs are met.

A12. It has not been possible to undertake a detailed skills analysis to provide an input to this Plan. This will be undertaken before this Plan is next reviewed. However, the following have been identified as areas where skills could be improved:-

a) General management skills – for example staff management; performance management; service analysis and review.
b) Customer care – for example in terms of development of customer care standards; finding out customer needs; dealing with their complaints and concerns and communicating with customers.
c) Financial skills among service managers.
d) Project management
e) Partnership skills
f) Procurement skills
g) ICT skills – skills need to continue to improve to maximise the benefits of ICT investment and continue to improve productivity – both at the level of the individual officer and the understanding of managers on how ICT can help achieve their business aims.
h) Some specialist skills - particularly in relation to the new settlements – eg urban design; landscape design; which the Council is trying to develop.

A13. There are some cases where staff have reached their limit or have had difficulty in changing or adapting as the nature of their job has changed. It must be emphasised that this applies to a very small number of staff; however, these few capacity or capability issues can have a disproportionate impact on relatively small teams and can be a major distraction for their managers. Improved support arrangements or processes need to be in place to address these situations.

A14. **Appraisals**. The Council has made considerable progress in developing its staff appraisal process and extending it to all employees. Links with performance management and priorities have improved. One area which would benefit from greater emphasis is the impact of appraisals in promoting personal development. Investors in People accreditation has been achieved for the Environmental Health service and current improvements being made in response to CPA are putting in place arrangements which will prepare the rest of the Council for IIP.

A15. **Management**. This was a significant issue raised in interviews with Directors. It was felt to be important to raise management capacity at corporate and at service management level to meet the challenges facing the Council in the years ahead. Areas to be addressed included improvements in service planning; performance management; management of resources; and customer care.

A16. A number of areas were identified which could be addressed to improve management capacity to tackle the future agenda of the Council:-

a) Leanness of current management structures.
b) Providing greater clarity about the role of managers and what they are expected to deliver.
c) Reviewing the amount of time taken up with meetings and the democratic process.
d) Achieving greater clarity of strategic direction and service outcomes.
e) Applying a more consistent approach to performance management.
f) Improving management skills.
g) Reviewing the balance between the roles of support services (such as finance; communications, HR and policy) and the roles of service managers. Some

concerns were voiced that service managers were being asked to take on too many of these support roles and address cross cutting issues or corporate issues.

A.17   Improving management capacity is addressed in the Action Plan.

A18**.   Staff Survey.** The Council undertakes a survey of its staff every two years and the most recent survey was undertaken in the autumn of 2004. The results of the survey were discussed with a panel of staff. There were many encouraging results from the survey. The following have been identified as the most important issues to be addressed and are included in the Action Plan:-

a)   Improving two way communication between staff and management.
b)   Ensuring greater consistency of the application of HR and management policies through the improvement of management capacity
c)   An improved and consistent approach to departmental induction for new starters.
d)   Bring forward a review of flexible working
e)   Review the lunchtime seminars to improve their effectiveness in addressing corporate issues and sharing ideas.

Council Priorities and Workforce Requirements

A19.   The Council has agreed the following priorities for the three years 2005/6 to 2007/8:-

Improving Customer Service. Many of the workforce requirements to achieve this priority have already been covered. For example:-

a)   Improving the capacity of managers to give leadership to a culture of customer service; and all aspects of its implementation (including effective performance management and use of ICT)
b)   Continuing to keep recruitment and retention under review to ensure that the Council has a continuity of skilled staff.
c)   Continuing to improve the skills and motivation of staff and a diverse workforce which is in tune with the needs and outlooks of customers.
d)   Structures, capacities and flexibility to enable the Council to adapt to meet the changing needs of customers.

New Settlements. The ability of the Council to respond to the challenge of the new settlements and develop its services to meet growing demands will depend on being able to put in place and retain the necessary skills, either by recruitment or training. Requirements will include:-

a)   A medium term financial strategy which provides the resources to recruit the planning, community services, housing, project co-ordination skills required.
b)   The ability to recruit and retain sought after skills, for example through attractive terms and conditions and opportunities for career development.
c)   The ability to develop or buy in specialist skills.
d)   The ability to plan and develop services to meet the service needs of a growing population.

Affordable Housing. In the last two years the Council has built up the capacity of the strategic housing team in order to address the challenges of significantly increasing the supply of affordable housing. Significantly greater staff capacity is unlikely to be required, except as project officers as the new settlements at Northstowe and edge of Cambridge progress.

