

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

STAFFING COMMITTEE

Date of meeting: 7 May 2009

Report of: Paul Bradshaw Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development

Title: General Update May 2009

FOR INFORMATION

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To update the Committee on progress with Human Resource issues

2.0 Decision Required

2.1 To note the report

3.0 Background

3.1. Critical Day 1 HR Policies

3.1.1 Cabinet on 24TH March 2009 approved and adopted the HR policies listed below, which needed to be in place from Day One. The policies were adopted on the basis that there would be an early review of terms and conditions, policies and procedures and that the matter be considered further by Cabinet in the light of any difficulties that arise.

The following policies apply to all Cheshire East non teaching employees:

- Attendance Management Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Workforce Performance Management Policy
- Equality in Employment Policy

The following policies apply to employees appointed on Cheshire East terms and conditions of employment:

- Attendance and Leave Policies
- Health Policies
- Pay Policies

- Termination Policies

3. 2. Progress in Implementing Organisational Structures

3.2.1. Progress with the third tier is as follows:

Appointments offers have been made for all the third tier posts. However two managers sought alternative jobs, and one turned down the offer. The posts concerned have therefore been re-advertised, with an appointment having been made to the Head of Planning and Policy, with the Head of Environmental Services and the HR Strategy Manager currently part way through the recruitment process.

3.2.2. Progress with the fourth tier is as follows:

People and Places: 50% of the recruitment to fourth tier posts has been completed. Dependant upon the number of remaining posts which can be filled internally through ring-fence interviews, up to 83% could be completed by the end of April with the balance by the end of May.

Corporate Services: 50% of the recruitment to fourth tier posts should be completed by the end of April. Again dependant upon the number of remaining posts which can be filled internally through ring-fence interviews, up to 95% could be completed by the middle of May.

3.3 Equal Pay

3.3.1 Nationally Unison have written to members about whether they have potential equal pay claims against their local government employers. Locally Members will be aware that we have outstanding issues regarding Congleton Borough Council and Macclesfield Borough Council. We are therefore currently working to fully identify and address all of the outstanding areas of significant risk.

3.4 Training and development

3.4.1. During the summer months most of the corporate training will be concentrated around inducting managers and employees into the new ways of working, and the policies and procedures of Cheshire East Council. There has already been a senior managers' conference, and others are planned for the top 300 managers on "Becoming a Transformational Authority" which will focus on continuous improvement, the importance of lean

systems and how managers can engage employees in transforming Cheshire East.

- .3.4.2 A more fully developed Corporate Training and Development Programme is planned to begin in September, which will include management development, personal skills development e.g. time management, customer care, influencing skills etc and IT Skills, and Health and Safety Training.
- 3.4.3. Work is currently being developed on a Supervisory Development Programme which could be accredited by the Institute of Management and Development. This would be a mixture of classroom based training, work based assignments and an assessment to ensure that the competencies have been successfully demonstrated in the work place. This accreditation would give points that could be used to gain credits towards further management qualifications with an academic institution.
- 3.4.4 To ensure that all managers have the ability to lead their teams and services efficiently and effectively development should be continuous, and to enable this to happen in a rigorous environment a partnership with an academic institution to create our own “Cheshire East Academy” is a proposal that will be worked up. If we could have a continuum of management development from supervisory managers upwards, underpinned by the values and aims of Cheshire East and linked in to succession management plans this could be very powerful. The University of Chester for example has been in partnership with a number of local authorities and other public employers in the North West doing similar work, so the model has been shown to work well.
- 3.4.5. Excellent authorities have strong performance management systems, and the system of appraisal needs to be closely linked with the targets in the Corporate Plan. Good feedback is essential for an employee to understand their strengths and weaknesses, and to develop their skills. A rigorous appraisal process should enable employees to improve and move into more complex roles, as well as weeding out those who are in the wrong jobs or are not prepared to work to the standards of the authority. A draft appraisal process is being developed for consultation and this will be brought to a future meeting of this Committee.
- 3.4.6. Once the initial phase of inducting all employees into the changes required in Cheshire East is underway, completely new employees will be arriving who need an “ordinary” induction programme into their new employment. There are some good frameworks for e-learning induction packs which we can build on

with some customisation so that this is available for new appointees.

