

WORKFORCE STRATEGY 2009-12

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The aim of the workforce strategy is to set out the Council's approach and plans for people management. It is the framework which will provide the future direction of all Human Resource activity within the Council. This will be done by detailing the kind of employer the Council now needs to be and outlining its plans on how it intends to get there. As such it represents a significant step forward in the way human resource management is to be focused, prioritised and delivered in the Council.
- 1.2 The workforce strategy attached as Appendix 1 has been shaped by the views of employees (employee survey and focus groups 2008), Industrial Relations Committee and Corporate Overview Panel. The strategy details the council's priorities for the next 3 years including high level actions.
- 1.3 The strategy is supported by a HR framework which includes:
 - 1.3.1 Policy and Resources Portfolio plan – Delivering through people
 - 1.3.2 HR Service Action Plan
 - 1.3.3 A set of detailed guidance contained in Management Advice Notes (MANs)
 - 1.3.4 Employee information contained in the councils Employee Handbook
 - 1.3.5 Workforce performance monitored through the councils performance management system and the Annual employee report.

2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

4. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 In accordance with the principles of equalities and diversity, the commitment to our workforce extends to everyone regardless of their gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion, disability, marital status, caring responsibility, trade union membership, age, sexual orientation, working pattern or grade.

6. INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE/CORPORATE OVERVIEW PANEL COMMENTS

- 6.1 Industrial Relations Committee were supportive of the new workforce strategy.
- 6.2 Corporate Overview Panel endorsed the workforce priorities and actions set out in the Workforce Strategy.

7. PORTFOLIO HOLDER COMMENTS

- 7.1 The Policy & Resources Portfolio Holder supports the recommendation and recognises that the new strategy has a greater emphasis on planning our workforce and improving our performance, but still retains our important commitment to developing our workforce for now and for the future.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 8.1 Cabinet agree the workforce strategy.

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Background Papers:



New Forest

DISTRICT COUNCIL

WORKFORCE STRATEGY

2009 – 2012

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Foreword

Our vision is to enhance the quality of lives of both present and future generations within the New Forest. We will look to provide this in many ways including the delivery of excellent public services. Our approach to this vision relies on people who are well motivated and trained with working conditions which help them provide services with care, quality and fairness. The Council operates in an environment where the only certainty is that nothing stands still and the only constant is the constant need for change and improvement. People, performance and continuous improvement are at the centre of this drive for improvement.

At New Forest District Council we believe that employees are the most valuable resource in our organisation. We appreciate their flexibility, commitment and resilience, and without them we will not deliver the improvements needed in delivering quality services now and in the future. If we are to make the most of our employees and deliver excellent services, we must plan how we will continue to develop a well skilled, well-motivated and high performing workforce.

This strategy outlines our commitment to developing our employees and to ensuring we have the right people, with the right skills, to deliver continually improving services.

Dave Yates
Chief Executive

Barry Rickman
Leader of the Council

Introduction

The aim of this strategy is to set out the Council's approach and plans for people management. It is the framework which will provide the future direction of all Human Resource activity in the Council. This will be done by detailing the kind of employer the Council now needs to be and outlining its plans on how it intends to get there. As such it represents a significant step forward in the way human resource management is to be focused, prioritised and delivered in the Council.

The document has been shaped by the views of employees, trade unions and members, in answer to the following questions:

- What is the Strategy intended to do?
- How is it linked to the Council's objectives?
- Where are we now in terms of:
 - The profile of the workforce; and
 - The internal and external challenges which face the Council as an employer
- What kind of employer does the Council need to be in the future?
- What are our key priorities to achieve the change?
- How will we achieve these improvements and how will they be measured?

What is the Strategy intended to do?

Make a direct contribution to the Council's Strategic Corporate Plan and objectives by focusing on how people management activity can achieve these goals.

Identify and set out what is actually important to the Council in respect of the management and development of its employees.

Translate what is important into specific human resource actions, performance measures and accountabilities which will then be tracked over time.

Where are we now?

Overview

Our workforce has continued to develop and adapt to the changes it has faced over the last 3 years. Some of the key actions taken within the people strategy are listed below:

- We have re-structured services to ensure they are structured in the most efficient and effective way and our resources are used to best effect – this has included the transfer of leisure calls to the corporate contact centre, the bringing together of the new property services section. To meet both financial and service needs, services have been continuously reviewing job roles, staffing levels.
- We have modernised current workforce practices to the benefit of the council and employees – including the launch of the HLOWLA recruitment portal, self service modules on Agresso, on-line travel system. A move towards flexible working (including a reduction in core hours, increase in homeworking, remote working).
- We have developed our management capability by continuing to deliver a high standard of management development programmes from supervisory to senior management.
- Our workforce performance continued to be a priority with the review of absence management policies and practices and regular monitoring of absence levels.
- The pay panel supported by a project team have been in regular discussions to ensure the council meets its single status and equal pay obligations. The Pay and Reward proposals will be considered by Council in February 2010.
- We have continued to consult and communicate with our workforce, the employee survey and focus groups highlighted a number of key concerns – these have been translated into an action plan. The action plan included the review of the Performance and Development Interview (PDI) process which is now complete and more face to face communication. The Executive Management Team undertook a number of briefing sessions with staff in 2008, the feedback from these were excellent – further sessions have taken place in 2009.
- We have continued to invest in the training and development of our workforce to ensure they have the right skills to do their ever changing roles – over 80 environment services staff completed successfully an NVQ 2 in waste.
- We believe that external inspections are a good way of benchmarking our performance against others. The council successfully maintained the more stretching Investors in People standard in 2008 and achieved the Equalities Standard at Level 3.

