



**CHESTERFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL**

# **Workforce Strategy 2012-15**

**Version 9  
Date: February 2012**

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Chesterfield Borough Council has ambitious plans in place for the delivery of high quality services to its residents and businesses, and recognises that these plans can only be achieved if it develops and nurtures a diverse, committed, motivated and highly skilled workforce.
- 1.2 This document sets out Chesterfield Borough Council's Workforce Strategy for the period 2012-2015. It builds on the Workforce Strategy 2010-13 and sets out key actions the workforce in its broadest terms and provides a framework to ensure our people management practices are aligned to the delivery of our corporate aims.
- 1.3 Employees and staffing matters are at the heart of the Council's operations, a commitment which has been recognised in the corporate achievement of the 'Investor in People' standard since 2004. In particular the Council has:
  - ◆ a track record of recruiting and retaining high quality employees
  - ◆ employees with the skills and knowledge to respond to the changing demands of our residents and businesses and the national policy agenda for local government
  - ◆ a positive and empowering culture
  - ◆ conditions of service that encourage flexibility, value diversity and address work life balance issues
  - ◆ achievement of the 'Achieving' level of the Equality Framework
  - ◆ robust performance management
  - ◆ excellent relationships with trade unions and trade union learning representatives.

## **2.0 Key Achievements in 2010-12**

- 2.1 Key achievements against the Workforce Strategy actions for 2010 -12 are:
  - The Council's aims in relation to a cleaner, greener environment have been supported by actions to create an appreciation and

understanding of EMAS which have successfully contributed towards a change of culture in the Council. The role of sustainability officer has been filled; new employees are briefed during induction; the Council produces the 'Green Leaves' publication; regular email briefings are distributed to staff and articles published in the Borough Bulletin. All have contributed significantly to the aim of reducing the Council's carbon footprint.

- The 'Streetscene' Improvement Plan was successfully underpinned by training for all relevant staff.
- The Council's aim to '*Provide services which are accessible to all of our customers through a range of channels*' has been supported by the successful implementation of a public/private partnership with *arvato Public Sector Services* in October 2010, to develop its customer interfaces. A new Customer Service Strategy is being developed which includes a revised channel strategy, plans for innovative development of the Council's web site to include much more accessible e-services and information. A competency framework has been developed for Customer Services Advisors in the call centre and a rigorous training programme for these staff completed.
- The Council's equalities agenda has made significant progress in that we achieved the "Achieving" level of the equalities framework in January 2011.
- The Council's aims in relation to economic promotion and its commitment to the *Destination Chesterfield* have been moved forwards by the provision of briefings for all service managers and key staff.
- The Council's skills gap relating to financial appraisal of development activities has been filled by provision of training for two members of staff.
- Progression of the Council's Health Inequalities Plan was hindered by a skills gap. Initially recruitment was considered but this has been successfully managed by implementing an alternative strategy in that a member of Derbyshire County PCT staff now works with the Council one day per week to help deliver this project.

- The Council's Community Safety Partnership Action Plan has been supported through dedicated Section 17 training sessions. However it has been recognised that the key to successful delivery of the plan is simple but effective communication between the Community Safety Team and Service managers who have ownership of the Plan. In the main this has been achieved for the present year.
- In support of the Council's efficiency aims a best value review of Value for Money (VfM) was undertaken. Development activities were undertaken to ensure Members and Heads of Service were familiar with the diagnostic tool and the approach to and importance of VfM. In addition the new performance management framework has been successfully implemented through coaching and mentoring of Heads of Service by executive officers (CE and Dep. CE) and the Head of Business Transformation.
- The Council delivered a very successful Apprenticeship Programme in a range of occupations across the Council. 30 unemployed people commenced the programme in 2010 where they gained valuable work experience and completed nationally recognised qualifications.
- Further development of the Council's senior team was successfully undertaken through the implementation of a leadership programme via action learning.
- The Council were reassessed for the liP Award at the end of 2010 which was successfully retained. This followed an Employee Survey in which the majority of employees who responded said that they were committed to the success of, and proud to work for the Council.
- The Council's Health and Safety Policy has been reviewed and updated to ensure that the workplace is safe for our employees and visitors.
- The Risk Management Group identified that Stress in the Workplace was becoming an increasing risk to the Council. A new Stress Policy has been developed followed by training for all managers to help them identify and prevent causes of stress, and provide support as appropriate.