3.5. Workforce Development Strategy

- 3.5.1 It was necessary to have a Workforce Development Strategy in embryo for 1 April 2009, and a copy of this is attached as Appendix 1. Over the next few months more work will be done on this to align it with emerging service workforce planning and the priorities of the Corporate Plan.

4.5. Health and Safety

- 4.5.1. The Health and Safety Team developed the key policies and procedures which the Council needed in place for Day 1, and are now pulling together quickly the good practice from the predecessor authorities to develop the others policies practices and procedures the Council will require. These will be further refined in the course of this year. The accident reporting procedures have been circulated and all are now coming through a single point of contact along with the statistics which will enable us to centrally record accident statistics. In the mid term we will develop an IT system to record and analyse accident reporting.
- 4.5.2 A draft Health and Safety Consultation Strategy has been prepared for comment, and this will be discussed with management and unions. Meanwhile consultation has commenced.

5. Reasons for recommendation:

To update Members and union representatives about the progress made on Human Resource issues, and the further work and consultation required.

For further information:

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Background Documents:

Documents are available for inspection at:

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

1. INTRODUCTION

From 1 April 2009 four authorities with all their separate services, cultures, terms and conditions of service and ways of working will combine. Although there has been a considerable amount of preparatory work to ensure that services continue to be delivered successfully on Day 1, some of the longer term aims and objectives have necessarily had to take a back seat, while the urgent work has been accomplished. This strategy is therefore a snapshot on Day 1 of the most important issues faced by the Council in its first year of operation, and will be refined following discussion with all the key stakeholders and shaped by the end of Year 1 into a longer term strategy until 2012.

2. CHESHIRE EAST'S AIM

The Corporate Plan's aim is set out as follows:

Cheshire East is a new Council; it will build on the best of its four constituent predecessor Authorities, but will establish its own distinctive characteristics, priorities and ways of working. The creation of the new unitary council gives a real opportunity to remove many of the barriers that have in the past hindered the delivery of high quality, joined up public services.

3. CHESHIRE EAST'S VISION

The Council's vision is to work together to improve community life:

Work together to improve community life

To achieve this vision the Council has set the following objectives and priorities to guide service delivery:

We will enable all children and young people to fulfil their potential by:

- Promoting their safety, care and stability
- Improving their educational attainment

We will improve the wellbeing, health and care of people by:

- Encouraging healthier lifestyles
- Increasing for older and disabled people their choices and their control over the resources made available to them.

We will ensure that people in local communities have a greater say about how resources are targeted in their area by:

— Devolving service provision, decision making and where appropriate budgets to create greater local choice

We will work with others to make all of our communities safer places to live, work and play by:

- Reducing crime and the fear of crime by targeting anti-social behaviour and drug and alcohol abuse
- Improving both traffic flow and road safety

We will enable people to have a good quality of life irrespective of where they live or their social or economic background by:

- Improving service provision to rural areas
- Facilitating appropriate transport for the public and service users

We will shape and maintain strong and prosperous neighbourhoods in which our residents are skilled and economically active, where businesses want to invest and where people want to visit by:

- Supporting the local economy and tourism to increase prosperity
- Improving roads and highways
- Where practical reducing the impact of the recession on both businesses and individuals

We will provide an attractive and sustainable environment which communities can be proud of by:

- Reinforcing the distinctive characteristics of our towns, villages and rural areas.
- Managing waste
- Tackling climate change

Building a New Council:

Cheshire East is a brand new Council and it is essential that it “hits the ground running” and continues to provide services that residents and communities have been used to. In doing so it must be responsive to changing needs and increasing demands, with a view to improving value for money. This will be a priority for the Council. The Workforce Development Strategy is the vehicle through which the Corporate Plan will be delivered by its workforce.

