

Committee: Personnel and General Committee
Date: Wednesday 17 September 2008
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA

Membership

Councillor Lynda Thirzie Smart (Chairman)	Councillor Rose Stratford (Vice-Chairman)	
Councillor Ken Atack	Councillor Christopher Pack	Councillor Barry Wood
Councillor Norman Bolster	Councillor G A Reynolds	Councillor David Hughes
Councillor Timothy Hallchurch MBE	Councillor Chris Smithson	
Councillor Russell Hurle	Councillor Lawrie Stratford	

Substitutes: Any member from the relevant political group

AGENDA

1. **Agenda** (Pages 1 - 92)

Information about this Agenda

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence should be notified to Theresa Goss, Legal and Democratic Services theresa.goss@cherwell-dc.gov.uk (01295) 221554 prior to the start of the meeting.

Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare interests at item 2 on the agenda or if arriving after the start of the meeting, at the start of the relevant agenda item. The definition of personal and prejudicial interests is set out in Part 5 Section A of the constitution. The Democratic Support Officer will have a copy available for inspection at all meetings.

Personal Interest: Members must declare the interest but may stay in the room, debate and vote on the issue.

Prejudicial Interest: Member must withdraw from the meeting room and should inform the

Chairman accordingly.

With the exception of the some very specific circumstances, a Member with a personal interest also has a prejudicial interest if it is one which a Member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest.

Local Government and Finance Act 1992 – Budget Setting, Contracts & Supplementary Estimates

Members are reminded that any member who is two months in arrears with Council Tax must declare the fact and may speak but not vote on any decision which involves budget setting, extending or agreeing contracts or incurring expenditure not provided for in the agreed budget for a given year and could affect calculations on the level of Council Tax.

Queries Regarding this Agenda

Please contact Theresa Goss, Legal and Democratic Services theresa.goss@cherwell-dc.gov.uk
(01295) 221554

Mary Harpley
Chief Executive

Published on Tuesday 9 September 2008

NOTICE OF MEETING

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL AND GENERAL
DATE: WEDNESDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2008
TIME: 6.30 PM
VENUE: BODICOTE HOUSE, BODICOTE, BANBURY

Mary Harpley
Chief Executive

AGENDA

PART I

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES
(ALTERNATE MEMBERS)**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services to report on apologies for absence and on the names of any Alternate Members notified to her before the start of the meeting.

(Contact David Best (01295 221589) to tender apologies or advise of attendance by Alternate Members.)

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to declare any personal interest **and the nature of that interest** which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting. (Please refer to the notes at the end of this agenda.)

(**Note:** The Council and its Committees and Sub-Committees are required to consider the implications of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998 when exercising their functions.)

3 MINUTES (pages 7 - 20)

To confirm as correct records the minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 14 May, 10 and 11 June and 21 July 2008 (**copies attached**).

4 ADDITIONAL ITEMS, ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD, PETITIONS AND REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE MEETING

- (a) The Chairman to advise whether any item of an urgent nature has been admitted to the agenda under item 17.
- (b) The Chairman to report on any requests to submit petitions to, or to address the meeting

5 EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS QTR 1, 2008-9 (Pages 21 - 22)

Report of the Head of Human Resources.

Summary:

This report gives details of employment statistics for information and monitoring purposes. As requested by Members this information has been amended to reflect turnover by directorate.

Recommendation:

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to resolve to note the contents of this report.

6 REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL ESTABLISHMENT POST CLERK OF WORKS (Pages 23 - 28)

Report of the Head of Building Control and Engineering Services.

Summary

For approaching 10 years the Council has engaged Consulting Engineers on a term basis top up and specialist resource to BCES and its former constituent departments. Over the top up resource has included a full-time equivalent Clerk of Works. Having regard to projected work load that requirement will continue into the medium to long term.

It is proposed to create an establishment post in the Engineering Services section to be the budget currently used to procure this resource from term consultants. This will provide saving to the Council and also enable the resource to work longer productive hours for since travelling down-time will be avoided.

The proposal outlined above will provide value for money in that more necessary resource will be acquired for less financial outlay.

Recommendation

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to resolve to approve the establishment post for a Clerk of Works within Building Control and Engineering Services.

7 GO ACTIVE IN CHERWELL PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR (Pages 29 - 32)

Report of the Head of Recreation and Health

Summary

The Go Active Project is a joint project between the Oxfordshire Sports Partnership, Oxfordshire PCT, the District Council and, in the case of Cherwell, Parkwood Community Leisure. The project aims to enable and support inactive people in becoming physically active through sports and recreation opportunities. It will therefore contribute to achieving levels of participation by residents in physical activity (new National Indicator NI 8).

A successful application was made to the National Lottery through the Sport England Community Investment Fund. This funding, in combination with PCT funding, will bring £38,750 per year to Cherwell District Council for three years to enable the recruitment of a Go Active Project Co-ordinator on a fixed term contract to work with GP Surgeries, sports and leisure clubs and leisure providers across the district.

Recommendation:

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to resolve to approve the establishment of a Go Active in Cherwell Project Co-ordinator post on a three year fixed term contract.

8 HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY (Pages 33 – 68)

Joint report of the Chief Executive and the Head of Human Resources

Summary:

The Council's current HR Strategy was developed in 2004 and focused largely on the policy framework for managing staff. As the Council embarks on a new and ambitious agenda it is essential that we develop a progressive and contemporary strategy for attracting, developing and retaining the skills and qualities we need to deliver excellent services.

The Human Resources Strategy will underpin the Council's main corporate plans. It has been developed in the context of the need to deliver the Council's corporate priorities and meet the current and future challenges facing local government in general and North Oxfordshire in particular.

The strategy has also been informed by the recent Investors in People assessment and the Staff Satisfaction survey carried out earlier in 2008. The outcome of both are contained within the overall objectives of the strategy and are subject to separate detailed action plans.

Members were given the opportunity to comment on outline priorities in June and this report provides the committee with an opportunity to comment on the final draft strategy which will also be considered by the Executive in September before a recommendation is made to full Council in October.

Recommendation:

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to resolve to:

- (1) Comment on and endorse the new Human Resources Strategy attached at appendix 1

9 STAFF SURVEY AND INVESTORS IN PEOPLE ACTION PLANS (Pages 69 – 80)

Report of the Head of Human Resources

Summary:

This report seeks comments from the committee on the action plans which have resulted from the staff survey undertaken in January 2008 and the Investors in People inspection which was carried out in June 2008.

Recommendation:

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to resolve to comment on and endorse the attached action plans.

10 COUNCIL OFFICES OPENING HOURS AND FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS

(Pages 81 – 88)

Joint report of the Strategic Director Customer Service and Resources and the Head of Human Resources

Summary:

The purpose of this report is to propose new working hours for the Council which will standardise our opening times across the district and provide greater access for customers.

Linked to this change is an updated flexible working hours policy which will allow management and staff more flexibility in managing staff hours to facilitate consistent cover for customers and allow staff to better balance their work-home responsibilities.

Recommendation:

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to resolve to approve the revised opening hours and flexible working hours policy detailed at appendix 1.

11 STAFF COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE (Pages 89 – 104)

Report of the Head of Human Resources

Summary:

This report seeks approval for a revised staff complaints policy. This policy will replace the current grievance and harassment and bullying procedures.

Recommendation:

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to resolve to approve the new staff complaints policy and procedure attached at appendix 1.

12 SERVICE HEAD RECRUITMENT: FINANCE Pages 105 – 110)

Report of the Strategic Director Customer Service and Resources

Summary:

This report seeks approval for changes to the job description for the Head of Finance and the addition of a separate allowance for the S151 Officer role.

Recommendation:

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to resolve to approve
The revised job description, grade and proposed recruitment process for this post.

13 ANY OTHER ITEM WHICH THE CHAIRMAN HAS DECIDED IS URGENT

14 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

It is **RECOMMENDED** that for the consideration of the items in Part II of the agenda, the Committee should resolve as follows:-

“that, having determined that in all the circumstances of each case the public interest in maintaining exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information and, pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting whilst the items in Part II of the agenda are considered on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as identified by the numbered paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.”

LIST OF ITEMS IN PART II

- 15 AMALGAMATION OF BANBURY DISTRICT HOUSING COALITION RENT DEPOSIT GUARANTEE SCHEME WITH THE COUNCIL'S SPEND TO SAVE SCHEME**
(Pages 111 - 112)

(Paragraphs 1 and 4)
- 16 COMPULSORY REDUNDANCY RECOMMENDATION** (Pages 113 - 114)

(Paragraphs 1 and 4)
- 17 LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES - DEMOCRATIC SERVICES, SCRUTINY AND ELECTIONS STAFFING** (Pages 115 - 126)

(Paragraphs 1 and 4)

(Notes:

- (1) On declaration of interest
- (i) any Member arriving after the start of the meeting is asked to declare personal interests as necessary as soon as practicable after their arrival even if the item in question has been considered;
 - (ii) with the exception of the circumstances listed in paragraph 10 (2) of the Local Code of Conduct for Members, a Member with a personal interest also has a prejudicial interest if it is one which a Member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest. In such circumstances, the Member must withdraw from the meeting room, and should inform the Chairman accordingly;
 - (iii) Officers cannot offer advice during the meeting on whether or not a personal interest should be declared, or whether a personal interest should also be regarded as prejudicial;
- (2) Members are reminded of the requirements of Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992, and those Members affected by its provisions will need to make a declaration and refrain from voting when a matter caught by the Act is discussed;
- (3) Members are asked to sign the Attendance Register.

JD
8 September 2008

CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL
PERSONNEL AND GENERAL COMMITTEE

5

17 SEPTEMBER 2008

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS QTR 1, 2008-9

1 Introduction and Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report gives details of employment statistics for information and monitoring purposes. As requested by Members this information has been amended to reflect turnover by directorate.

2 Wards Affected

- 2.1 Not applicable

3 Effect on Policy

- 3.1 None

4 Contact Officer

- 4.1 Anne-Marie Scott – Head of Human Resources (extension 1731)

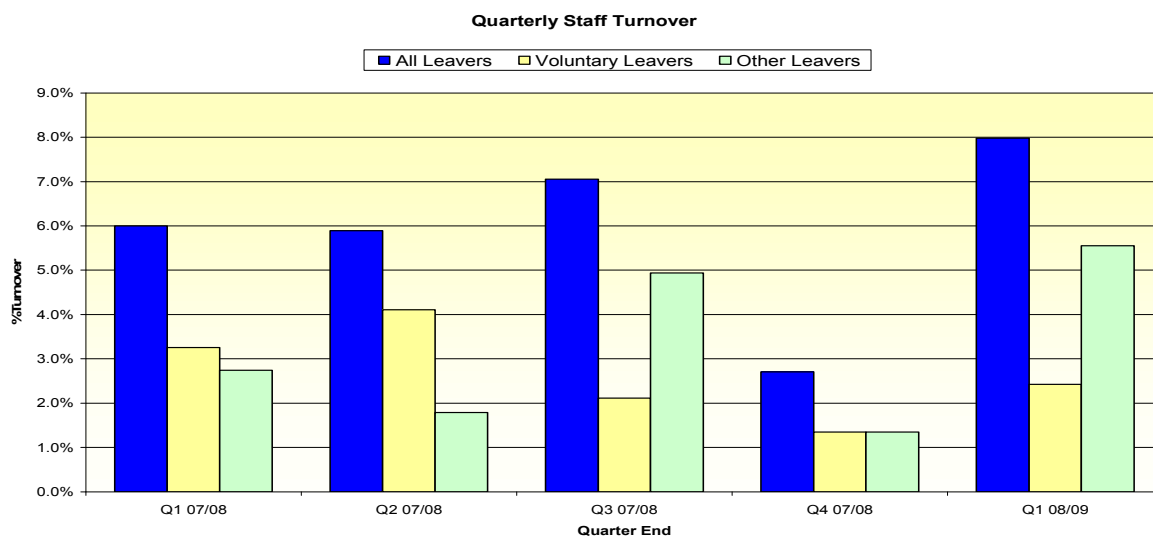
5 Employment Statistics: April to June 2008

- 5.1 During the above period, the following quarterly changes took place in respect of individual employments. Staff transferred to other employers under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE) are excluded from the statistics shown in this report. In April this year 87 permanent staff and 109 casual staff transferred under TUPE following the sports centre transfer.

