

## **East Devon District Council**

### **Foreword**

At East Devon District Council, we consider our staff to be our most valuable asset. It is only through effective people management and development that the Council will deliver the priorities outlined in our Corporate Strategy for 2006/09.

Workforce planning is therefore an integral part of our business planning and performance management arrangements. Planned improvements to our services are dependant upon not only identifying and monitoring the financial resources required but also on planning the people we will need.

East Devon District Council has taken a structured approach to workforce planning by including this dimension in the service planning process for 2006/09. Services have therefore used people data as well as financial data to formulate their service plans.

The 2006 Workforce Plan ensures that the Council will take an innovative approach to meeting the challenges of the strategic and community plans.

It is designed to meet the requirements of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's (ODPM) Pay and Workforce Strategy.

Specifically, it details action to:

- develop leadership capacity
- develop the skills and capacity of the workforce
- develop the organisation
- secure resources
- develop pay and reward systems
- encourage a co-ordinated approach to workforce planning across East Devon District Council

An effective Workforce Plan is one of the 'planks' to delivery of all Council strategies and plans. This Plan drives the Organisational Development Strategy and will help us to improve our organisational performance by developing a skilled and motivated workforce that can deliver the services which are valued by our communities and stakeholders.

### **Monitoring and evaluating**

Workforce Plans are an integral part of business planning. Service areas will annually review and update their Workforce Plans through Service Planning. Priority actions will flow into the Organisational Development Service plan as appropriate. The Head of Organisational Development will review the corporate Workforce Plan annually in conjunction with the Executive Board and the Heads of Service to ensure its continued relevance.

**Mark Williams**  
**Chief Executive East Devon District Council**

## Workforce Plan for East Devon District Council 2006

### 1 Introduction

#### What is workforce planning?

- link between business strategies and people plans
- identification of the future skills and competencies needed to deliver new and improved services
- analysis of the present workforce
- comparison between the present and the future and identification of the gap
- strategies to address the gaps

#### Why undertake workforce planning in East Devon District Council

To serve the people of East Devon as well as possible, we need the *right* people with the *right* skills and aptitudes in the *right* place at the *right* time. The development and maintenance of a workforce plan will enable the Council to focus on the medium and long term and at the same time provide a framework for dealing with immediate challenges in a consistent way.

There has been considerable focus nationally on the need for workforce planning. For example, the ODPM's pay and workforce strategy for Local Government highlights the need and requires Councils to have a workforce development plan. There is also a requirement within the Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

Central Government's public sector modernisation programme will lead to significant changes both in:

- the types of service provided and other ways that local authorities respond to the needs of the local population in future
- the forms of organisational structure and partnership arrangements set up to respond to the needs of the local population in future.

In addition, the changing needs and expectations of East Devon's population, including the rapidly rising elderly population, and other external factors, such as the opportunities afforded by new technology are likely to lead to significant changes in the volume and type of services required in the future, whether provided directly by the district council or in partnership with other agencies.

This will in turn have significant implications for the Council's future workforce requirements. Workforce planning needs therefore to be integral to the other plans and strategies being developed by the Council and partner agencies in response to this changing agenda.

## **How has the plan been produced?**

This plan has involved consultation with the Executive Board, senior managers, individuals in all areas and Unison as well as with reference to Devon County Council's workforce plan.

## **2 What should East Devon District Council be doing?**

The Corporate Strategy which was updated at the end of 2005, identifies four overarching priorities. These are:

- Achieve thriving, balanced communities
- Take care of and improve our environment
- Encourage a flourishing local economy
- Provide community leadership and good value for money, customer focused services.

These priorities are influenced by the views of the people of East Devon and by government policy and the modernisation agenda. They are the basis for targets aimed at achieving a 4\* rating in the next Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

Alongside these priorities are the following aims that East Devon District Council would like to achieve by 2010:

- to make a success of building a new sustainable community at Cranbrook without imposing large increases in Council tax
- the housing supply to be adequate and affordable for all needs
- a diverse economy with jobs that suit all needs, and which improves overall wealth
- to retain and attract more young people (18-35) to balance out our ageing population
- to promote our world heritage coast and areas of outstanding natural beauty to encourage green tourism
- further progress in the 'can do' business culture of the Council to assume the role of community leader capable of dealing with urban problems we are increasingly facing.