4. CHESHIRE EAST’S VALUES

Cheshire East’s values are set out in the Corporate Plan, with the strap line **ASPIRE** (see Appendix 1) and this strategy will aim to implement these values in all aspects of its actions.

5. THE SHAPE OF THE STRATEGY

This strategy is divided up into the five areas used in the national Pay and Workforce Strategy and commended to councils as they draw up their individual plan as follows:

- developing the organisation
- developing leadership capacity
- developing the skills and capacity of the workforce
- resourcing, recruitment and retention
- pay and rewards

6. THE CHALLENGES

As well as the challenge posed by developing a completely new authority there are national and local developments that it needs to encompass as follows:

- the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement
- legislative developments eg the Independent Safeguarding Authority, the White Paper, Communities in Control, the Personalisation Agenda
- large scale projects such as the Schools Reorganisation Programme (Transforming Learning Communities) and Extra Care Housing
- increased focus on Partnership Working
- Children's Services and safeguarding children
- new national pay and conditions framework for school support staff
- business efficiency and E-Government
- increasing external inspections of our services
- new ways of working eg flexible and mobile working

7. DEMOGRAPHIC ISSUES

Until the recession there was a very low employment rate in Cheshire East, which made some posts difficult to recruit. However this is changing. During the twelve months to November 2008, the number of Job Seeker Allowance (JSA) claimants across Cheshire East rose by 54.1%; the national increase over the same time period was 34.4%. In November 2008 there were 4,300 JSA claimants, compared to only 2,800 a year before. These figures mask important neighbourhood differences. 24 wards of these saw their claimant count rise by 100% or more in the year to November 2008. The number of young people is declining, and there is an increasing number of elderly people which has a significant impact both on our services and the working population.

Cheshire East's working population has higher than average qualifications. The 2001 Census found:

* 24% of residents aged 16-74 in Cheshire East had qualifications at degree level or higher compared with 17% in the North West and 20% in England & Wales

- * 25% of residents aged 16-74 had no qualifications at all (32% in the North West, 29% in England & Wales)
- * 37% of Cheshire East residents had qualifications less than 2 'A-level' equivalents (36% in the North West and England & Wales) and 32% had 2 'A-level' equivalents or more (25% in the North West and 28% in England & Wales). The Learning and Skills Council has a target for all employers to enable their all employees to achieve as a minimum a Level 2 qualification.

The workforce of Cheshire East does not reflect the wider community it serves in terms of the number of ethnic minority and disabled employees. A workforce profile will be run after 1 April 2009 so that the actual numbers can be seen, but based on the numbers of the previous authorities this is unlikely to be more than 1 – 1.5% in each category.

8. DEVELOPING THE ORGANISATION

The Local Government Pay and Workforce Strategy 2007 set out some key areas for action as follows:

- developing an organisational climate that encourages innovation, including engaging their staff positively in service transformation
- developing their local vision, new roles and new ways of working
- supporting staff through organisational changes, managing risks and anxieties and promoting high performance practices
- progressing up the levels of the Generic Equality Standard

Transformation of the way that the whole authority delivers its services and interacts with its communities is key to becoming an excellent authority, and at the same time working within the tight financial constraints. A Transformation Strategy needs to be developed which gives a clear vision of how Cheshire East can deliver this and engage the workforce with its implementation.

Obviously an important thrust for the first year of operation of the new Council is to begin the task of encouraging all employees to think of themselves as Cheshire East employees rather than looking backwards and retreating into old comfort zones with those colleagues that were in the same previous authority. It will therefore be important to maximise the opportunities for employees to meet across service/professional and former allegiances to engage with the new culture, aims and objectives. As mentioned earlier the values of the new Council have been agreed and it will be the task for the first year to embed these in all the policies, practices, processes and development activities so that all are clear about the new expectations.

One way of monitoring this is to undertake employee surveys at regular intervals to assess how well embedded the new values and ways of working are becoming.