Corporate Plan

“To be an outward looking Council, working closely with the community and in partnership with others to enhance the quality of lives of present and future generations” is the Councils stretching vision.

To achieve its vision, the Council has developed a corporate plan ‘Leading our Forest Communities’. The vision is delivered through:

A set of values which are shared by all Members and employees. These are:

- Caring
- Communication
- Openness and Trust
- Positive Thinking
- Quality
- Simplicity
- Value for Money
- Working Together

A number of key themes – these themes are key activities which help to deliver the corporate plan. These are:

- Managing our finances
- Maintaining excellent performance and improving effectiveness and efficiency
- Managing our assets including exploring the scope for one site administration
- Working to reduce the carbon footprint of the Council and the District
- Leading and enhancing local partnerships including the Local Strategic Partnership
- Engaging local people and communities in all we do
- Improving the ease and equality of access to public services of all our customers and citizens

The Council will only achieve its aims and its overall vision through people – employees, Members and partners.

The workforce Strategy describes the Council's approach to managing and developing people, and is key to achieving the following Council aims:

- Delivering through People
- Improving our Performance
- Managing our finances
- Improving People's (Health)
- Providing Equal Opportunities

As a committed Investor in People the council recognises that the workforce is an important investment, and is committed to providing appropriate resources, within available resources, to recruit, retain and develop employees to be capable, willing and confident to meet the needs of our services.

In accordance with the principles of equalities and diversity, the commitment to our workforce extends to everyone regardless of their gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion, disability, marital status, caring responsibility, trade union membership, age, sexual orientation, working pattern or grade.

The council is aware of the importance of workforce planning and development in an environment that requires adaptability rather than stability.

Local government Workforce Data

The following information is taken from 'Tomorrows people' – Audit Commission – 2008.

- 66% of the workforce are women, the majority work part-time
- 77% of male employees in local government work full-time compared to 40% of women.
- The local government workforce is older than the wider economy with 31% of council employees will reach retirement age in the next decade.
- Ethnic minorities now account for 10% of the total population.

Data for the District

The census data for 2001 states a total resident population in New Forest of 169,331. This is split as follows:

Gender	Percentage
Women	52
Men	48

Age	Percentage
Under 16	18.2
16-74	70.3
75 plus	11.5

Ethnicity	Percentage
White	98.9
BME	1.1

There is no official figures available on the % of the population that are registered disabled, but we would estimate this figure at around 14%.

Our workforce profile

The Council employees 1565 employees (headcount)

Registered Disabled	3%
BME	0.6%

Gender	Percentage
Women	55%
Men	45%

Age	Percentage
24 and under	20%
25 to 34	16%
35 to 44	20%
45 to 54	22%
55 and over	22%

Workforce Context

The current workforce at New Forest District Council has a number of characteristics which present some challenges if the Council is to achieve the aim of fitting its future workforce profile to changing service delivery needs. Among these challenges are:

Employment of Young People

There is a local, regional and national need to attract young people to work within local government and address the poor image of taking up a public sector career. Specifically we need to increase the number of young people coming into local government in order that their skills can be developed for future succession planning and career opportunities. The recruitment of young people needs to be given a special focus. This includes graduates, school leavers, trainees and apprentices.

Hard to fill posts

The current economic situation has eased the difficulties in recruiting, but there is still a concern that there are not enough talented employees in key occupational areas. In the Council these roles are typically in building control, environmental health and planning.

Profile of local government as an employer

The council is aware that in order to attract and retain employees of a variety of ages and backgrounds, we need to promote New Forest District Council as an employer of choice and to raise the profile of local government as a career. Key actions in this plan include liaison with schools and promotion of flexible working policies.

Diversity of our workforce

To ensure our services reflect the needs of our customers, we must ensure we have a workforce that reflects the community. Specifically, we need to provide an organisation that is free from all forms of discrimination and which promotes the benefits of equality and diversity.

Succession planning

It is often difficult to recruit experienced local talent. Whilst this suggests a need to attract individuals from outside the District, we also need to develop and retain talented employees in key areas. Succession planning has been highlighted as a need, especially for our management population.

Changing nature of work

The nature of work and service delivery is shifting. For example, some technical work could be sourced elsewhere rather than by directly employed staff. The Council's role as a commissioner of services, rather than a direct provider will continue to grow. The council therefore needs to be equipped to deliver efficient and effective services through business process redesign as well as employing staff with advanced skills in partnership and procurement. Outsourcing, collaborative arrangements and strategic partnerships will lead to

a steady decrease in the number of directly employed staff. This is likely to affect services provided directly to the public as well as support services.