A20. **Council Values**. The Council has adopted values: Customer Service, Using initiative; doing what you say; simple processes; politeness and respect; and team working. There is a lack of awareness of the values; they need to be reviewed; to see if there is commitment to them; and if so, built more into what the Council does.

The objectives of the Plan

A21 In the light of the foregoing paragraphs, the following objectives reflect the needs of the Council in adapting to external pressures and meeting its objectives in the medium term:-

> **Workforce Plan Objectives**: to enable the Council to achieve a workforce to deliver its objectives by:-
> a) enhancing leadership and management
> b) working towards a staffing complement and structure which reflects the Council's objectives and future needs
> c) enhancing the skills and motivation of staff to meet the changing work environment and maximise performance
> d) flexibility and the ability to achieve organisational change to reflect changing needs

A22. The objectives also reflect best practice guidance that workforce plans should address the following areas:-

- Organisational development and transformation
- Leadership capacity
- Workforce skills and capacity
- Recruitment and retention
- Pay and rewards

Strategic Change Principles

A23. Over the next year the Council will potentially be required to make a number of substantial and radical steps which will impact greatly on the workforce. These may include some or all of the following: the implementation of the decision on housing stock options; the response to capping and Gershon; and changes to reflect new ICT systems, business re-engineering and the contact centre. It is recommended that the Council adopt the following strategic principles in responding to these pressures. The Council will -

a) Adopt a comprehensive and joined up response to the various pressures facing the Council.

b) Develop a clear view about a sustainable workforce required in three years' time which will discharge the Council's statutory obligations to an appropriate standard and continue to make progress on priorities – to inform the next review of the Workforce Plan.

c) Ensure that changes made support the Council's priorities and the performance management structures and culture to deliver them.

d) Take opportunities to strengthen strategic and service management.

e) Ensure that changes in staffing structures and numbers are accompanied with corresponding clarity about what services are expected to deliver.

f) Develop and apply consistent change management procedures and principles

Action Plan

A24. The attached action plan addresses the issues raised in preceding paragraphs and is centred around the objectives of the plan given at paragraph 19.

Performance Indicators

A25. The Council already has a number of national and local performance indicators relating to this plan and are valuable in measuring progress on key matters relating to workforce matters.– ie:-

- Training
- Turnover
- Sickness

A26. At this stage no further performance indicators are recommended.

Implementation, Review and Monitoring

A27. The following approach will be taken to monitoring and updating the plan:-

a) Actions in the Action Plan will be included within the Council's normal performance management framework – ie in Service Plans, appraisals and the Performance Plan and major actions included in the quarterly monitoring reports to Management Team and Cabinet.

b) The Workforce Plan will be revised annually in the period July to December to enable:-

- the review to take into account the views of members on priorities and those of services on workforce needs
- the outcome of the review to feed into the annual update of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Summary of Departmental Statistics

Gender

Male	Female
245	255

Disability

Disabled	Not disabled	Not declared
24	249	226

Ethnicity

Employees from Minority group	Employees who are not from a minority group	Not declared
4	367	129

Age

16-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-65
1	63	127	119	142	49

Working Pattern

Full Time	Part Time
457	43

Contract

Fixed Term	Permanent
26	474

Length of Service

Under 1 Year	41
1-4 Years	151
5-9 Years	108
10-19 Years	129
20-29 Years	48
30-39 Years	21
More Than 40 Years	2

Workforce Plan 2005/6 to 2008/9 - Action Plan

The following action plan is based on the four objectives of the plan. Because service plans for 2005/06 have already been approved, the new actions for the current year have been kept to a minimum, with most new actions beginning in 2006/7 at the earliest.

The Action Plan has been extended to include actions:-

- actions from the HR Strategy (indicated by "HR" in the "Links" column)
- actions in response to the staff survey (indicted by "SS" in the "Links" column)

Action		Links	Director	When				Resources required
				05/6	06/7	07/8	08/9	
Objective 1: Enhance Leadership and Management								
1	Create clear three year service targets based on Council priorities as a basis for workforce planning		CEX	✔	✔	✔	✔	
2	Introduce leadership development, initially for all first and second tiers and then Cabinet Members, in a phased programme.	SS	F&R		✔	✔	✔	£20k pa (but will seek CPA capacity funding)
3	Create improved strategic capacity through the National Graduate Development programme	HR	F&R	✔	✔			£8k pa
4	Agree a generic job description with defined competencies for various tiers of management.	HR/SS	F&R		✔			
5	Introduce managers' development programme – compulsory for managers with more than 5 staff and available for managers with fewer staff or officers with aims to become managers – based on the job description in 4.	HR/SS	F&R		✔	✔	✔	£15k pa
6	Develop standards so that service managers receive a consistent and agreed level of support from support services.		F&R			✔		Potential cost if higher levels of support required
7	Include workforce plan review into the budget and service planning process.		CEX	✔				