	April to June 2008
Permanent – Starters (incl. Internal Transfers)	48
Permanent – All Leavers	46
Permanent – Voluntary Leavers (Leaving CDC)*	14
Temporary and Casual – Starters	13
Temporary and Casual – Leavers	106

* excludes internal transfers, age retirements, early retirements and redundancies, ill-health dismissals and retirements, other dismissals and TUPE transfers.

5.2 The turnover rates for permanent and fixed term staff for this quarter and the previous year , and are illustrated below.



* excludes internal transfers, age retirements, early retirements and redundancies, ill-health dismissals and retirements, other dismissals and TUPE transfers.

5.3 The tables attached at Annex 2 contain details of numbers of permanent and fixed term employees at Cherwell District Council in post on 30 June 2008 by Directorate and Service area detailing staff movement and corporate capacity for the quarter. It is not yet possible to provide comparison data although this will accumulate during the year.

6 Risk Assessment, Financial Effects and Contribution to Efficiency Savings

6.1 The following details have been approved by Denise Westlake (extension 1559).

6.2 There are no risks associated with the contents of this report.

6.3 All financial effects of changes can be contained within existing approved budgets.

6.4 There are no efficiency savings arising from this report.

7 Recommendation

7.1 The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to resolve to note the contents of this report.

Background Papers: None

CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL

PERSONNEL AND GENERAL COMMITTEE

17 SEPTEMBER 2008

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF BUILDING CONTROL AND ENGINEERING SERVICES

Request for Additional Establishment Post (Clerk of Works)**1 Introduction and Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 For approaching 10 years the Council has engaged Consulting Engineers on a term basis to provide top up and specialist resource to BCES and its former constituent departments. Over recent years the top up resource has included a full-time equivalent Clerk of Works. Having regard to the Council's projected work load that requirement will continue into the medium to long term.
- 1.2 It is proposed to create an establishment post in the Engineering Services section to be funded from the budget currently used to procure this resource from term consultants. This will provide a financial saving to the Council and also enable the resource to work longer productive hours for the Council, since travelling down-time will be avoided.
- 1.3 The proposal outlined above will provide value for money in that more necessary resource will be acquired for less financial outlay.

2 Wards Affected

- 2.1 All

3 Effects on Policy

- 3.1 None

4 Contact Officers

- 4.1 Tony Brummell – Ext 1524
Anne Marie Scott – Ext 1731

5 Background Information

- 5.1 Since 1999 the Council has operated without a directly employed civil-engineering Clerk of Works. At about that time, when a previous post holder retired, it was decided not to replace him but instead in the light of uncertain future construction workload in this District rely on the newly appointed term Consultants to supply it. In fact, as it has transpired, that resource has been needed almost continuously since that time.
- 5.2 The resource is needed not only to oversee the Council's capital and quasi-capital construction programme but also to a much larger extent to service its highway adoption agency with the County Council. The pressures on development within the District over the last decade, and thus the new road construction within newly built estates, has not let up and the Council is now

entering a new vigorous period of developer funded construction.

- 5.3 Before making this proposal I have tried to get from Oxfordshire County Council some clarity on the future of the highways adoption agency. There is always the potential that they may withdraw it. However, whilst it is evident that they have explored this option it does not seem an immediate possibility. It is acknowledged that if the Agency were ever to be withdrawn this would take place on the 31st March in any year with the Council being given at least 12 months notice. Therefore, the earliest the withdrawal could currently take place is now 31st March 2010. In that eventuality anyway, TUPE would apply with the post-holder transferring to Oxfordshire County Council provided he/she continues to work substantively on highway adoption work, which is strongly envisaged.
- 5.4 For this reason the proposal to employ directly a full-time Clerk of Works was not included in the organisational restructure of BCES.

6 Financial Considerations

- 6.1 The cost to the Council in 2007/08 of employing this resource through its term Consultants was £37553. For this, net of travelling, time holidays etc, the Council purchased 1224 productive hours. If employed directly the Council would typically obtain 1640 productive hours from the post holder. Allowing for 3% inflation the cost to the Council during 2008/09 under the existing arrangements will be £38680.
- 6.2 The Clerk of Works post has been indicatively graded at LG14. At this grade the cost of directly employing the resource is estimated to be (at 2008/09).

Salary Cost	£34743
Essential User Allowance	£1095
Mileage - 8500 miles at 45.8p	£3893
Mileage – 3500 miles at 15.8p	£553
• Other Miscellaneous Direct Costs (e.g Protective Clothing Employee related insurance) at say 10% of salary	£3474
Total	£43,758

- 6.3 Based on the workload of the Engineering Services Section I have estimated that 1.25 full time equivalents will be needed for the foreseeable future in addition to the resource currently employed directly. This is to service schemes such as:

- Parsons Street pedestrianisation scheme
- Council's Environmental Improvement Programme
- Various Commitments associated with the construction phases of the Sports Centre Modernisation programme and the Bicester Town Centre re development scheme.
- The procurement of the Sports Field development at South West Bicester.
- The highway adoption works on the District's major development areas which will begin during this period.

- 6.4 As currently resourced the Clerk of Works provides about 0.75 FTE (1224 productive hours per year compared with about 1640 productive hours if employed directly). Although this proposal would cost £5000 more than the existing arrangement it would result in a saving of about 0.25 bought-in FTEs, equivalent to about £10,000 per year. There would therefore be an ongoing full-year efficiency saving of £5,000 net which would be saved from the consultancy budget.

7 Risk Assessment, Financial Effects and Contribution to Efficiency Savings

- 7.1 The following details have been approved by Eric Meadows (ext 1552) and Rosemary Watts (ext 1566).

7.2 Risk Assessment

With the term consultants currently providing this resource the Council has no direct control over its quality. By employing a full-time resource directly the risk of not having the right quality of individual will be reduced. As has been set out in the report there is no risk to the Council in respect of any TUPE implications provided the resource is employed largely on the highways adoption service, which it is envisaged will occur.

7.3 Financial Effects

This proposal would result in a net annual saving to the Council of approximately £5,000. Since the Clerk of Works is required almost entirely to help deliver the Council's capital programme and to work on developer funded highway adoption projects this saving would show itself as a reduced draw on the Council's capital funds and its highway adoption reserve account.

7.4 Efficiency Savings

The £5,000 per annum identified above will comprise an efficiency saving.

8 Recommendations

- 8.1 The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to approve the establishment post for a Clerk of Works within Building Control and Engineering Services.

Background Papers

None



JOB DESCRIPTION

Post title: Clerk of Works

Post No: N/A

Grade: LG14

Directorate:	Planning, Housing & Economy	Section:	Engineering Services
Responsible to:	Principal Engineer	BC0020	
Responsible for:	N/A	Post No:	N/A

Key Objectives:

1	To undertake the supervision and inspection of construction works to ensure compliance with contractual specifications.
2	To contribute to the delivery of the four corporate priorities, along with departmental service plan targets and objectives.
3	To assist with the administration of construction and highway adoption works.

Responsibilities:

1	To carry out all aspects of site supervision and inspection of works in progress, including the checking of setting out, checking compliance of both workmanship and materials with the agreed specification relating to the works.
2	To ensure effective records and diaries are maintained of all measurement and recording of works carried out.
3	To assist with detailed surveys and the preparation of reports and records of surveys.
4	To assist with the administration of contracts including the checking of accounts and day to day liaison with Consultants, Contractors, Developers and Clients.
5	To help prepare specifications for repair and maintenance works in accordance with tendering requirements.
6	To ensure all works are carried out in accordance with the Council's Health and Safety Policies and relevant statutory controls.
7	To play a positive role in any service reviews by the effective provision of information and knowledge to assist the process.
8	To cover for other team members during absence by the provision of advice and to assist team members as necessary as the need arises.

This Job Description was created / revised on:	1 May 2008	By:	Tony Brummell
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PERSON SPECIFICATION

Post Title	Clerk of Works	Post No	
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	JOB REQUIREMENTS	
	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Qualifications	<p>Good standard of general education.</p> <p>Technical Qualification for Surveyor Role (HNC in Building or equivalent).</p> <p>Full Driving Licence.</p>	<p>Member of Institute of Clerk of Works</p>
Experience	<p>Delivery of advice to customers and managers to enable informed decisions to be made.</p> <p>Experience of dealing with contractors and highlighting default works to be done.</p> <p>Experience of undertaking inspections of construction works</p>	<p>Undertaking written Risk Assessments.</p>
Knowledge	<p>Good level of construction knowledge.</p> <p>Working knowledge of health and safety legislation as it relates to construction works.</p> <p>Working knowledge of Microsoft Outlook and work.</p>	<p>Holder of CSCS card</p> <p>Working knowledge of other Microsoft packages</p>
Skills	<p>Confident communication skills.</p> <p>Good customer care skills.</p> <p>Highly organised and able to prioritise workloads.</p>	
Aptitudes	<p>Friendly and outgoing.</p> <p>Confident.</p> <p>Flexible.</p> <p>Ability to deal with problems in a logical manner.</p>	

	Ability to communicate to site staff.	
Circumstances	None to conflict with the requirements of the job.	

CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL**PERSONNEL AND GENERAL COMMITTEE****17 SEPTEMBER 2009****REPORT OF THE HEAD OF RECREATION AND HEALTH****GO ACTIVE IN CHERWELL PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR****1 Introduction and Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The Go Active Project is a joint project between the Oxfordshire Sports Partnership, Oxfordshire PCT, the District Council and, in the case of Cherwell, Parkwood Community Leisure. The project aims to enable and support inactive people in becoming physically active through sports and recreation opportunities. It will therefore contribute to achieving levels of participation by residents in physical activity (new National Indicator NI 8).
- 1.2 A successful application was made to the National Lottery through the Sport England Community Investment Fund. This funding, in combination with PCT funding, will bring £38,750 per year to Cherwell District Council for three years to enable the recruitment of a Go Active Project Co-ordinator on a fixed term contract to work with GP Surgeries, sports and leisure clubs and leisure providers across the district.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to recruit the Go Active Project Co-ordinator on a three year fixed term contract.

2 Wards Affected

- 2.1 All

3 Effect on Policy

- 3.1 By taking part in the Go Active Project the Council will be delivering towards;
- i) The Corporate Plan theme, A Safe and Healthy Cherwell
 - ii) The Cherwell Community Plan theme, Improve Health
 - iii) The Recreation Strategy theme, Creating Healthier Lifestyles and Improving Community Wellbeing

4 Contact Officers

- 4.1 Ian Davies (Ext 1698)
Philip Rolls (Ext 1697).

5 Background

- 5.1 The Go Active Project is a County-wide project so there is funding available for all the Oxfordshire district councils to employ a co-ordinator if they wish to participate in the project. As part of the project, Parkwood Community Leisure has agreed to employ three full time Go Active Activators who will be based at the Sports Centres in Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington. The role of the Activators is to form links between GP surgeries, local sports and leisure clubs, the Council's sports development programme and activity programmes at sports and leisure facilities across the District. These posts are also lottery funded with an additional contribution from Parkwood Community Leisure. They would be at risk if Cherwell chose not to take part in the project. The Co-ordinator post will coordinate the activities of the Activators ensuring maximum productivity, good practice and consistency.
- 5.2 The project does not require any funding from this Council. Our contribution is purely the provision of a desk and officer time in line managing the post which would sit in the Recreation and Health Improvement Team. The office accommodation review has included the capacity to accommodate this post within the proposed Recreation and Health area on the second floor of Bodicote House.
- 5.3 The Project Co-ordinator post has been evaluated at Local Grade 13. This leaves sufficient funding for the on costs plus an employment contingency fund for redundancy/sickness/other HR costs if required. If not required, this contingency fund will be used as a small development budget.
- 5.4 The project is strictly limited to three years and will then cease with no requirement for the Council to fund any further work. This is a sustainable position as it is expected that this type of work will be incorporated into mainstream activities with no increase in current costs.