Although employees who are transferred across into Cheshire East will come with their existing terms and conditions of employment, it is recognised that

some policies need to be harmonised for Day 1 and this work has been achieved. The unions agreed that this could be done on the basis of the best of the existing policies with a review within a year, so there needs to be a rolling programme of HR policy review during 2009/10.

There needs to be a clear link between the objectives and performance indicators in the Corporate Plan and the targets for all employees agreed in their appraisal interviews, so that a high performance culture is expected at once.

It must however be appreciated that for many their existing work patterns, teams, location etc have all changed and that this could impact on attendance at work. The sickness levels need to be closely monitored over the first few months of operation of Cheshire East so the levels move to those of the best of the previous authorities. Managers need to undertake Attendance Management meetings with staff who are ill, spot problems and refer to Occupational Health for appointments with nursing and medical staff and/or counsellors to address the problems. A culture of positive attendance needs to be promoted, and managers trained in managing attendance well.

The Health and Safety Policy also needs to address the health of the workforce, in the reduction of accidents and the well being of employees, and a prioritised list of actions needs to be agreed. The Health and Safety Executive will expect to see

- Visible commitment to health and safety throughout the chain of command. This would require training of all managers.
- Legionella and asbestos management
- Good management systems for stress at work, particularly in light of LGR changes. The HSE would be checking that the authorities would be using the stress management standards
- Good systems for waste and recycling activities with the traditional system of 'task and finish' coming under scrutiny
- Member training given and particularly looking at the procedures for budget allocation and long-term planning in the light of Health and Safety Risk Assessments.
- Harmonisation of Health and Safety policies and procedures

A major issue for Cheshire East is the problems of relocating those employees who currently work and live in the Chester area. Agreement has been reached on a policy for flexible and mobile working which will enable such employees to manage the relocation problems more easily, but this has to be embedded through into enabling managers to manage a more flexible and mobile workforce, to ensuring that employees have the equipment and

confidence to work effectively in this way and to reflect on the lessons learnt and improve practice.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

- **developing a strategy for transformational change;**
- **organising activities to enable employees to feel themselves part of Cheshire East;**
- **embedding the values into all HR policies and activities;**
- **undertaking an employee survey to measure attitudes to the Cheshire East as an employer;**
- **harmonising and reviewing HR policies;**
- **setting targets for managing and monitoring attendance;**
- **delivering the Health and Safety priorities; and**
- **promoting and monitoring the success of mobile and flexible working patterns and behaviour.**

9. DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

Developing leaders together is an important way to break down barriers and aid the formation of a new culture. A clear strategy for management development related to the competencies that Cheshire East would like to see all its managers possessing needs to be undertaken. Some work on competencies has been done in respect of the recruitment of the top tiers but this needs further refining and consultation with new managers so that it is owned and appropriate for leadership development activities.

The capacity for a comprehensive leadership development programme run in house is probably limited with the resources available, so an important task will be to assess what training should be run by internal staff, what needs to be commissioned and whether there is scope for joint training with neighbouring authorities and partners. The concept of a Change Academy to develop leaders in a coherent way with an academic partner to accredit learning and provide academic rigour is suggested as the way forward. There had been substantial development work along these lines by the County with the University of Chester before LGR put a hold on this work, but it could easily be resurrected and reshaped to the needs of Cheshire East. As part of the Change Academy consideration needs to be given to developing a culture of coaching and mentoring to enable managers to work most effectively, and there are regional activities that Cheshire East could join with to enhance this.

There will be a need to train managers in all the new HR policies and procedures in the first few months of the new authority so that all are working to common standards, and there is an existing supervisory programme which the County has run which could be tailored for new supervisors in 2009/10, as it is important that any employee appointed to a managerial post for the first time is properly trained.

For Middle Managers more time is needed to consider what is required. It will be important to involve Middle Managers in team briefing activities, and to assess what their development needs are and how they should be met. Team development activities for the emerging management teams may be a key activity for the first year.

In February 2009 a conference for all senior managers was organised, and this should be a regular event in the first year to give messages directly to the senior managers and receive feedback on the issues they believe that Cheshire East needs to address.