### **3 How will this affect services and structure**

In order to begin to address these issues, EDDC will need to demonstrate that it can:

- work with key partners in the public and private sector and with the customers of our services
- develop shared values and goals
- be responsive to the community
- be willing to learn and change
- be representative of diverse communities
- demonstrate a 'can do' culture
- deploy skills flexibly
- be effective in providing and managing information

At the same time several key questions will need to be addressed by the Council in the next five years:

- With the likely reduction in emphasis on regional government, will there be changes to local government structures?
- With the emphasis on pursuing shared services, will there be changes to structures particularly for support functions?
- How will the Council develop its role of community leadership amongst its partners?

### **4 What kind of workforce will be needed?**

The list below which is published in the Pay and Workforce Strategy shows the top skills which authorities have identified as priorities for the future:

- 1) Performance management
- 2) Creating a culture of continuous improvement
- 3) Strategic leadership
- 4) Change management and organisation development
- 5) Promoting a learning culture, flexibility, re-skilling and developing staff potential
- 6) Managing and delivering diversity and equality
- 7) Attracting staff to work in shortage areas such as planning or environmental health
- 8) ICT and e – government
- 9) Managing and delivering best value through procurement and contract management
- 10) Coaching front line managers and staff development
- 11) Community planning and consultation skills
- 12) Partnership working

## **Jobs and roles**

The impact of the labour market and technology and the need for more efficient ways of working will impact on the nature and numbers of jobs required. They may operate directly within local government or within outsourced or partner organisations but the Council will have a responsibility to anticipate the change and plan accordingly. The Pay and Workforce Strategy nationally predicts a net reduction of 0.7% in employments within local government between 2003-2008.

Despite this reduction there will be a constant need for new developments. Often these are unsuccessful where they are undertaken as part of existing jobs. The use of project management has already been identified as a method of developing both the organisation and the individual.

## **5 Demography and the labour market**

- The workforce in Devon is likely to increase by about 19,000 between 2001 and 2011 (3.8%).
- Reduction of over 9000 16-34 year olds by 2006.
- The demand for replacement employees is more significant than the demand required due to growth
- Unemployment is relatively low and declining.
- Earnings in Devon are relatively low.
- There is a low level of basic skills in some rural areas.
- There is a tendency for highly qualified young people to leave the county.

## **Recruitment and Retention**

- There is increasing competition to secure good employees, particularly in the Exeter area.
- Demography, transport and house prices discourage people from working in Devon
- There are 'hot spots' where it is already difficult to recruit both in Devon and nationally.
- The Employers Organisation reports that in 2005, 90.2% of all authorities reported experiencing recruitment and retention difficulties with one or more professional/managerial occupation. Fewer authorities reported difficulties for one or more non professional/ non managerial occupation (58%).
- The highest recruitment difficulties in 2005 were for social workers (particularly children and community), public protection (planning, building control, building surveyors, environmental health, trading standards), occupational therapists, education (teachers and psychologists) and legal staff. With the exception of building surveying (replacing librarians) these occupations also had the highest recruitment difficulties in 2004.

## Age profile

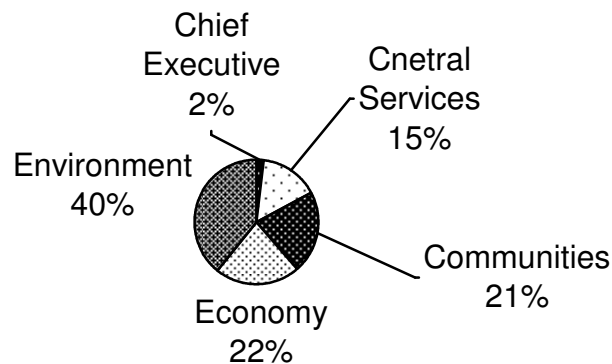
- Population changes in the 2001 census indicate that nationally by 2014 there will be more people over 65 than under 16. In East Devon there are already many more people of retirement age (30.3%) than under 15 (16.1%). The extension of the retirement age and concerns about pensions suggest that more people will continue working up to and beyond 65.

## Equalities

- This is a high profile area that is influenced by the social inclusion agenda and is assessed as part of the Best Value Performance Indicators and within Local Government Equality standards.

## 5 What do we know about the current workforce?

East Devon District Council employs 532 people. This figure excludes Leisure Services. The chart below shows this as a % breakdown by directorate.