Action		Links	Director	When				Resources required
				05/6	06/7	07/8	08/9	
Objective 2: Work towards a staffing complement and structure which reflects the Council's objectives and future needs								
8	Agree and implement a project plan to apply a co-ordinated approach to the following:- • the implementation of workforce elements of the outcome of the housing stock options appraisal • workforce effects of capping • the workforce implications of the Council's efficiency agenda (Gershon and savings in the MTFS) • front office/back office structure in accordance with the strategic change principles in this plan (paragraph A23).		CEX	✔	✔			There will be significant resource implications – but could be up or down.
9	Revise the Workforce Plan by December 2006 (and annually thereafter) to include:- • Three year projections of workforce requirements. • An assessment of future needs arising from the new settlements and more generally from population increase. • Staffing requirements to achieve performance indicator targets • Impact/requirements for MTFS		CEX/ F&R	✔	✔	✔	✔	
10	Review the continuation of the pay and grading review, taking into account experience with recruitment and retention		F&R		✔			
11	Review the use of fixed term contracts		F&R		✔			Potential implications if contracts replaced by permanent posts
12	Implement improved monitoring reports covering turnover, vacancies and departmental profiles to Directors and Management Team, made possible by the new HR system.	HR	F&R	✔	✔	✔	✔	
13	Introduce a structured approach to career development ("grow your own") drawing on secondments, mentoring plus establishment of career grades and consider application to all appropriate areas where recruitment/retention has been a problem.	SS	F&R			✔	✔	Potential costs, but depends on application
14	Review of retirement policies	HR	F&R		✔			Potential cost

	Action	Links	Director	When				Resources required
				05/6	06/7	07/8	08/9	
	Develop a proactive approach to absence management, including support for healthy lifestyles in accordance with emerging government advice		F&R			✔	✔	Potential relatively small cost
15	Introduce flexible working practices (eg compressed hours, annualised hours and review of core hours) to aid diversity and recruitment/retention	HR/SS	F&R	✔				
16	Investigate the feasibility and report on a flexible benefits scheme – ie enabling staff to choose from a range of benefits – including a career break scheme.	HR	F&R			✔		Potential cost
Objective 3: Enhance the skills and motivation of staff to meet the changing work environment and maximise performance								
17	Develop a training policy to ensure a consistent approach to the allocation of training and value for money		F&R	✔				
18	Carry out a skills audit to identify current skills level across the organisation	HR	F&R	✔				
19	Identify generic/core skills (competencies) for different posts within the Council for use at recruitment, appraisal and supported by a rolling training programme	HR	F&R				✔	
20	Improve induction for new starters, including by review and re-issue of induction checklist and the provision of a welcome pack	SS	F&R		✔			
Objective 4: flexibility and the ability to achieve organisational change to reflect changing needs								
21	Continue to work with and develop the officer group responding to the staff survey towards a staff forum to act as a sounding board on matters affecting the workforce.	HR/SS	F&R	✔				
22	Review and relaunch the Council's values		CEX		✔			
23	Re-launch lunchtime seminars – revised to give greater emphasis to the sharing of ideas and approaches; to be open to all employees, but with top 3 tiers normally expected to attend.	SS	CEX		✔			
24	Re-introduce regular briefings from the Chief Executive in an appropriate format.	SS	CEX	✔				
25	Request all Directors and service managers to ensure that all staff are covered by a team briefing process which enables staff to be informed of important corporate issues and to feed their views to management.	SS	CEX	✔				
26	Introduce mentoring and coaching policies to encourage career development and shared learning	HR/SS	F&R	✔				

	Action	Links	Director	When				Resources required
				05/6	06/7	07/8	08/9	
27	Introduce a secondment policy to encourage career development opportunities and learning from best practice.	HR	F&R		✔			Potential costs
28	Develop change management procedures and policies and develop change management capacity within the Council.		F&R /CEX	✔				
29	Revise and up date the capability policy and procedure		F&R		✔			
All Objectives								
30	Achieve IIP status for the whole Council	HR	CEX/ F&R				✔	Some potential limited cost