Leadership Development also needs to encompass the development of leading Members, and the synergies with officer leadership development should be explored with the Member Development Panel.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

- **develop a strategy for leadership development including a set of competencies;**
- **examine how a Change Academy could deliver leadership development in partnership with an academic institution;**
- **recommend a programme of leadership development activities for the first year and the delivery mechanisms;**
- **organise regular senior managers conferences; and**
- **work with the Member Development Panel on common officer/member development leadership activities.**

10. DEVELOPING WORKFORCE SKILLS AND CAPACITY

Cheshire East has decided to work towards IIP on a whole authority basis. This presents considerable challenges, as in the County each department was separately accredited, and each of the Districts was separately accredited. However in terms of collaborative working across services this is a very positive decision as it will help in the dissemination of common standards and behaviour towards developing our employees. A Steering Group has been established to take this work forwards, and they will produce an action plan which will be part of this Strategy.

There are other statutory Workforce Development Strategies that need to feed into and be informed by the Corporate one, viz the Children's and Adults Workforce Development Strategies, and other Services will need to consider how they take their service specific training and development needs forward. Officers responsible for this will meet regularly together to ensure that all the development needs are planned for and implemented.

For the first year of operation of the new authority there will be some difficulty as training needs are prioritised against new budgets which may not be appropriate for the needs, but it will become clearer after a year of operating appraisals what is required and what is available.

There is a corporate training and development budget, but this is barely sufficient to run management development programmes and deliver programmes/events on corporate priorities. Information needs to be gathered on generic training needs eg IT, customer care, diversity and how this can be afforded and organised, and a way forward agreed.

There are Basic Skills courses delivered by the Lifelong Learning Team which our employees can access, and Cheshire East may wish to sign up to the LSC's Skills for Life Pledge to aim to enable as a minimum all employees to gain a Level 2 qualification.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

- **Implement the IIP Action Plan to gain accreditation by the end of Year 1;**
- **Ensure that the actions from the statutory Workforce Development Plans which relate to this Strategy are implemented;**
- **Develop a Corporate Training Plan and agree how it is funded; and**
- **Sign up to the Skills for Life Pledge.**

11. RESOURCING, RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Information on the Workforce for Cheshire East is attached as Appendix 2, and shows the total number of employees per department and the total head count.

It is difficult to estimate future turnover for Cheshire East as figures from the old authorities will be different, there may be more turnover than previously because of the uncertainties in the LGR transition, but less due to the recession. This will be monitored during the course of the year, but at the time of writing this Strategy no informed view can be taken of what the turnover figures are showing. However each Service does need to look carefully at its workforce profile, permanent and temporary numbers as well as the age and diversity of the profile, to assess what is required in terms of succession planning and addressing areas where there is under representation of particular groups. Where there is a high level of agency working this also needs consideration to assess whether this is the best way of plugging gaps and delivering the service.

A profile of where there are posts that are difficult to fill, and where gaps are likely to occur soon due to the age profile need to be drawn up, and appropriate action considered. One issue that may be addressed in conjunction with the Regeneration Service is the use of Modern Apprentices to grow the Council's own talent, and this needs to be part of the wider use of apprentices planned by the Government. In addition the approach to trainee posts in hard to fill areas should be considered.

Cheshire East will have some capacity issues to address as economies of scale may have been lost as County staff were split into the two new authorities. On the other hand District and Corporate functions were merged and further economies need to be sought in the first year of operation due to budget pressures. Business Transformation activity needs to be prioritised and planned so that systems and processes are made as lean and effective as possible.