6 Risk Assessment, Financial Effects and Contributions to Efficiency Savings

- 6.1 The following details approved by Jonathon Russell, Service Accountant (Ext 1545).
- 6.2 Risk assessment – The main risk to the Council in this project is the potential cost of any redundancy payment or other related employer costs. This would be mitigated by retaining an element of the budget each year as an employment cost contingency (as set out below). Another risk arises if the Council decides not to join in the project in that the Council would be turning down an opportunity to make some real impact, using external funding, in terms of people's health and wellbeing. Potentially, if all the other districts join the scheme as expected this Council would be seen as the only Council in Oxfordshire to decline.
- 6.3 Financial effects – The project is funded by £38,750 external funding per year for three years. The funding breakdown is as follows (salary costs assume a 3% cost of living increase):

	Salary costs (LG13)	On costs	Car allowance	Employment cost contingency	Total
Year 1	£24,441	£7,261	£1,095	£5,953	£38,750
Year 2	£25,281	£7,511	£1,128	£4,830	£38,750
Year 3	£26,040	£7,736	£1,162	£3,812	£38,750

6.4 Efficiency savings – The Go Active Project Co-ordinator post will compliment and make more effective the work delivered by the Council’s Recreation and Sports Development Team.

7 Recommendation

7.1 To approve the establishment of a Go Active in Cherwell Project Co-ordinator post on a three year fixed term contract.

Background Papers:

- (a) Correspondence from Oxfordshire Sports Partnership
- (b) Go Active Project Initiation Document

CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL

PERSONNEL AND GENERAL COMMITTEE
17th September 2008JOINT REPORT OF THE HEAD OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND THE HEAD OF HUMAN
RESOURCES

HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY

1 Introduction and Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The Council's current HR Strategy was developed in 2004 and focused largely on the policy framework for managing staff. As the Council embarks on a new and ambitious agenda it is essential that we develop a progressive and contemporary strategy for attracting, developing and retaining the skills and qualities we need to deliver excellent services.

The Human Resources Strategy will underpin the Council's main corporate plans. It has been developed in the context of the need to deliver the Council's corporate priorities and meet the current and future challenges facing local government in general and North Oxfordshire in particular.

The strategy has also been informed by the recent Investors in People assessment and the Staff Satisfaction survey carried out earlier in 2008. The outcome of both are contained within the overall objectives of the strategy and are subject to separate detailed action plans.

Members were given the opportunity to comment on outline priorities in June and this report provides the committee with an opportunity to comment on the final draft strategy which will also be considered by the Executive in September before a recommendation is made to full Council in October.

2 Wards Affected

None

3 Effect on Policy

- 3.1 None.

4 Contact Officers

- 4.1 Anne-Marie Scott, Head of Human Resources
Mary Harpley, Chief Executive

5 Background

- 5.1 All Councils and their partners face the challenge of leading their communities and satisfying rising customer and citizens expectations. We are expected to be place-shapers and strategic leaders as well as integrate services around citizen's needs to offer greater choice and personalisation.
- 5.2 New challenges such as climate change, an increasingly global economy, a growing elderly population and greater diversity combine with the need to respond to complex cross cutting issues such as social exclusion, anti-social behaviour and poor skills.

- 5.3 These contextual changes, and the authorities' response to them, mean changes for workforce practices, skills and jobs. We face these challenges in the context of tighter resources. To be successful therefore we will need to maximise employees' performance; introduce more technology and new ways of working, promote innovation, change attitudes and behaviours to support staff to work in different and more flexible ways. Engaging staff positive and openly in these changes is key to achieving sustainable improvement.
- 5.4 We also face these challenges in the context of a highly competitive labour market. With the number of skilled jobs in the economy increasing and the numbers joining the labour market reducing, attracting and retaining talent is a top priority.
- 5.6 The purpose therefore of a new medium-term Human Resources strategy is to set out our ambitions and expectations for the next 3-5 years. Fundamentally this involves planning for the skills and capacity we need for excellent service delivery now and in the future and setting out how we will achieve that plan.

It also gives us the opportunity to paint a picture of the type of employer we are and aspire to be; what skills, qualities and performance we expect and how we will reward performance and commitment.

- 5.7 The strategy has been developed through consultation with the extended management team and the staff consultation group. Employee side have been consulted and are supportive of the strategy.

6 Risk Assessment, Financial Effects and Contribution to Efficiency Savings

- 6.1 The following details have been approved by Julie Evans.

6.2 Risk Assessment

The risk associated with not approving the recommendations contained in this report is that the Council does not achieve a strategic and long-term approach to managing people and therefore risks not securing sufficient skills and commitment to deliver its objectives and services.

6.3 Financial Effects

There are no direct financial consequences to this report.

6.4 Efficiency/Savings

There are no savings arising directly from this report. However employee costs represent a significant percentage of the Council's budget and successful implementation of the strategy will facilitate savings in the future.

7 Recommendations

7.1

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to resolve to:

- (1) Comment on and endorse the new Human Resources Strategy attached at appendix 1 and the Learning Development Policy and Strategy attached at appendix 2.



Human Resources Strategy 2008 - 2012

Human Resources Strategy 2008 - 2012

Introduction

Cherwell's Corporate Plan and Improvement Strategy 2007 – 2012 sets out what we plan to do to deliver our four strategic priorities:

- Cherwell: A district of opportunity
- A safe and health Cherwell
- A cleaner, greener Cherwell
- Cherwell: An accessible, value for money Council

This strategy underpins that Corporate Plan and Improvement Strategy by setting out how we will develop the size, shape and skills of our workforce to meet the future challenges all local authorities face. We recognise that local councils of the future will need to be more flexible, responsible and innovative. To achieve this we need to modernise practices, remove bureaucracy and develop a culture that engages staff and rewards high performance.

In the future our workforce will be smaller and have a greater focus on partnership delivery, problem solving and community engagement. To achieve this ambition we need to make a step change in our approach to managing our current workforce and developing our future workforce.

This strategy has been developed through consultation with staff groups and Members, a review of external best practice and identification of the capacity, skills and talents the Council will need to delivery its priorities in the future. Our starting point for developing key priority areas were:

The Council's Corporate Plan and Improvement Strategy 2007-2012

The Audit Commission's report 'Tomorrow's People' (June 2008)

The Local Government Workforce Strategy 2007 ('local government the place to be, the place to work', LGA, I&DeA and LGE)

Our key priorities were identified with our leadership team and evolved through consultation with staff groups, trade unions and Members.

This strategy identifies six key priority areas in which we will take action to develop a workforce fit to meet the challenges of the future:

1. Workforce planning
2. Organisational development
3. Leadership development
4. Skills development
5. Pay, reward and performance management
6. Employee relations and involvement and equality

This strategy provides identifies broad priorities and objectives for the Council over the next 4 years. It will be underpinned by a series of operational plans, both distinct improvement plans driven by the Human Resources team and by key actions embedded within the Service and Financial Planning processes.

Our overarching aim is to provide excellent services to our community through a workforce who are engaged, committed and proud to work for Cherwell District Council.

Mary Harpley
Chief Executive

Barry Wood
Leader of the Council

Cherwell District

- Cherwell is one of the least populated parts of South East England although the population is expected to increase by 15.6% by 2026. By 2031 Cherwell's population aged 65 and over is expected to nearly double compared with a growth of 24% across all age groups.
- The proportion of people of non-white ethnic groups in Cherwell is very small at 3.9% (2001 census) compared with a regional figure of around 4.8% and 9.1% nationally. The largest population of migrant workers in Cherwell come from Poland.
- The groups underrepresented in Cherwell compared with the national picture include young well-educated single people, poorer families on minimum wage and those with high 'municipal dependency'.
- The Office for National Statistics annual population survey shows that Cherwell has slightly fewer people in managerial and professional occupations and correspondingly more people in more elementary jobs reflecting a relative lack of skills in the local workforce. Generally the workforce in Cherwell has a lower level of qualifications than those in the rest of the South East. There are fewer people educated to degree level but more whose highest qualification is less than five GCSEs.
- Cherwell has a slightly higher than average proportion of its population in the working age range.
- Only 1.1% of the working age population were receiving job seekers allowance (in April 2008) whereas the national picture was double that. The proportion of claimants in the younger age range (18-24 years) is lower than the regional or national picture but the situation among older people (50 years upwards) is reversed.

Outside Influences

This strategy aims to take account of the external pressures faced by the Council, including:

- Central government policies, local government inspection regimes (LAA) and customer expectations driving the need to improve performance
- Central government influences on the nature of public sector provision demanding more varied working styles and relationships, for example; working in partnership across traditional agency boundaries and becoming an enabler of provision rather than a direct supplier
- UK employment law and European directives such as the EU Directive on agency workers and amendments to the entitlements of fixed-term employees
- Very low unemployment locally and the changing economy impacting on local and national labour markets
- The changing face of local government as an employer
- The high cost of living in the South East
- The rising costs of wage inflation whilst Council income is constrained
- A number of identified current and future skills shortages in key professional areas
- Commitment to ensuring a diverse workforce to meet the needs of our diverse society
- Meeting the demands of employees and potential employees for increased flexibility in work and working practices

Cherwell District Council

The Council employs 617 people (554 FTE) in 17 service areas. 73% of our employees work full-time (30 hours per week or more). There are three Strategic Directors each responsible for a portfolio of services and three areas reporting directly to the Chief Executive. The Council also has an improvement team with a fixed-term head of improvement who is a member of the Corporate Management Team.

There are currently 48 members of staff who have been with the Council over 20 years. 16 of these have been with us over 30 years. At the other end of the spectrum we have 149 staff who have been with the Council less than 2 years.

Our gender balance has remained fairly static over the last 5 years with a slightly higher proportion of female employees. Women account for 35% of our top 5% of earners, although this figure has risen by 26% since 2003-4.

Absence levels, both long and short term, are below average for the sector.

We recognise that our workforce is not sufficiently representative of our community and we have taken specific steps over a period of time to put this right. We are beginning to see early signs of results with a gradual improvement in ethnic representation from 2.18% in 2003-4 to 2.6% in 2007-8. However this remains well below the latest census data for the locality which suggests an ethnic population of 3.68% and we recognise the need to engage specifically with these groups to understand if and how we might become an attractive employer and/or whether our current practices are failing to meet their needs.

Although the trend data shows a decrease in staff with disabilities our representation remains comparatively high at 7.72%

Before 2006 Cherwell's workforce showed higher representation in the 40-59 category with very low representation in the youngest age categories. This clearly presented an issue for the Council and steps taken to address this have resulted in an increase in the 16-29 categories with a corresponding decrease in the 40-59 groups. This has taken us closer to the census age profile of the community. However we still have 33% of staff over the age of 50, many of them in key professional posts which could prove difficult to replace.