Where do we want to be and how will we get there?

The corporate objectives and the workforce context have identified a number of recurring themes, which need addressing from a people management perspective. These issues have been classified into six themes. These are:

- Planning our workforce
- Transforming our organisation
- Developing our Management and Leadership capability
- Recruiting and developing Workforce, skills and capacity
- Managing our performance
- Developing pay and reward

The themes include a number of high level actions which will be delivered over the life of the strategy.

Planning our workforce

There will be a council wide strategic approach to workforce planning that reflects strategic priorities and objectives and supports the delivery of services. It will align closely with strategic planning and will be designed to deliver improvements in efficiency, productivity and value for money outcomes against local priorities. The strategic workforce plan will address current and future workforce needs for people and skills, and will be underpinned by fit-for-purpose information on demand for services, workforce size and profile, and systematic collection of the views of staff.

- To produce a strategic workforce plan (annually) and ensure this is supported by service workforce plans
- To work with Hampshire and Isle of Wight (HIOWLA) on a sub-regional workforce plan, particularly on hard to fill posts, i.e. Planning, Environmental Health

Transforming our organisation

We will effectively build workforce support for new structures and new ways of working to deliver citizen-focused and efficient services, in partnership. We will review organisational structures and consider these in the current and future context, taking full consideration of the Medium Term Financial plan and the external as well as internal priorities. The council will have a corporate approach to service delivery which includes partnerships, commissioning, and outsourcing. The delivery model will reduce cost/increase capacity or deliver a better service for our citizens. We will develop a culture of innovation and continuous improvement that embraces new ways of working and continual learning to achieve citizen-centred services in the most efficient way possible. The Councils one-site review will be a key driver in transforming our organisation and changing the way employees work in the short to medium term.

- To review managing change policies and procedures to support the council's improvement and efficiency programme.
- To review our employee relations framework – ensuring that we continue to communicate, consult staff, trade unions and other staff representative groups and actively involve them in transforming our council.
- To support the work of the office optimisation team. This will include working with partners and the review of flexible and mobile working.
- To undertake a biennial employee survey of our workforce

Developing Management and Leadership capability

Members play a key role in leading the council and we will continue to deliver a councillors development programme to meet current as well as future needs. We will be clear about the leadership and management qualities we require in both the short and medium term, it is clear the role of the manager has and will change considerably. We will take effective action to attract, develop and retain the leaders of today and the leaders of tomorrow. We need to raise performance and skills levels by delivering an integrated and accelerated management development programme – good people management skills will be core. We believe our workforce should reflect our community and in turn our management should reflect our diverse workforce, we will continue to monitor our diversity profile and ensure that no barriers exist to accessing management opportunities.

- To continue to deliver the Councillors development programme
- To continue to deliver high standard Management Development Programmes
- To review management standards and introduce leadership standards as part of the Performance and Development Interview process

Recruiting and developing workforce skills and capacity

The Council will present itself as a good employer in the marketplace, exploiting a range of recruitment channels. When skill gaps are identified from the workforce plans – the council will need to ensure that plans are in place to address the gaps. The Council will promote its talent through a talent management approach and undertake effective succession planning. We will develop our workforce to ensure they have the right skills to do their jobs both in the short and medium term; this will include ICT and partnership skills.

- To review the councils recruitment and selection policies and procedures to ensure they meet the needs of the Council in the medium term
- To put in place a succession planning process
- To liaise with schools and colleges on promoting the council as an employer of choice

Managing our Performance

The Councils performance management arrangements will reflect priorities and have a strong customer focus to support new patterns of service delivery. We will improve performance management arrangements which support management in delivering services that are fit for purpose and action will be taken to resolve poor performance. We will continue to invest in the health, safety and wellbeing of our workforce –we will implement initiatives that will optimise health outcomes and productivity through improved attendance. We will review staffing costs in high spending areas against other organisations and take appropriate action. We will be able to demonstrate how staff benefit the community, including examples of staff that identify and implement efficiencies and innovation, backed by a strong improvement culture.

- To develop a Workforce performance matrix – which looks at a number of quantifiable measures of performance including, attendance.
- To review attendance policies and procedures to ensure we improve attendance levels and in turn improve our productivity
- To review Performance and Development Interview (PDI) process
- Continue to review staffing costs per service

Developing Pay and Reward

The Council will modernise its pay and reward frameworks to ensure they reflect the Councils priority objectives and they are able to attract, retain and motivate high performance workforce. We will continue to keep the pay bills under control by anticipating and addressing potential equal pay risks. We will invest in training managers to appropriately and fairly manage performance of employees (Determine awards rather than rely on automatic systems). We need to work with our employee side representatives to shift employee expectations to understand that the Council can no longer offer certain benefits.

- To agree and implement the current pay and reward review
- To introduce a total rewards approach – this approach recognises that the workforce is diverse and a wide range of tools need to be available to motivate the workforce – some financial and others related to lifestyle choices.
- To consider performance based recognition schemes