Recruitment to posts will only have been up to third tier pre Vesting Day, and over the next few months the services will need to develop structures and recruit or slot employees into them. There will therefore be turbulence in the system for some while, whilst normal recruitment will continue for front line delivery employees. Six months into the new authority should be a time to take stock, to look at turnover so far and assess what future recruitment issues need solving.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

- **monitor turnover and undertake service workforce profiles;**
- **assess future recruitment and resourcing needs when recruitment to new structures is complete;**
- **prioritise business transformation activity and implement a plan to deliver efficiencies; and**
- **consider the use of Modern Apprentices, Apprentices and trainees both for the authority as employer and more widely with the Regeneration Service.**

12. PAY AND REWARDS

Cheshire County Council and Crewe and Nantwich District Council had completed their Single Status exercise before Vesting Day, but the other two District Councils will still have work to be completed post 1 April 2009. The strategy on harmonising pay will need to be part of the wider harmonisation strategy and a prioritised action plan needs to be put in place.

There will need to be an Equal Pay Audit to assess the impact of Single Status in equal pay terms and a general review of the pay and grading structure and pay line to fit Cheshire East's new structures and workforce. During the recruitment of the top tiers it was apparent that for some posts, particularly those in Children's Services, were out of line with the market and had to be re advertised with a market supplement. The review should assist in identifying where Cheshire East may be out of line with market competitors (or not) and make any necessary alterations. Increased partnership working also brings differentials into focus between

The other aspect of the Equal Pay Audit is to look at areas of Occupational Segregation, which in practice means that more women are in posts with lower rates of pay than men. It also means that in areas such as those in the People Directorate there are too few men in caring/education roles which has

an impact on the way that service users have good male role models or carers of a similar sex. This will involve exploring the reasons for the gender gap and consider strategies to increase the numbers of the under represented sex in those posts.

In addition Cheshire East needs to consider whether to adopt Best Practice or Performance Awards in future.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **complete the roll out of Single Status;**
- **review the effects of Single Status on pay levels and recruitment and retention;**
- **undertake an Equal Pay Audit;**
- **explore the nature and reasons for the gender gap and possible measures to deal with it; and**
- **consider the adopting of a best practice/performance awards scheme.**

Draft 25 February

Appendix

ASPIRE CORE VALUES FRAMEWORK

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| Action – take responsibility for making the right things happen | | Support – work and learn together in order to succeed | | People – put customer and community needs at the heart of what we do |
| We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement agreed changes as quickly as possible • Balance urgency with quality and efficiency in delivery • Take responsibility for solving problems where possible • Be flexible about the way we work | | We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate clearly and openly • Share information and best practice with others • Work together being prepared to compromise • Encourage and support others to achieve their potential | | We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do our best to understand people's needs and requirements • Treat each person as an individual providing choice where possible • Work hard to make our processes simple • Agree realistic timescales and keep people informed |
| | | | | |
| Integrity – be open, honest and fair, expecting the same of others | | Recognition – value all views, efforts and achievements | | Excellence – strive to improve all that we do |
| We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat everyone with dignity and respect • Speak up when others are behaving inappropriately | | We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve all members of our team, valuing their differences • Acknowledge everyone's efforts and contributions | | We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take the initiative and make suggestions • Keep up to date with new developments |

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face up to difficult or awkward questions and situations • Separate personal feelings from professional requirements | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give and receive feedback positively and constructively • Celebrate success | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try new ideas and approaches • Reflect and learn from our own and others' experiences |
|---|--|--|--|--|

Appendix

Cheshire East Workforce Numbers as at 20th February 2009

| Cheshire East Summary | Head count | FTE |
|---|-------------------|-------------|
| Services for Children & Families | 1254 | 797 |
| Services for Adults | 1980 | 1340 |
| Health and Well Being Services | 698 | 414 |
| Policy & Performance | 231 | 197 |
| Finance & Assets | 1011 | 740 |
| Democratic | 75 | 67 |
| Human Resources & Operational Development | 125 | 115 |
| Environmental Services | 608 | 584 |
| Safer and Stronger Communities | 171 | 147 |
| Planning & Policy | 193 | 173 |
| Regeneration | 463 | 284 |
| Unallocated | 25 | 17 |
| <i>Totals Non Schools</i> | 6834 | 4875 |
| <i>Totals Schools</i> | 7470 | 4717 |
| TOTAL | 14,304 | 9592 |