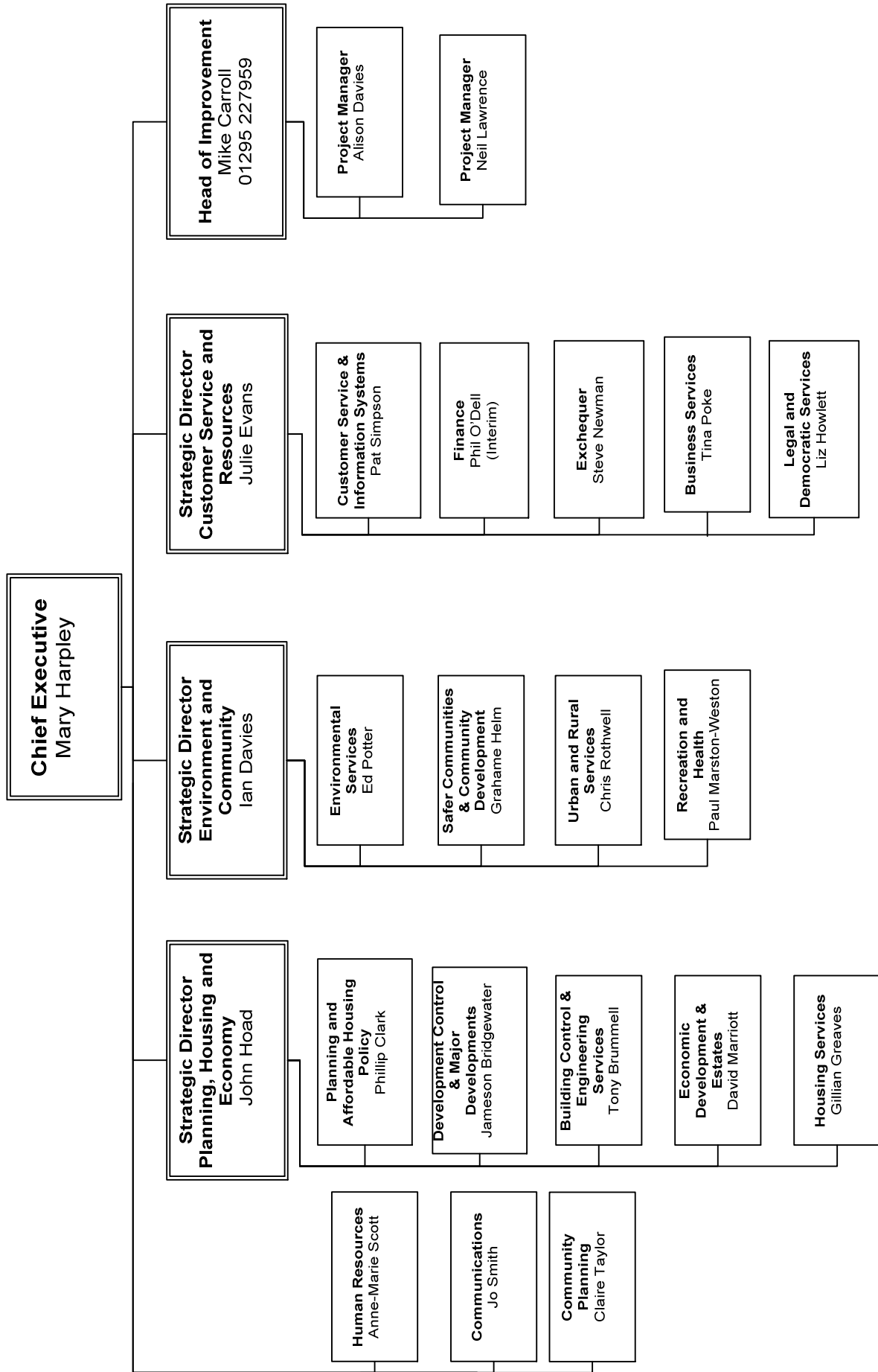
Voluntary turnover of staff has remained even at around 10% over the last 3 years although the Council has recorded an overall leaver rate of 24% this year due to the TUPE transfer of our sports centre staff to an external provider.

40% of our staff travel to work at the Council from outside of the district.

The Council has two ticks accreditation and has been an accredited Investor in People for 10 years.

The CPA inspection in 2004 rated the Council as good. The Council aspires to reach Excellent before the CPA inspection regime is replaced.

Management Structure



What our staff have told us

In January 2008 the Council engaged Ipsos MORI** to undertake a full staff satisfaction survey, the first that Cherwell District Council has ever conducted. This told us that, on the whole, the Council is seen as a good place to work and an organisation that is effective and engaged with the needs of its staff. The results were particularly encouraging as the survey was undertaken just as we were entering the final quarter of a year of significant organisational change. 64% of staff took the opportunity to complete the questionnaire which means we have an excellent idea of what we need to build on and what we need to change to continue to be an employer of choice.

Key strengths

- The Council is seen to have an excellent working atmosphere with 90% of people satisfied with the friendliness of their colleagues, 85% happy with the working hours and 72% satisfied with the working environment
- Advocacy of the Council both as an employer and about its services is high with far more staff more likely than usual to speak highly about our services
- Commitment to customer service is high with most staff agreeing they feel personally responsible for improving service
- Staff are engaged with the Council's objectives with 67% saying they understand our overall objectives
- Most people are positive about our internal communication with 3 in 5 saying they feel informed about what's going on
- The need for change is generally well supported with 75% of staff saying they understand why change is happening
- The Council is seen to have effective line management practices with the vast majority agreeing that their line manager is approachable (86%), open and honest (76%) and supportive (75%)

Areas for improvement

- Staff expressed a clear desire for more consultation and opportunities to have their say
- There is a feeling that the Council's Corporate Management Team are out of touch and not interested in listening to staff ideas and concerns
- Change management and communicating the reasons for change is also seen as a relative weakness with 54% disagreeing that change is well managed
- At the time of the survey, less than half of our staff were satisfied with their job security
- There is a clear need to ensure that staff are recognised and rewarded with some staff feeling undervalued, relatively dissatisfied with their pay and only just over a third feeling they work for an employer that looks after its employees.

The Council has committed to repeating the full staff satisfaction survey every 2 years.

** The full report is available to all staff at <http://intranet/features/library.cfm?frmPage=download&frmDocumentID=1386>.

Key aims, objectives and plans

1. Workforce Planning

What this means: To develop a workforce plan, in terms of size, composition and competence, integrated with service and financial planning, that underpins the Council's strategic aims

Actions we will take:

Objective	Actions	Success Measures
Develop systematic succession planning across the organisation	Train all line managers in identifying key posts and planning to maintain skills and capacity in the future.	Succession planning in place across the organisation and embedded in service and financial planning and appraisal processes Number of internal candidates short listed for more senior jobs increasing Organisational capacity improving year on year
Provide staffing data that is robust, reliable, accurate and consistent with other data used in planning processes	Continue to develop management information systems to provide more sophisticated internal workforce data Develop systems to collect and make available external market data and use regional/national information to supplement census information Continue to monitor time and cost of recruitment process and set targets to reduce resource spent on this by 5% per year	Data available to managers and used to inform succession planning Reduced failure to recruit rates Reduced cost of recruitment per post
Ensure workforce capacity is developed and maintained to ensure delivery of Council objectives and ability to respond to new challenges	Develop clear internal progression paths and career graded posts Develop redeployment and secondment policies to encourage internal movement to enhance flexibility and skills development	Number of staff in progression posts increased Higher number of internal placements

<p>Consider partnership and shared service solutions wherever possible</p>	<p>Build consideration of partnership and/or shared services into planning and recruitment processes Actively support partnership solutions by hosting posts and providing management support and training</p>	<p>Number of partnership and shared solutions increasing year on year Established policy position on hosting shared posts with appropriate guidelines and protection for the Council</p>
<p>Enhance the reputation of Cherwell District Council as an employer of choice with particular emphasis on attracting talent from other sectors</p>	<p>Actively work with partners and outside agencies to attract talent from other sections Develop innovative recruitment and selection solutions to ensure the Council is able to attract appropriately skilled staff Develop links with schools, colleges and community groups Review the Council's advertising strategy to maximise engagement with potential employees and to ensure cost effectiveness</p>	<p>Workforce capacity statistics Established links with community groups facilitating effective engagement with the Council as an employer Representation corporately and in senior posts increasing to reflect community makeup Revised advertising strategy in place to include hard to reach groups and e-recruitment</p>

2. Organisational Development

What this means: Building a multi-skilled, flexible workforce able to deliver customer focussed, efficient services through new and enhanced ways of working

Actions we will take:

Objective	Actions	Success Measures
<p>To develop and organisational culture that encourages innovation and embraces change</p>	<p>Engage staff positively in service transformation and in developing their local vision and ways of working</p> <p>Further development and implementation of processes, policies and procedures that support and facilitate organisational change and minimise the impact of change on individuals</p> <p>Engage staff groups and forums more consistently in the change agenda</p>	<p>Staff survey feedback</p> <p>Investors in People assessment and internal review feedback</p>
<p>To achieve maximum flexibility in the workforce to ensure the Council can respond effectively to the changing environment</p>	<p>Develop clear guidelines for use of agency staff, shared posts and other mixed-economy solutions to maximise the ability to redeploy resource as required</p> <p>Continue to develop the use of homeworking to maximise flexibility and efficiency</p> <p>Develop the use of internal secondment, job shadowing and organisational career paths to encourage internal movement of skills and resource</p>	<p>Percentage of non-permanent staff engaged</p> <p>Number of staff working from home (with consequent efficiency savings)</p> <p>Number of posts filled internally</p> <p>Corporate capacity improving year on year</p>

<p>Deliver a programme of core skills and competencies, increasing transferability of skills across the organisation</p>	<p>Refine and rollout the competency framework to be used as an integral part of performance appraisal and review</p> <p>Delivery core management skills training through the corporate L&D programme</p>	<p>Competency framework embedded into appraisal process</p> <p>Management skills training programme established part of corporate programme</p>
<p>Retain the Investors in People standard, promote and facilitate individual and organisational learning</p>	<p>Deliver evidence against indicators 6 and 7 of the IIP standard in line with agreed timetable</p> <p>Extend the size and role of the Internal Review Team to enhance communication and learning</p> <p>Establishment of systems and processes which facilitate the capacity of the Council to learn and develop from issues raised via formal procedures such as staff complaints and discipline</p>	<p>Accreditation confirmed (2009)</p>
<p>Encourage partnership working through the development of policies and practices to facilitate shared working</p>	<p>Develop policies that support shared posts and shared working arrangements</p> <p>Promote partnership solutions through recruitment processes</p>	<p>Number of shared solutions in place</p>
<p>Achieve greater cross-service working driven by technology and skills development</p>	<p>Develop systems and skills to ensure community and organisational intelligence is used to achieve better service to the community.</p>	<p>Number of examples of cross-service delivery</p>

3. Leadership Development

What this means: Building ambitious leadership and leadership potential

Actions we will take:

Objective	Actions	Success Measures
Taking effective action to attract and retain effective leaders	<p>Formalise approach to senior management recruitment to include assessment centres and technical testing for all posts</p> <p>Develop recruitment materials which explicitly outline the benefits of working with the Council in relation to continued development</p>	Reduced failure to recruit rates
Foster the development of leadership skills and behaviour at all levels	<p>Continue rollout of leadership skills development programme at all levels</p> <p>Run annual management conference to work on and cascade key corporate issues</p> <p>Extend the use of the competency framework, complemented by 360 feedback</p>	<p>Programme of leadership development with evaluation in place</p> <p>Annual management conference timed to maximise contribution to corporate planning</p>
Ensure equality of access to management posts to ensure representation of all groups	Embed policies, practices and cultures that effectively increase the percentage of women, people from black and ethnic minorities and people with disabilities in leadership positions	% of top earners from minority groups reflecting community statistics
Maximise internal leadership and nurture potential leadership capacity	Develop internal mentoring/buddy scheme to facilitate shared learning and development	Increased % of leadership posts filled through internal appointment
Develop an effective arena for staff and senior management to communicate	Develop structured processes for involvement of senior team through team meetings and 'back to the floor' events	Staff survey feedback

4. Skills Development

What this means: Developing employees' skills and knowledge

Actions we will take:

Objective	Actions	Success Measures
Define the most important current and future skills needs	<p>Audit current and potential skills within the workforce to identify critical gaps</p> <p>Take action to provide development routes to fill future critical gaps</p>	The number of critical skills gaps reduces year on year
Take action to attract, develop or share skills needed to provide and develop services	<p>Use competency framework to agree and promote a core set of transferable skills</p> <p>Develop the role of trade union learning reps to support development of internal skills base</p>	Increased use of partnership solutions and internal progression
Use the Investors in People model to promote continuous learning and shared development	<p>Extend role of Internal Review team to audit service areas and provide feedback on learning and development</p> <p>Develop robust and consistent evaluation methods and techniques to inform future development activity</p>	<p>Increased number of recommendations from internal reviews</p> <p>Evidence of evaluation informing future development planning, embedded with SFP and appraisal process</p>
Support staff in attaining basic literacy and numeracy skills, working with partners to extend this to developing the skills of the community	<p>Participate in the Government's 'Skills Pledge' initiative</p> <p>Develop shared training initiatives with local partners</p> <p>Work towards attainment of the Get On (Go) Local Government award to develop a cohesive strategy for addressing basic skills needs</p>	Increased % of workforce above level 1 in literacy and numeracy

5. Pay, reward and performance management

What this means: Developing a culture that encourages and rewards excellence, perseverance, flexibility and initiative

Actions we will take:

Objective	Actions	Success Measures
<p>Develop a reward strategy for all staff that ensures fairness and equality, is responsive to market changes, supports the attraction and retention of staff and encourages sustained levels of high performance.</p>	<p>Implement corporate job evaluation scheme</p> <p>Improve the flexibility of the employee benefits package by moving towards menu benefits</p> <p>Develop, empower and recognise high levels of performance</p> <p>Continue to develop schemes for progression between grades via career maps which allow for recognition of individual contribution and facilitate succession planning</p>	<p>Scheme in place by April 2010</p> <p>Staff turnover levels and costs (reducing year on year)</p>
<p>Ensure all individual and collective employee contributions are recognised and valued</p>	<p>Develop a recognition strategy to include local, regional and national initiatives to recognise and celebrate achievement</p>	<p>Number of initiatives in place/reported</p> <p>Feedback from staff satisfaction survey 2010</p> <p>Investors in People assessment 2009</p>
<p>Improve the quality of workforce related data to assist with performance management and cost control</p>	<p>Continue to develop and populate systems which provide comprehensive, current and flexible data to managers</p>	<p>Standard data reports in place</p> <p>Direct access to information provided to all managers</p>
<p>Embed the use of performance management tools as key drivers in performance management and the development of a high performance culture</p>	<p>Revise appraisal and personal development planning processes for all staff supported by management development and training.</p> <p>Develop guidance materials and support from HR in formal training and coaching to improve the management of performance and the ability and confidence of managers to address under performance.</p>	<p>Revised appraisal process in place and being used consistently across the organisation</p> <p>Number of performance issues reported/escalated</p>

<p>Provide flexible approaches to work that provide an effective balance for staff throughout their careers between the demands of work and life outside work</p>	<p>Further develop the suite of flexible working policies and practices</p>	<p>Improvement in representation of minority groups across the organisation and at senior levels Reduced staff turnover Reduced failure to recruit levels</p>
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6. Employee relations, involvement and equality

What this means: Develop an environment that will foster employee involvement, wellbeing and respect for diversity

Actions we will take:

Objective	Actions	Success Measures
<p>Maintain effective relations with staff, individually and collectively and with the recognised trade union to achieve high levels of employee engagement</p>	<p>Develop clear and co-ordinated strategies and structures for employee consultation, involvement and engagement utilising two yearly staff surveys and the IP internal review process to test staff perceptions, involvement and understanding in corporate objectives</p> <p>Develop increased partnership working on key projects with trade union and employee representative groups</p>	<p>Staff survey response 2010</p> <p>Reduced turnover rates</p>
<p>To ensure that all staff know how they are contributing to corporate goals</p>	<p>Revise induction processes to clearly outline Political structures and corporate objectives</p> <p>Revise the appraisal process to clearly integrate with service and financial planning and clearly define performance standards</p> <p>Use annual management conference to engage whole leadership team in the corporate agenda</p>	<p>Staff survey response 2010</p> <p>Revised induction and appraisal processes in place</p>
<p>Occupational health</p>	<p>The establishment of a broader occupational health service which supports and promotes wellbeing including associated health services and health promotion</p>	<p>Reduced sickness absence levels</p>
<p>Further improve employee communication</p>	<p>Develop a corporate framework for communication and consultation to ensure consistency of practice</p>	<p>Planned and consistent processes for communication and consultation in place</p>

<p>Progress to level 4 of the Equality Standard</p>	<p>Impact assessments and resulting actions to be completed in line with agreed timetable</p>	<p>Impact assessments completed and resulting actions implemented</p>
<p>Ensure the removal of barriers to achieving a truly representative workforce</p>	<p>Develop further flexibility in working practices to facilitate access Develop routes to access community groups to facilitate communication/consultation on employment issues and build links and reputation</p>	<p>Workforce representative of community at all levels</p>

Cherwell District Council is committed to providing an excellent service for its customers and to reaching ambitious targets that respond to the needs of the community. A Corporate Plan and Improvement Strategy have been developed for 2007 – 2012 setting out four strategic priorities. Fundamental to achieving these are the Council's employees, who must have the right knowledge, understanding, skill, attitude and behaviour to deliver an excellent, effective and professional service. Sitting beneath this and embedding these priorities is the HR Strategy which incorporates the Learning & Development (L & D) function. Additionally as an Investor in People the principles to support continual improvement (as recommended following 2008 assessment) have been incorporated in this strategy and associated Policy (Indicator 2).

This Learning & Development (L & D) strategy has been developed to support the Corporate Plan and Improvement Strategy with the following underpinning priorities:

- To develop a strategic and joint approach to Member and Officer development
- To aid recruitment and retention of suitably skilled and competent staff.
- To demonstrate commitment to the Investor in People standard.

Each year specific learning priorities will be identified through service and financial planning and the appraisal process. The agreed focus for 08/09 covers eight learning and development areas:

- a) Organisational and Community Awareness
- b) Customer Care and Equalities
- c) Leadership and Management Development
- d) Governance
- e) Project and Performance Management Skills
- f) Information and Communication
- g) Health, Safety and Wellbeing
- h) Individual Skills Development

A centralised process will allow for improved management of the entire L & D function through:

- Standardised budgetary control and clear accounting
- Improved budgetary decision making at Member & CMT level
- Fairness of access for individually supported training
- Maintenance of an employee skills database to facilitate succession planning
- Greater flexibility in developing and deploying transferable skills across the organisation
- Greater evaluation of organisational benefits and value for money
- Improved ability to conduct strategic training needs analysis
- Delivery of L & D which has direct links to individual appraisal, Service plans and corporate objectives
- Better use of in-house training provision
- Role out and monitoring of Continuous Professional Development processes

To meet the underpinning priorities there will be four main streams through which supported Learning & Development can be accessed:

1. Corporate Led Development
2. Team/Departmental Development
3. Personal or Essential Career Development (Formerly PET)
4. Technical/Role Specific Essential CPD

An overview of these can be seen at appendix a. These four streams will be managed centrally, with priority given to L & D events which best support the corporate strategy and service plans through an assessment matrix (appendix b). A Corporate Led L & D Directory will be available outlining all generic programmes. This will include aims and learning outcomes designed to meet corporate strategy enabling managers to easily match the L & D needs of their staff to standard programmes. An annual schedule of course delivery dates will be published to assist in planning attendance.

To ensure that learning and development is effective and value for money there will be an evaluation process incorporated into all formal L & D events. The evaluation may take several forms but will primarily be completed at departmental level through an Integrated Personal Development Process or, where relevant, Continuous Professional Development recording. Managers are the best people to be able to recognise performance development of their staff and comment on the effectiveness of any L & D interventions. For Corporate programmes level 3 evaluations (Kirkpatrick) will take place. This strategy will meet the continual improvement actions of the liP (Section 4)

Cherwell District Council is committed to maintaining its status as an Investor in People (liP) and will continue to support the processes that will achieve this. It has highly dedicated and motivated staff fulfilling the roles of internal reviewers and liP champions. These roles will be maintained and the profile raised to ensure the commitment is highlighted

Risk The following risks are identified:

- Poor support at Corporate and Departmental level will adversely effect the ability for effective implementation
- Inadequate resourcing, both in terms of finance and staff, will result in parts of the strategy not being achieved
- Ineffective use of the appraisal system will adversely effect the identification of relevant skills development which link to corporate and departmental service plans

Community Impact Assessment (high)

Whilst there has been no external consultation, this strategy can be recognised as having the potential to significantly impact on both the community and the Councils employees. Many of the identified training interventions are based around service provision, management and leadership. All learning and development programmes need to have aims, objectives and methodologies that consider sensitive community and minority issues. This includes recognition that employees will have differing needs.

Appendix a

Corporate Led Development (CLD)	
This stream refers to all learning and development driven and initiated by the Council. It will cover a broad spectrum of interventions designed to directly reflect the priorities in place at the time. This area of development will be a priority	
Examples of CLD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Induction, Diversity, IT Skills (various), Leadership & Management Skills, HR Workshops
Personal or Essential Career Development (PECD)	
This stream refers to all development that is based on personal career development funded by the Council. It will include;	
<p>1) Development that is essential or mandatory to fulfil the requirements of the specific role and results in a recognisable professional qualification or</p> <p>2) Personal development where there is a significant benefit to the council in terms of effectiveness and professionalism but the overriding benefit will be for the applicant in terms of professional qualification and/or development. Applications for development that is not essential or mandatory will be subject to a priority assessment by the L & D Manager using the scoring matrix. All funding in this stream will be subject to a formal contract between the Council and the applicant. All applicants will be interviewed by the Service Head to ensure that the commitment required is recognised and the reclaiming of funding criteria fully understood.</p>	
Examples of PECD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ European Computerised Driving Licence ○ Degree/Diploma/Certified courses ○ EHO qualification ○ CIH qualification
Technical/Role Specific Essential CPD (TEC)	
This stream refers to individual personal development that is an essential or mandatory part of a persons professional updating or is a part of their recognised CPD, and is a requirement to complete. The Service Head will need to sign that the event is essential or mandatory and justify the decision. It is likely that this application will be generated by the Service Head either through a recognised CPD requirement or appraisal. Alternatively it may be driven from the essential criteria on the job description. Providing the development is justified this will be an organisation priority	
Examples of TEC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Seminars, Conferences, Workshops
Departmental/Team Development (DTD)	
This stream refers to any team development issue that has a cost implication for L & D. It might include developing skills to improve performance or reacting to personal performance issues that can be resolved through training as opposed to management or peer coaching. Applications for this stream will be subject to a priority assessment. The benefit to the central management of this stream will be to identify other teams that may have similar development needs	
Examples of DTD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Customer care or communication skills (not Corporate) ○ Report writing course ○ Development days

Each application will be assessed according to its merits and authorising managers should ensure fairness, consistency and accuracy in their decisions

Appendix b

Assessment Matrix

Criteria	Score	Level of funding
This is an essential part of the role and is an expected part of the person’s development. If essential it will be part of a mandatory personal certification or qualification demanded by the role. It will significantly increase their personal effectiveness and efficiency and enable the department to meet the requirements of their service plan or corporate strategy	5	100%
The development must have clear and direct links to the role and be aligned to meet the department’s service plan or corporate strategy. It should result in a recognised qualification and will significantly increase their professional performance and effectiveness.	4	100%
This development will benefit the departmental service plan or corporate strategy but is predominantly a distinct career development opportunity	3	25 - 75%
Has little benefit to the council but will enhance career prospects	2	0 - 25%
Individual benefit only	1	0%

The overriding principle is that the level of support will be reasonable given the benefit it will bring to the organisation combined with career development for the organisation.

Compiled by:	Chris Harvey Learning and Development Manager
Agreed by:	
Review date:	July 2010
Owned by	Learning & Development (Human Resources)

Content

Section No.	Section Title	Page
1	Introduction	2
2	The Four L & D Streams	2
3	Corporate Led L & D	2
4	Application & Attendance	3
4a	Appeals	4
5	Funding	4
6	Study Leave	6
7	Results & Qualifications	7
8	Continuous Professional Development	7
9	Evaluation and Transference of Learning	7
10	Integrated Personal Development	8
11	New Training Initiatives	8
12	Documentation	8
13	NVQ & Modern Apprenticeships	9
Appendix A	Learning & Development Streams & Assessment Matrix	10

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy is designed to enable all staff to;
- receive relevant and appropriate development
 - equip them to provide an excellent service
 - meet the council's commitment to provide support, where possible, for employees to develop their careers.
- This will be achieved by both corporate led learning and individual career and professional development.
- 1.2 All Learning and Development (L&D) will support the Council's duty to meet Equal Opportunities Legislation by ensuring that the principles of fairness underpin all access and resource opportunities. To maintain an inclusive environment particular consideration must be given to recognising specific individual needs in any decision making process.

2 The Four Streams

- 2.1 The provision of L & D within the Council will be managed through four ways:
- Corporate Led Development (CLD)
 - Personal or Essential Career Development (PECD)
 - Technical/Role Specific Essential CPD (TEC)
 - Departmental/Team Development (DTD).
- 2.2 Apart from CLD the other Streams will be assessed by the L & D Manager on receipt of a completed training application form. The assessment will be against a matrix which considers best value for both the Council and individual career development. These Streams and the assessment matrix are explained at Appendix A.