Of these employees:

- 49.34 % are female
- 25.56% of our workforce work part time hours
- The average age of our employees is 46 and just over 217 people are aged 50 and over (40.78%)

- Around 0.95% of our staff state that they are from a black or minority ethnic background and 5.07% have declared a disability.
- Our sickness figures for period (01.02.05 - 31.01.06) are at around (BVPI indicator level) 12 days per full time equivalent. (This figure is likely to change because not all sickness will have been captured at time of report).
- Most sickness is termed as other which means it is for a variety of reasons with no particular trend. Stress, Depression and Anxiety is closely followed as the most commonly cited reason for absence at 1129 days lost out of 5724 days.
- Our voluntary turnover figure is 6.54%. This does not include Leisure and only includes voluntary resignations.

The total number of leavers in 2005 was 32. Street Scene, Planning, Development and Building Control account for 56% of these leavers. This is a consistent pattern when compared with national figures.

There were 6 leavers from Economy, 5 from Central Services and 3 from Communities.

## **Employee relations**

- Employee relations at East Devon District Council are generally good with positive relationships between trade unions and employers. This plan will aim to foster this relationship by advocating continued close working with trade union colleagues on the changes to employment conditions and practices which will arise as we respond to external pressures and the Council's priorities.
- The Council seeks feedback from its staff through:
  - Employee Satisfaction Survey
  - Staff Awareness Seminars
  - Involvement in cross organisational initiatives and project working
  - Staff Joint Forum
  - Joint Safety Committee
  - Local Joint Panel

## **6 What is the gap at East Devon District Council?**

These actions are grouped using the ODPM's Pay and Workforce five priority areas:

### **Developing leadership capacity**

- Since good leadership skills are at the heart of all successful organisations, we know it will not be possible to respond to any of the service developments without them.

- The Council has addressed core management development through a specific programme but now needs to develop leadership skills amongst its senior management team. This is with particular reference to developing the skills to lead teams through ambiguity and change, skills which will be required to successfully guide the authority through change over the next few years.

### **Developing the skills and capacity of the workforce**

- Current gaps in skills and specific recruitment ‘hotspots’ remain difficult to address. We will need to maintain a positive profile in the employment market and through developing policies and practices which will encourage staff to remain with the Council.
- We cannot expect to replace people easily and so career pathways need to be developed as a retention tool.
- There is a lack of monitoring and evaluation for local training budgets.
- There is a need to measure ‘what’ people are achieving as well as ‘how’ they are achieving it. Competencies need to be developed which are integral to our performance management approach.
- Development of a customer standard and focus is required which will support new ways of working and our Customer Access Strategy.
- More promotion of diversity.
- Development in understanding management information and new technology is required for new initiatives such as the Customer Service Centre.

### **Developing the organisation**

- There is a need to increase management focus and attention to ‘people data’ in areas such as turnover and absence.
- Greater attention to succession planning is required.
- More management of poor performance is required to ensure that issues are addressed.
- More focus on reducing absenteeism and improving employee health.

### **Resourcing local government**

- Work is still needed to address the implications of the ageing workforce. The known and practical changes to pensions in local government will lead to the need to manage an ageing workforce in a more flexible way.
- There is still significant evidence of under representation and lack of advancement for black and minority ethnic people.
- The image of local government remains poor, especially among young people, and remains an issue to address.
- The continuing trend towards variable funding streams in support of service development, the need to find short-term specialist input to specific projects combined with an overall shortage of some skills creates a different challenge.

This is unlikely to be met from our traditional approach of appointing a mixture of temporary and permanent staff to resource projects. We will also need to improve the flexible management of people. For instance with regard to work location to meet the government targets on reducing car journeys.

### **Pay and rewards**

- Different job evaluation schemes, varying job descriptions means that there are obstacles to partnership working through differences in pay and conditions between organisations.
- Gathering information on market data is difficult and very time consuming.
- There is no clear policy on applying market premium for recruitment and retention purposes.
- Pay and reward does not have a performance element.
- People do not always appreciate the full worth of their total reward package which includes significantly better pension arrangements than elsewhere.
- There needs to be greater use of career pathways to increase retention rates.

## **7 The way forward**

In light of the issues discussed in this Workforce Plan, we have drawn up an action plan to help us to make progress in those areas where we have identified gaps.

Karen Jenkins  
Head of Organisational Development