

# East Devon District Council

## Secondment Policy

### Reviewed

### Policy Approval

Executive Board 31 October 2007

### Reasons for introducing the Policy

East Devon District Council's achievement of its corporate objectives depends on having the right skills, in the right place, at the right time. We are committed to ensuring that we strike a healthy balance between developing existing employees and bringing in new skills externally.

Our commitment to 'growing our own' stems from a continuous improvement culture which fosters learning and development at all levels to help individuals maximise their potential.

The Secondment Policy aims to support our recruitment and retention strategy as well as offering opportunities to gain new experience and develop new skills. The Policy also supports our approach to succession planning and helps us overcome recruitment difficulties in certain areas of the Council.

### Policy Statement

This policy aims to inform you and your managers about secondments, why they are valued at East Devon District Council and how they will work in practice. Contact Human Resources for further advice.

### Terms Explained

Seconded – employee undertaking a post on a secondment basis

Releasing manager – the Line Manager of the employee who is applying for a secondment

### Specific Policy Areas

#### What is a secondment?

Whilst there cannot be a list of completely hard and fast rules, a secondment arrangement is likely to be characterised by the following:

- a duration of 3 to 12 months
- the need for a specific assignment to be undertaken, probably of a project nature, over and above the planned workload of the section
- the work involved provides a learning experience for an existing member of staff
- the nature of the work calls for existing knowledge of the Council and its processes.

The need to cope with short term workload peaks will not be suitable for secondment type resourcing; managers will have to consider use of fixed term contracts or agency staff to close the gap between resources required and resources available.

### **How can secondments assist our succession planning processes?**

Secondments offer an excellent opportunity to provide new learning experiences for 'high potential' employees who have been identified through succession planning. It is important to ensure that secondment opportunities are maximised to aid retention by providing opportunities for key employees to work in a different field, gain new skills and learning experiences.

High potential employees will be prioritised for certain secondment opportunities where appropriate.

**At East Devon District Council, succession planning is undertaken for Directors, Heads of Service and middle managers. It identifies:**

#### **'High potentials or hipos'**

People with significant headroom and high potential to achieve. Suitable for further promotion

#### **Critical resources**

People who have high potential and whom the Council certainly wants to keep, but who are not real high flyers

#### **Core contributors**

People who are considered valuable resources and who are in the right post.

#### **Under achievers**

People who are underachieving and need coaching and help to improve but who demonstrate the right behaviours (competencies) and values

### **What are Managers' responsibilities?**

Before a secondment opportunity is advertised, the Line Manager must ensure that an authority to recruit form is completed and signed off in the usual way. In particular, there will be a need to highlight:

- the rationale for offering a secondment, rather than meeting the workload need through other resourcing routes such as fixed term contracts, agency temps
- budget implications
- the learning opportunities to be gained by the secondee
- the timescales which may be influenced by the needs of the releasing manager.

Once a secondment has been agreed an Employee Change Form will need to be completed and sent to Human Resources in order that a contract can be drawn up to cover the employment issues arising from the secondment.

The Line Manager responsible for the secondment must ensure that normal 121's take place to identify training or support required.

**Who is eligible?**

If you have worked at East Devon District Council for 2 years or more, you will be eligible to apply for an advertised secondment.

Your release to take up a secondment must be subject to the agreement of your existing manager. We are committed to developing a positive approach to learning and career development and therefore such an agreement will not be unreasonably refused. Reasons for refusal will be related to organisational circumstances and cost issues rather than the convenience of the Line Manager concerned. The underlying principle is the wider interests of the organisation.

**Making an application**

If you wish to submit an application to be considered for a secondment opportunity, you need to discuss it with your Line Manager. At this stage in the process, the Line Manager is not able to exercise an automatic veto but should discuss any concerns associated with release with you and the recruiting manager.

Even though it may not be possible to release you from your current responsibilities, you still have the opportunity of going through the recruitment and selection process for a secondment. This is because we consider that going through this process can be a valuable learning tool. Feedback on the extent to which you possess the competencies required for the secondment can be helpful in formulating future personal development plans.

**Remuneration**

Where the job evaluated grade of the secondment is higher than your current job grade, you will be paid an honorarium and receive any additional benefits which apply. You can find more details about honorarium in the Employment Handbook under Pay and Grading. In circumstances where an honorarium is paid for a secondment there is no need for the Line Manager to complete a Director's Decision Notice. The changes should instead be completed on an Employee Changes Form.

**What will the recruitment and selection process be?**

The recruitment and selection process will follow with our established recruitment principles of being fair and open. The specifics of each process will be dependant on the secondment opportunity.

**What will happen at the end of the secondment?**

Once you have completed the secondment, you will return to your substantive post, salary and benefits.

**Performance Reviews**

If the period of secondment coincides with the normal Performance Review cycle, the responsibility for initiating and conducting the Review rests with the new Line Manager unless otherwise agreed on an individual basis.

### **What will happen if it is decided to make the secondment post permanent?**

If as a result of organisational change or development, the role being covered by the secondee is converted to a permanent post, selection will be undertaken on an open and competitive basis.

### **Outcomes**

This policy aims to help provide greater opportunities for individuals to pursue self development goals as well as supporting the Council's learning and development, succession planning and recruitment and retention strategies. This policy will also assist in providing a flexible resource in enabling the Council to match available staff to specific short term organisational needs.

### **Who is responsible for delivery?**

Heads of Service, Line Managers and all employees. This policy attempts to set out the main points of principle but cannot cover all eventualities. Advice and guidance on particular scenarios or situations is available from Human Resources.

### **Performance Monitoring**

The Organisational Development Team will monitor the effectiveness of this policy through the number of opportunities arising and taken up.

### **Policy Consultation**

Consultation has taken place with UNISON, SMT and Heads of Service and Middle Managers.

### **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed in the light of any organisational or legislative changes and in 2009 by the Head of Organisational Development.

### **Related Policies and Strategies**

Coaching and Mentoring Policy  
Recruitment and Selection Policy  
Learning and Development Strategy  
Workforce Development Plan  
Pay and grading