3 Corporate Led Development

- 3.1.1 The underpinning priorities of the L & D strategy cover a five year period and within that, specific areas will be identified as bi - annual targets. For the period 2008 – 2010 the Corporate Learning and Development focus will be on the following areas:
- a. Organisational and Community Awareness
 - b. Customer Care and Equalities
 - c. Leadership and Management Development
 - d. Governance
 - e. Project and Performance Management
 - f. Information and Communication
 - g. Health, Safety and Wellbeing
 - h. Individual Skills development

The Aims and Learning Outcomes for these learning events will be available on the L & D directory (see 3.2)

- 3.2 This Corporate Led stream of L & D will be delivered to all relevant staff via both internal and external provision, managed through an L& D directory of courses. These will attract evaluation and accreditation where appropriate. If any specific development is required for an individual which is available from the L & D directory a simple request form will be required to place a member of staff on an attendance list.
- 3.3 The L & D team will maintain an annual schedule of planned course delivery dates available on the intranet ([Human Resources>Learning & Development>L & D Directory](#)).
- 3.4 The L & D team will maintain an annual schedule of planned course delivery dates available on the same intranet site. At the commencement of each new L & D year this schedule will be sent out to all service heads.
- 3.5 The Leadership and Management Development Programme will incorporate the Management Competency Framework and be delivered through a modular approach.
- 3.6 When a Corporate Led L & D event is held over a day it is the responsibility of the delegate to make provision for their own lunch and claim expenses from their own department if appropriate.

4 Application & Attendance

- 4.1 All L & D requests (except CLD, see 2.2) will be submitted on the relevant application forms that are located on the intranet at;[\(Human Resources>Learning & Development>Applications\)](#). These applications will need to be fully completed and appropriately signed before final approval by the L & D Manager. The application will need to show how the requested training will link into Council priorities, Service plans, appraisal, performance development, essential qualification/certification or career development.
- 4.2 Attendance at Corporate Led L & D will be managed within HR and courses will be allocated to staff, following application on the relevant form located as at 4.1, via appointments on Outlook. An acceptance will be confirmation that the member of staff will attend. In the event of non-attendance or cancellation (less than two weeks notice) the costs will be reclaimed from that persons departmental budget. Costs will be calculated as a proportion (of the number of attendees) of the standard day rate for internally provided training or, if externally provided, at a proportion of that particular consultancy cost. The current internal day rate is £350 per course.

- 4.3 The final authorisation will rest with the L & D manager who has a complete overview of all requests. Once authorised, a purchase order will be raised and, if appropriate, a letter, for registration purposes, stating that Cherwell DC will be responsible for payment will be provided. However, it may be beneficial for the L & D manager to research and arrange alternative interventions which are more cost effective.
- 4.4 All applications will be recorded and monitored and the original placed on personal files. PECD applications will require a formal contract to be signed whereby the applicant accepts the criteria for funding and potential recovery of funds.
- 4.5 All applicants for PECD will be required to have a formal meeting with the Service Head to review the application and to ensure the policy on funding and the demands of the course are fully recognised. At the conclusion the applicant will be asked to sign a declaration stating that they are aware of, and fully understand the Councils policy on recovery of funding. This declaration will form part of the application and contract. (See 5.4)

4a Appeals

- 4a.1 Appeals: If an applicant disagrees with a decision made at any stage during their application they have a right of appeal, firstly to the L & D manager, then the Head of Human Resources. If the decision to be appealed was made by the L & D manager it should be referred direct to the Head of HR.
- 4a.2 The appeal should firstly be made in writing (Form TRG 8), available at [\(Human Resources>Learning & Development>Applications\)](#), outlining the grounds or reasons for the appeal. Once the appeal is received the L & D manager or Head of HR will arrange for an informal discussion with all parties concerned. If this fails to resolve the issue a formal meeting will be arranged within two weeks of receipt of appeal where the appellant can be represented by a nominated person (Line manager/Unison) to a panel consisting of Head of HR, L & D manager and an independent Service Head

5 Funding (PECD TEC and DTD)

- 5.1 The Council will provide funding for all learning & development which has been authorised by the L & D manager. This will include provision of any course costs and examinations. When an application is approved the L & D team will raise a purchase order and forward it to the applicant to contract the training. Invoices should be sent to;
P.O. Box 27 Banbury, Oxon, OX15 4BH

Exam retakes will be funded in circumstances where it is reasonable to do so. Books and other course materials will be funded through the original application if exact costs are known.

- 5.2 Any additional course costs not described at 5.1 including mileage claims (over and above usual home to work mileage), additional books/course materials and meals at the appropriate rate should be submitted on the CDC Claim Forms through the usual route. Receipts for all claims are required
- 5.3 Level of Funding: The level of funding will be proportional to the relevance and need for the training to the applicant's role and council/department service plans: In general terms the following will apply:

L & D Stream	Funding Level
Corporate Led Development	100%
Technical/Role Specific Essential CPD	100%
Personal or Essential Career Development	0% to 100%
Departmental/Team Development	0% to 100%

- 5.4 Recovery of Funding Personal or Essential Career Development Stream Only: The funding of learning & development has a significant impact on the Council budget, and the use of such public funds must be subject to strict monitoring and assessment. It is essential that the Council get value for money from its commitment to support professional and personal development. Therefore the Council will robustly pursue a policy to recover funding from applicants in the circumstances set out below;

Circumstance	Recovery %
The applicant fails, without good reason, to complete the course whether by choice or direction (for example being expelled from the course) and includes leaving employment with the council during the period of a course. This does not include deferring completion, providing the course is completed within two years.	100%
The applicant fails, without good reason, to sit expected examinations or other course completion requirements such as dissertations or project work	100%
The employee leaves the Council employment within two years of the date the qualification was obtained (not CPD). This includes moving to another local government post.	0 – 6mths 100% 6 – 12mths 75% 12 – 18mths 50% 18 – 24mths 25%

5.5 When calculating 100% recovery costs the Council will include any costs of books, materials or mileage claims but not salary for study time or absence. Funding will not be reclaimed if:

- An employee dies in service or leaves on ill health grounds
- An employee is subject of redundancy
- An Employee who leaves due to pregnancy

5.6 On receipt of a resignation notification line managers are responsible for completing a Leavers form, part of which requires the identification of any outstanding funding for training. The L& D manager should be notified at the earliest opportunity of any requirement to reclaim funds from a member of staff leaving the organisation

5.7 The recovery of outstanding funds will in the first instance be taken from final salary, although discretion may be exercised in individual cases where hardship may arise

6 Study Leave

6.1 Study Leave is time given to the applicant to dedicate toward studying, preparing for exams or course requirements such as dissertations. The authorisation for study leave remains at the discretion of the service head who should consider the amount of funding, length of course and the level of qualification. A decision should be based on what is reasonable in the circumstances but should reflect the guidelines below. All applications will require a written agreement of study time allowance and these will be reviewed by the L & D manager to ensure fairness and consistency. The council will support the attendance of applicants who are required to attend formal training events such as day/part day or block release. Similarly students who are studying by distance learning should benefit from a similar level of study time free from work distractions. However studying is a two way agreement and all students should recognise that they will be expected to give up some of their own time to support their learning. Study leave is time that a person is entitled to be absent from work commitments and should not be recovered by any agreement to work additional hours

6.2 The following table is a guideline for assessing study leave and the final decision is at the discretion of the service head:

- Day/Part day release – to reflect course attendance requirements.
- Distance learning – maximum of one day per week and should reflect intensity of the course
- Block release – one or more blocks up to a maximum of 10 weeks per year

- Exams – pre exam leave may be granted up to a maximum of one day per exam
- Day/Part day study leave required for other course arrangements outside of term time, such as field trips or continuing study
- Appropriate time to gather evidence for NVQ assessment and to prepare portfolios'

6.3 Employees who are required to attend meetings away from their normal workplace will be credited with reasonable excess time for travel etc. less normal travel to work time.

7 Results & Qualifications

7.1 All students who receive financial support are required to inform the L & D manager of their progress at the conclusion of their course or after each year for long term study. If any training is certified a copy of that certificate should also be forwarded to the L & D manager

8 Continuous Professional Development

8.1 Many roles within the Council require varying levels of certification and qualification with associated continuous professional development. The Council will support all members of staff to meet the requirements of their particular professional qualification wherever possible both financially and with time. However the core function of the department must take precedence.

8.2 Many of these professional roles are supported, within the specific regulatory body, with seminars and conferences. Attendance at these will be assessed on a necessity basis. If attendance is essential to maintain a professional qualification it will be supported. If attendance will improve effectiveness and performance it will be given a high priority. However if attendance is not at this level any support will be subject to assessment.

9 Evaluation & Transference of Learning

9.1 The evaluation of Learning & Development is crucial to identifying its effectiveness and to realising the benefits for the council. All corporate led training will attract a level 1 evaluation as a minimum. This will consider knowledge and confidence levels prior to attending the course and at its conclusion.

9.2 This process will be the first step in the Integrated Personal Development Process (IPDP), see 10 below. All existing L & D provision, where there has been a significant change in the aims, objectives or delivery method, and all new L & D initiatives will attract level 3

evaluations. To identify the value of L & D delivery, service heads will be asked to report on the impact specific L & D has had on staff performance through the IPDP process. This will be by way of an evaluation questionnaire sent by the L & D Manager

10 Integrated Personal Development Process (IPDP)

- 10.1 A principle part of the evaluation process, designed to support the transference of learning into the practical workplace environment, will be the IPDP. This will apply to all members of staff who attend Corporate Led L & D events or who are funded for career development opportunities. Prior to commencing any Corporate Led L & D event a student will receive a personal development plan document (TRG 6). This will outline the learning outcomes of the event and will ask the student to consider their current knowledge and confidence levels in relation to those learning outcomes. Following the event the student will be asked to reflect on what they have learnt and how they intend to use this in the workplace. A post training 1 to 1 session between the member of staff and their manager should then take place to design a development plan identifying how the learning will be put into practice and embedded. This plan should be monitored within an identified time scale by that manager. Each member of staff will be expected to maintain an IPDP which can be made available for sampling and review by managers and the L & D team.
- 10.2 In many circumstances attendance on a Corporate Led L & D event will be of significance to a persons Professional Qualification and in this circumstance their CPD record will replace the Integrated Personal Development Process

11 New Training Initiatives

- 11.1 From time to time departments will identify new training initiatives that will impact on the whole organisation,(for example the introduction of a new IT system). Depending on the scale of the project there could be significant budgetary and resource implications. To ensure that any initiative or project which has an L & D need can be appropriately managed, and the correct level of training needs analysis applied, it is essential that learning & development is considered at an early stage in the planning process. To enable this, departmental managers should complete a Training Initiation Document (TID) (TR7) ([Human Resources>Learning & Development>Applications](#)) which should be submitted to the L & D Manager who will nominate a project coordinator to work with the department to develop an effective L & D strategy.