## 3.0 Moving forwards

3.1 The overarching key issues facing the Council have been identified as:

- **Organisational development**

There has been a seismic shift in the context of delivery of local government services. Councils face an unprecedented period of declining resources and we need to do more with less funding.

*Where we are now* - The Council has taken steps to reduce management and back-office costs through restructuring and partnerships but needs to take further action to cut out wasteful processes and bureaucracy. Partnership working, in particular with public and 'not for profit' bodies, will continue to play an important part in the management of budgets, as will the need to harness new technologies to enable customer-focused transformation.

*What success will look like* – The Council's workforce embrace a change culture where each employee is encouraged, skilled and empowered to promote service process improvement and customer focused delivery. Its retained services are fully integrated with services provided by partner organisations that may have different cultures.

*What we will do (key actions):*

- Deliver training for conducting improvement programmes (Lean Reviews) to ensure that any reduction in resources is led by work to create the necessary capacity.
- Include 'striving for improvement' in core competencies of all staff.
- Ensure managers are skilled to promote the culture change through development activities.

- **Leadership development**

*Where we are now* – The Council restructured its Corporate Management Team (CMT) in 2009. Since the creation of the new senior team they have completed a leadership programme and have gained new skills and insight through the action learning provided. An initial draft of top tier management competencies has been

developed. This draft needs to be refined, published as used as basis for performance management.

Given the resourcing challenges facing the Council, it is vital that leadership skills are encouraged and developed at all levels to develop the next generation of senior managers. The competency framework needs to be extended to middle managers and first line managers.

*What success will look like* – The Council encourages the development of leadership skills and leadership behaviours at all levels. The Council's managers demonstrate the following behaviours, aptitudes and skills:

- Provides vision, leadership and direction and works effectively with peers to deliver corporate messages and champion corporate priorities.
- Grows and develops people.
- Embodies the Council's standards and values.
- Champions and leads change and keeps promises.
- Demonstrates high level analytical, presentational, communication and interpersonal skills.
- Delegates effectively, inspires and expects high standards of professionalism and performance.

*What we will do (key actions):*

- Agree and publish core competencies for all staff and members (see skills development, below).
- Develop, agree and implement new EPD scheme based on competency framework.
- Develop a training programme based on identified key management skills for existing and aspiring future managers.

- **Skills development**

*Where we are now* – The Council currently has a framework for employee development based on the Employee Performance and Development (EPD) scheme supported by both a corporate training programme and service specific development. It is recognised that

development provision needs to be more structured and in synergy with the Council's values and its corporate aims and priorities.

The Council revised its Corporate Planning Framework in 2011. As part of that planning process 'key projects', which underpin achievement of the defined outcomes, were agreed. A review has been undertaken to identify the skills development implications of each of the key projects.

*What success will look like* – The Council has a competency framework for all its leaders including elected members, managers and employees, which reflect its values, supported by an EPD scheme which measures performance against those competencies. The Council defines the most important current and future skills needs and takes effective action to attract, develop or share these skills.

A training and development programme which reflects the identified needs of Corporate Plan, service objectives and the professional aspirations of employees, is in place. The Council has a culture in which employees engage and invest in their own development and that of their team.

*What we will do (key actions):*

- Agree and publish core corporate competencies for all employees
  - Identify the core requirements of each role
  - Develop, agree and implement new EPD scheme based on the competency framework. The scheme will be flexible and designed to ensure it is appropriate to different levels in the Council.
  - Develop a training programme based on identified key core skills.
  - Develop a training programme to support service delivery and appropriate personal development opportunities.
  - Developing structured secondments and job shadowing programmes.
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- **Recruitment and retention**

In the current economic context there is a need for the Council to focus on retaining the right people with the right skills and attitudes needed to achieve its vision and aims.

56% of the top 5% of earners in the Council are aged over 50 years. 65% of the total workforce are 40 years of age or over with 38% being aged 50 years or over. This age profile makes it evident that many skilled staff are approaching retirement, so it needs to look ahead to make sure that it will have enough people to provide future services.

The reduction in management posts will make it more difficult for the Council to significantly improve its senior diversity profile through recruitment over the next few years. Formal succession planning for future leaders would assist with the retention of talent within the Council.

The recession has increased unemployment in the Borough. The Council aims to increase employment opportunities and increase the life chances of young people. It is important that the Council sets an example to other local employers by taking on apprenticeships and offering work placements.

*What success will look like* – and attracts, develops and retains the political and managerial leaders of the future, taking effective action to increase the percentage of leaders from diverse backgrounds.

The Council identifies future occupational skills requirements and takes action to address these for example by promoting key future jobs, organising apprenticeship and trainee programmes and student placements.

*What we will do (key actions):*

- Ensure new EPD scheme identifies and supports the development of potential future leaders to aid succession planning.
- Develop a Future Manager fast track programme for at least two high achievers per year to aid succession planning and retention of talent (subject to available budget).
- Continue to support apprentices and trainee placements and to support apprentices into employment on the successful completion of their apprenticeship.



- Continue to support employees and managers at all levels to ensure that they have the relevant skills to deliver future requirements and that their experience is retained
- Continue to review recruitment procedures to target under represented groups.
- **Pay and rewards**

*Where we are now* – The Council completed ‘Single Status’ and implemented the collective agreement relating to the Local Pay, Conditions and Grading Review with effect from 1 January 2008. The Council’s pay and benefits scheme operates on the basis of an entitlement culture in which increments are awarded on the basis of service, regardless of performance.

*What success will look like:*

A fair and efficient job evaluation process in place which reflects best practice

A new appraisal scheme established with managers fully equipped with the skills to assess performance and determine progression in a fair and equitable way

A revised pay agreement, with creative and flexible approaches to pay and reward, which recognises the need for equality of opportunity and work life balance, whilst meeting the Council’s future business needs.

*What we will do (key actions):*

- Review the process and administration of the current job evaluation scheme bringing in good practice and learning from other Councils.
- Undertake a fundamental review of the EPD process and determine whether incremental progression should reflect performance. This will require detailed action in relation to consultation, training and culture change actions.
- Retain all options for discussion and negotiation to recognise and reward, by any means, employees at all levels.

## **4.0 Review**

The Workforce Strategy is not designed to be prescriptive. It will be updated annually to reflect changes to the Council's business needs and priorities and changes within Local Government. The Workforce Strategy will be reviewed regularly to reflect practical progress, external influences and any redefinition of corporate and service aims and objectives.

The Workforce Strategy will be refreshed following the annual review of the Corporate Plan.

## **DRAFT WORKFORCE STRATEGY ACTIONS**

This action plan sets out the key actions that are required to meet the success criteria of the strategy.

A group will need to be established shortly after formal approval to agree on final priorities and timescales.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>LEAD</b>	<b>BY WHEN</b>
Identify the core requirements of each role	Managers/HR	Completed
Agree and publish core competencies for all employees to include 'striving for improvement' for everyone	HR	April 2012
Develop, agree and implement new EPD scheme based on the competency framework (flexible and designed to ensure it is appropriate to different levels in the Council).	HR	April 2012 (provisional date)
Ensure new EPD scheme identifies and supports the development of potential future leaders.		April 2012 (provisional dependent on above)
Develop Learning Programme that supports <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- core learning in accordance with competency framework</li><li>- delivery of Council services</li><li>- key management skills for both current aspiring managers</li></ul>	HR	Mid 2012 (dependent on completion of EPD's)
Review the administration and process of job evaluation scheme	HR	June 2012
Developing structured secondments and job shadowing programmes.	HR	July 2012

Develop a Future Manager fast track programme for two high achievers per year.	HR/CMT	July 2012
Deliver training for conducting improvement programmes (Lean Reviews).	Business Transformation/arvato	TBA
Continue to support apprentices and trainee placements.	HR/CMT	Ongoing
Continue to review recruitment procedures to target under represented group.	HR	Ongoing