12 Documentation

- 12.1 All the relevant documentation is shown at appendix B and will be available on the intranet at: ([Human Resources>Learning & Development>Documentation](#)). For ease of reference each form has a unique ID number:

- TRG 1 – Application to attend Corporate Led Development (CLD)
- TRG 2 – Application for Personal or Essential Career Development (PECD)
- TRG 3 – Application for Technical/Role Specific Essential Development (TEC)
- TRG 4 – Application for Departmental/Team Development (DTD)
- TRG 6 – Integrated Personal Development Plan
- TRG 7 – New Training Initiation Document
- TRG 8 – Appeal
- TRG 9 – Standard letter of acceptance for funding

13 NVQ & Modern Apprenticeships

- 13.1 The attainment of relevant qualifications will be encouraged and supported wherever possible. In particular qualifications such as NVQ are a good route for staff to evidence their skills and gain accreditation for them. Train to Gain and Skills for Life will be supported
- 13.2 Similarly the process of modern apprenticeships will be supported as far as possible

Appendix A Learning & Development Streams

Corporate Led Development (CLD)	
This stream refers to all learning and development driven and initiated by the Council. It will cover a broad spectrum of interventions designed to directly reflect the priorities in place at the time. This area of development will be a priority	
Examples of CLD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Induction, Diversity, IT Skills (various), Leadership & Management Skills, HR Workshops
Personal or Essential Career Development (PECD)	
This stream refers to all development that is based on personal career development funded by the Council. It will include;	
<p>1) Development that is essential or mandatory to fulfil the requirements of the specific role and results in a recognisable professional qualification or</p> <p>2) Personal development where there is a significant benefit to the council in terms of effectiveness and professionalism but the overriding benefit will be for the applicant in terms of professional qualification and/or development. Applications for development that is not essential or mandatory will be subject to a priority assessment by the L & D Manager using the scoring matrix. All funding in this stream will be subject to a formal contract between the Council and the applicant. All applicants will be interviewed by the Service Heads to ensure that the commitment required is recognised and the reclaiming of funding criteria fully understood.</p>	
Examples of PECD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ European Computerised Driving Licence ○ Degree/Diploma/Certified courses ○ EHO qualification ○ CIH qualification
Technical/Role Specific Essential CPD (TEC)	
This stream refers to individual personal development that is an essential or mandatory part of a persons professional updating or is a part of their recognised CPD, and is a requirement to complete. The Service Head will need to sign that the event is essential or mandatory and justify the decision. It is likely that this application will be generated by the Service Head either through a recognised CPD requirement or appraisal. Alternatively it may be driven from the essential criteria on the job description. Providing the development is justified this will be an organisation priority	
Examples of TEC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Seminars, Conferences, Workshops
Departmental/Team Development (DTD)	
This stream refers to any team development issue that has a cost implication for L & D. It might include developing skills to improve performance or reacting to personal performance issues that can be resolved through training as opposed to management or peer coaching. Applications for this stream will be subject to a priority assessment. The benefit to the central management of this stream will be to identify other teams that may have similar development needs	
Examples of DTD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Customer care or communication skills (not Corporate) ○ Report writing course ○ Development days

. Each application will be assessed according to its merits and authorising managers should ensure fairness and accuracy in their decisions

Assessment Matrix

Criteria	Score	Level of funding
This is an essential part of the role and is an expected part of the person’s development. If essential it will be part of a mandatory personal certification or qualification demanded by the role. It will significantly increase their personal effectiveness and efficiency and enable the department to meet the requirements of their service plan or corporate strategy	5	100%
The development must have clear and direct links to the role and be aligned to meet the department’s service plan or corporate strategy. It should result in a recognised qualification and will significantly increase their professional performance and effectiveness.	4	100%
This development will benefit the departmental service plan or corporate strategy but is predominantly a distinct career development opportunity	3	25 - 75%
Has little benefit to the council but will enhance career prospects	2	0 - 25%
Individual benefit only	1	0%

The overriding principle is that the level of support will be reasonable given the benefit it will bring to the organisation combined with career development for the organisation.

6.4 **Efficiency/Savings**

There are no efficiencies arising directly from this report.

7 **Recommendations**

- 7.1 The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to resolve to comment on and endorse the attached action plans

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE ACTION PLAN

June 2008

Our Investors in People review took place during week commencing 16 June 2008.

Due to an extended period of significant change in the run up to our 2008 Post Recognition Review, our Investors in People assessor found that not all parts of the Standard continue to be met. Two Indicators of the Investor in People Standard were not fully met and these linked to the culture of the Council which had not fully been able to embrace the amount and speed of change required.

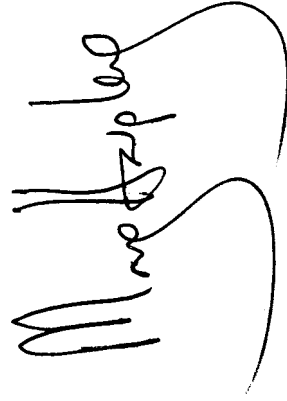
This action plan has been put together in response to those findings, and demonstrates the full commitment of the organisation to return to the Standard. It details the actions to be taken for each indicator 'not met' to bring us back to the requirements of the Standard.

We understand that our ability to retain our recognition status while working through the action plan is at the discretion of the Quality South East Investors in People Recognition Panel, and that the Panel will only grant 'Retaining Recognition' status if it is satisfied that we remain fully committed to achieving the Standard once more, subject to a time-bound and robust action plan as detailed below.

We understand that we have a maximum of two years from the date of our last review to return to the Standard, but we should aim to return to the Standard more quickly if possible. Our assessor has indicated that she firmly believes that the Council will be fully back to Standard within one year and we have agreed that she should return on 21st January 2009 to conclude the process.

We do understand that as a condition of granting 'Retaining Recognition' status, the Panel may require the assessor to return at an earlier date to monitor our progress and give a report to the Panel.

We submit this action plan to the Recognition Panel for its consideration.



Indicator 6: People contribution to the organisation is recognised and valued:

Requirement for this indicator:

An organisation's success largely depends on the time, effort and ideas that its people put into helping it to achieve its objectives. To make that kind of effort, people need to feel that what they do make a difference and are appreciated by their manager.

The assessor is looking to see that there is a culture of measuring individual performance so managers are able to understand the contribution people make. Secondly, there must be evidence that managers let people know how much they value their input to the organisation. Because of this, people will feel valued for making a positive difference and be able to give examples of how they personally feel valued and that they make a difference.

Current situation – as found by the assessor:

Relevant Evidence Requirement	As found by the Assessor	Action to be Taken and person responsible for ensuring that the action takes place	Planned Completion Date	Expected outcome (How we will know the action has been successful)
6.1 Managers can give examples of how they recognise and value people's individual contribution to the organisation.	Managers commented on how the Performance Appraisal process is used to acknowledge the jobs that people do. However, due to uncertainty still felt by many members of the middle and wider management team themselves comments like "We are all in the same boat and feel uncertain in terms of feeling fully part of the new structure" and "The CMT and even EMT seem to be out of touch with us" demonstrate that a culture of valuing is not yet consistent across the Council.	Develop a recognition strategy to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An annual celebrating success event such as a lunch hosted by the Chief Executive [HR] ▪ Develop policy and budget for 'players player' or similar, determined by DMTs [CSM] ▪ Encourage participation in national awards and events such as the LGC Challenge and PFA [Service Heads] ▪ Develop a programme of soft skills development for line managers at all levels, to complement the Leading for Excellence programme [L&D Manager] 	Spring 2009 Oct 2008 On-going April 2009	Consistency will exist in terms of how managers acknowledge the contributions of their staff. Clarity will exist in terms of what is expected of managers in the Council in respect of valuing staff and letting them know their contribution is acknowledged. Managers will be actively involved in raising the profile of the Council in terms of participation in National Events. They (managers) will be able to see the difference they make and will realise that effective management and valued staff is crucial to the success of the Council. Managers will be demonstrating the softer skills aligned with the sharper skills required of them.
6.2 People can describe how they contribute to the organisation's success and	Job roles were clear and people confirmed how the Appraisal process is being consistently used to note roles and responsibility. However, morale remains at a low ebb in several areas of the Council, particularly in the HO areas. There	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review appraisal process to ensure we clearly define what meets and what exceeds expectations [L&D Manager] ▪ Run an annual management conference to include all members of EMT and SMT to 	April 2009 Oct 2009	Staff will be aware that their performance is being truly monitored and acknowledged as part of the Council's Performance Management system. Because Managers will come

<p>believe they make a positive difference to its performance.</p>	<p>is a view that CMT and EMT are not fully listening to their concerns.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ work on, and cascade, corporate issues [HR] ▪ Run 'back to the floor' days to provide opportunity for CMT to work with front-line staff ▪ Run Inside Cherwell campaign to raise the profile of new management groups and respective responsibilities [Comms] ▪ Use staff consultation group for policy review and involvement in decision making [HR] ▪ Develop more formal recognition approach through new HR Strategy [HR] ▪ Extend the Internal Review team and programme of Internal Reviews to support and help embed changes. 	<p>Oct 2009</p> <p>Sept 2009 onwards</p> <p>Underway and on-going (monthly)</p> <p>Sept 2009</p> <p>Sept and on-going (training scheduled for October)</p>	<p>together on an annual basis to share good practice, people will be assured of consistency in terms of recognising and rewarding good performance.</p> <p>People will have easy access to the CMT and will be in a position to receive acknowledgement directly from CMT.</p> <p>Staff will have more of a voice as Representatives will be in a stronger position to raise issues of concern knowing that they (Representatives) have direct access to senior managers.</p> <p>The number of staff who are trained as Internal Reviewers will mean that more staff will be actively involved in supporting the Council in terms of using the Investor in People framework for continuous improvement.</p>	<p>.As above</p>
<p>6.3 People can describe how their contribution to the organisation is recognised and valued.</p>	<p>Primarily this was through being able to describe their role. There remains uncertainty as changes and improved support mechanisms are not being felt by staff in a consistent way.</p>				

Indicator 7. People are encouraged to take ownership and responsibility by being involved in decision-making.

Requirement for this indicator:

Common characteristics of high performance organisations are effective employee involvement and empowerment that enables them to have a

greater role in the decision-making process.

Managers need to explain how they encourage people to be involved in the decision-making process, on an individual basis or through representative groups. They also need to demonstrate how they encourage people to take ownership and responsibility for decisions made. People need to be able to describe how they are involved in decision-making at a level appropriate to their role, and how they are encouraged to take ownership and responsibility for decisions that affect the performance of the organisation.

Current situation – as found by the assessor:

Relevant Evidence Requirement	Current situation – as found by the assessor:	Actions to be Taken and person responsible for ensuring that the action takes place	Planned Completion Date	Expected outcome (How we will know the action has been successful)
<p>7.1 Managers can describe how they promote a sense of ownership and responsibility by encouraging people to be involved in decision-making, both individually and through representatives groups if they exist.</p>	<p>Discussions with the wider management team described how they promoted a sense of ownership and responsibility by encouraging people to be involved in decision-making, both individually and through representative groups, where they exist.</p> <p>They described how being part of a Trade Union was encouraged but that TU membership was relatively low but meaningful as the Representatives were helpful and kept their members fully informed. “As TU Reps we’re involved in the accommodation project and planning how to get involved in the Job Evaluation project coming up in September.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Build in structured staff involvement opportunities to the service and financial planning processes [IT] ▪ CMT to regularly attend team meetings, cascade etc. [CMT] ▪ Ensure time is made available for meetings, training, involvement in team and corporate planning [HR] ▪ Expand use and role of staff consultation group (above) ▪ TU membership and role to be supported and developed [HR/TU] ▪ Ensure detailed feedback on all questions/comments to demonstrate listening/response on all issues [EMT] 	<p>Underway and on-going</p> <p>Underway and on-going October 2009</p> <p>Underway and on-going April 2009</p>	<p>Managers in the Council will be actively involved in strategic planning for the Council and their Service.</p> <p>As a result, they will be better informed and will be in a position to engage their team members in issues of a strategic nature.</p> <p>As members of CMT will ‘guest’ at their meetings, managers will be seen to be the decision-makers by their staff and will note the support they are receiving from CMT.</p> <p>Increased ownership and thus confidence will be felt across the Council and managers and Representatives will receive comprehensive responses to questions they raise.</p>
<p>7.2 People can describe how they are encouraged to be involved in decision-making that</p>	<p>Interviewees commented on feeling uncertain in some respects as they are not yet being able to fully commit to the way forward. “I so want to move on but there seems to be some unrest amongst the more junior managers as many say they are in the same boat as</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extend soft skills development programme below SMT [L&D] ▪ Develop corporate values and commitments statements [HR] ▪ Service and financial planning involvement (above) 	<p>April 2009</p> <p>April 2009</p>	<p>People will be in a position to take ownership; their managers will feel confident, informed and involved and thus they too will be more aware.</p> <p>People will see and note the values of the Council, which will include ‘delegation’; ‘empowerment’ and ‘involvement’.</p>

<p>affects the performance of individuals, teams and the organisation at a level that is appropriate to their role.</p>	<p>us."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop the role of SMT as part of the leadership of the organisation through management conference and L&D programme 	<p>October 2008 and on-going</p>	
<p>7.3 People can describe how they are encouraged to take ownership and responsibility for decisions that affect the performance of themselves, teams and the organisation at a level that is appropriate to their role.</p>	<p>As above.</p>			<p>The Performance Management process, team meetings and easy access to CMT will encourage people to put ideas forward for change, which will improve their performance. A culture of openness, involvement and encouragement will mean they feel confident.</p>

Appendix 2

AIMING FOR EXCELLENCE IN PEOPLE MANAGEMENT (STAFF SURVEY ACTION PLAN)

This action plan outlines areas for improvement in people management as the Council moves through the next phase of organisational development. Having completed a structure and process review this plan aims to establish a new identity and culture for the organisation, facilitating staff engagement and commitment. It is informed by the **MORI survey** undertaken in January 2008 and the feedback from the **Investors in People assessment** in June 2008. The aims and actions are also integrated into the development of the Council's new Human Resource Strategy.

Action	Lead	Timescales	Response/Progress
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT			
Develop and launch an on-going campaign via Inside Cherwell to explain the roles of the management teams (CMT, EMT, SMT) and introduce individual members of CMT.	Communications	December 2008	
Include information on management team at recruitment and induction, including photos and personal messages. Involve all directors in induction process.	HR	September 2008	
Run an annual management conference, to include all members of CMT, EMT and SMT to work on, and cascade, key corporate issues.	HR	October 2008	
CMT to engage in 'back to the floor' days, initially within own directorates.	HR	October 2008	
Introduce a weekly intranet message from a member of CMT about something they have been directly involved in.	Communications	September 2008	
CMT to regularly attend departmental meetings (own directorates initially)	CMT	Immediate and on-going	
CMT to communicate clearly reasons for office location and take steps to ensure visibility.	MH	Immediate and on-going	

Develop the use of the competency framework 360 feedback to collect feedback on leadership performance.	HR	April 2009	
COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION/FEEDING BACK			
Develop a corporate framework for meetings, to include 121s, team meetings, directorate meetings and cascade.			
Add staff photos to telephone directory	(Intranet)	Pending Sharepoint	
Issue Cascade directly to SMT	Communications	Immediate	
CMT to attend occasional Cascade meetings within their directorates	CMT	Immediate	
Invite guest speakers to team meetings to promote understanding of other services	HoS	September and on-going	
WORK-LIFE BALANCE			
Tender for a new occupational health service with a broader remit for proactive health management and employee wellbeing initiatives.	HR	December 2008	Additional resource will be required to support this
Develop further flexibility in working practices	HR	October 2008	New flex policy in consultation
CUSTOMER FOCUS			
Pre-paid response cards to be handed out to customer to gain feedback on quality of service	Communications		
Develop corporate customer service standards and principles and communicate to all staff	HCSIS		

Develop routes for accessing community groups to facilitate communication and consultation	?? (this is critical for CPA)	October 2008	
Introduce service standards for all areas which clearly identify customer groups and service standards, include monitoring in performance management systems.	EMT	April 2009	
MANAGING CHANGE			
Develop guidance on managing change to include a clear and robust communication strategy at the outset of any change process. Include clear guidance/definitions of consultation, negotiation and staff involvement.	HR/Comms	September 2008	
Create a staff forum to facilitate informal discussion of key issues.	HR	September 2008	
Develop a reward and recognition strategy which ensure recognition is demonstrated at all levels	HR	September 2008	
Refine and develop the competency framework to explicitly include change management skills.	HR	April 2009	
LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT			
Focus further development on SMT and team leaders to enhance their role as a key part of the leadership team.	HR	On-going	
Develop and strengthen the leadership development programme.	HR	December 2008	
Communicate new learning and development priorities and policies	HR	September 2008	
Identify and deliver enhanced training and communication on	Business Services	October 2008	

Health and Safety			
Include learning evaluation at team level in leadership development programme.	HR	April 2009	
CORPORATE HEALTH (ENGAGEMENT IN STRATEGIC AIMS)			
Develop wider team involvement in service planning for 2009-10 including production of corporate framework and facilitation guide	Improvement Team	October 2008	
Produce departmental summary in plain English, outlining how each service area contributes to strategic objectives	Improvement Team	March 2009	
Use wider range of visual aids to communicate corporate aims and objectives (screen savers, coasters, payslips etc)	Communications	September 2008	
Use Inside Cherwell to promote examples of teams contributing to corporate targets.	Communications	December 2008 and on-going	
ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT			
Clearly outline a vision for the type of culture the organisation aspires to work within	CMT		
Develop a shared set of corporate values and commitment statements	CMT		
Continue and extend development of soft skills through the leadership programme with emphasis on recognition	HR		
Develop the role of the Internal Review Team to take the lead on cross-Council working groups to act as liaison between management team and staff.	HR	September 2009	

CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL

PERSONNEL AND GENERAL COMMITTEE
17th September 2008JOINT REPORT OF THE HEAD OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR CUSTOMER SERVICE AND
RESOURCES AND THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

COUNCIL OFFICES OPENING HOURS AND FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS

1 Introduction and Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to propose new working hours for the Council which will standardise our opening times across the district and provide greater access for customers. Linked to this change is an updated flexible working hours policy which will allow management and staff more flexibility in managing staff hours to facilitate consistent cover for customers and allow staff to better balance their work-home responsibilities.

2 Wards Affected

All.

3 Effect on Policy

- 3.1 The effect of this proposal is to change the opening hours of the Council.

4 Contact Officers

- 4.1 Pat Simpson
Julie Evans
Anne-Marie Scott

5 Background**5.1 The business context**

The council offers a range of services to its personal and telephone customers; bill payment, benefits advice and administration, pest control, planning, land search, housing advice and homeless applications and so on. These activities can be compared with the availability of similar services provided through other suppliers in the not for profit or commercial sectors, within Cherwell district.

- Bill Payment

People pay bills at a wide range of locations, and while we may wish to move as many customers as possible to automated payment systems such as Direct Debit, and make more of our bills payable via PayPoint, we currently retain the personal service option. Other providers operate the same hours each day. Examples include Halifax, HSBC and Lloyds who all follow "traditional" 9.00am – 5.00pm Monday to Friday, with a later opening one morning a week for staff training, plus Saturday mornings. Their phone operation is, of course 24/7.

The Post Office opens til 5.30 every day except when it is located in a shop that closed half day Wednesday, and also open Saturday mornings.

- Benefits

Benefits advice and administration is offered by Job Centre Plus which opens 9.00am – 5.00pm Monday to Friday, with a later opening on Wednesday mornings (10.00am) for staff training. Customers can also make a claim over the telephone between 8.00am and 6.00pm

- Housing matters

Sanctuary Housing Association – Office hours 9.00am – 5.00pm Monday to Friday.

- Police non-emergency

Thames Valley Police non-emergency number 0845 8 505 505 is available 24/7.

5.2 Commercial Service

- Pest Control Services

Commercially provided pest control services all have 24/7 phone services, with a face to face presence the exception rather than the norm.

5.3 Summary

Suppliers of services similar to those provided by the Council offer, by and large, uniform opening hours five days a week minimum. Housing and benefits customers of other agencies have 9.00am – 5.00pm access Monday to Friday, banks and building societies also follow this pattern with only the post office (in terms of a payments route) offering 5.30 (and in some instances half day Wednesday). Commercial service providers in the profession, to use as comparators with planning and land search services, while having variable hours on a Friday don't seem to close in advance of 5.00pm at all, and in the pest control industry 24 hour call out is standard.

There are no peer examples of early closing on Fridays and even where there are in the private sector, closing before five doesn't seem prevalent. There is no business reason for this organisation to operate different hours on one day of the week and doing so may be damaging in terms of reputation – appearing old-fashioned.

The recommendation is therefore to standardise hours across the district to 8.45am to 5.15pm Monday to Friday with the possibility of delaying public opening hours until 9.30am on Thursday mornings to facilitate staff training and enhanced communication. This will not be implemented until further work on feasibility and customer impact has been done with Service Heads. The revised hours will take effect from 1st October 2008.

As all employee contracts of employment include opening hours, a collective agreement is required to make this change. Employee Side have been consulted and endorse this change.

5.4 Staff Hours

In order to ensure the Council can operate consistent services throughout standard working hours it is necessary for staff to start and finish work at different times to remain within the 37 hour contracted working week. Having flexible working hours is also a significant benefit to staff and key in attracting and retaining our workforce. To enhance flexibility for services and for staff a new flexible working hours policy has been developed.

5.6 Flexible Working Hours

The proposed new flexible working hours policy is attached at appendix 1. Flexible working hours (FWH) provides a flexible system of attendance, which allows Council employees to

vary their times of arrival, departure, length and timing of lunch breaks, and to take time off if extra hours are worked.

FWH must operate within the confines of the employees work environment and cannot reduce the overall efficiency of the workplace or the service provided. The following key principles will therefore apply at all times:

- Managers must discuss with each employee their expectation and aspiration of working hours both from the individual's and the overall team's perspective;
- Employees are obliged to work hours to suit the nature of the service and the service needs will ultimately dictate the pattern of working hours;
- Recording mechanisms must be transparent and consistent and Wintime should be used by all employees to record hours and absence;
- Employees must ensure that they take adequate breaks from work and ensure they take breaks in accordance with the Working Time Regulations. Employees working more than 6 hours per day must take a minimum of 30 minutes lunch break and there must be a break of at least 11 hours between finishing work and starting work the following day;
- Full time employees must work a minimum four day week;
- Employees must be sure that working outside of standard office hours will not compromise personal safety and security and is approved by their line manager;
- The opportunity to participate in the FWH scheme is a benefit that may be withdrawn at management discretion

We know from the staff survey and from national labour market research that flexibility is a key benefit that staff look for in an employer and is listed as one of the top 3 reasons for people choosing jobs (CIPD).

Employee Side have been consulted and endorse the new policy.

6 Risk Assessment, Financial Effects and Contribution to Efficiency Savings

6.1 The following details have been approved by Rosemary Watts and Denise Westlake.

6.2 Risk Assessment

The risk associated with not approving the recommendations contained in this report is that the Council is not able to move to consistent working hours across all offices and that an opportunity to enhance our working practice, and so retain key staff, is missed.

6.3 Financial Effects

There are no direct financial effects.

6.4 Efficiency/Savings

There are no direct efficiency savings.

7 Recommendations

7.1 The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to resolve to approve

- (1) The revised opening hours and flexible working hours policy detailed at appendix 1.

Background Papers: None



Flexible Working Hours

Policy Statement

The Council's standard office hours are:

8.45am – 5.15pm Monday to Friday and every department has to provide cover during these hours

The Council's opening hours are the same as standard office hours with the exception of Thursday mornings when opening to the public may be delayed until 9.30am to allow time for staff training, communication and other activities.

Flexible working hours (FWH) provides a flexible system of attendance, which allows Council employees to vary their times of arrival, departure, length and timing of lunch breaks, and to take time off if extra hours are worked.

FWH must operate within the confines of the employees work environment and cannot reduce the overall efficiency of the workplace or the service provided. The following key principles will therefore apply at all times:

- Managers must discuss with each employee their expectation and aspiration of working hours both from the individual's and the overall team's perspective;
- Employees are obliged to work hours to suit the nature of the service and the service needs will ultimately dictate the pattern of working hours;
- Recording mechanisms must be transparent and consistent and Wintime should be used by all employees to record hours and absence;
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- Full time employees must work a minimum four day week;

- Employees must be sure that working outside of standard office hours will not compromise personal safety and security and is approved by their line manager;
- The opportunity to participate in the FWH scheme is a benefit that may be withdrawn at management discretion.

Procedure

1. Office Hours

Line managers must ensure that employees FWH are planned so as to ensure that working environments are adequately covered during the full working day i.e. 8.45 am to 5.15 pm.

2. Lunch Breaks

A minimum lunch break of 30 minutes must be taken by employees working more than 6 hours per day.

3. FWH Bandwidth

The daily working bandwidth is from 7.00 am until 10.00pm. This is the period within which the employee's working day must be contained and employees must not start work earlier or finish work later than these times without the prior authorisation of their line manager. The line manager must give adequate consideration to any security or health and safety implications that may arise before they authorise working hours. Local bandwidths may apply to specific service areas who have to account for duty officers, shift workers etc.

4. Banking FWH Credit

Employees may bank up to a maximum of their normal weekly contractual hours e.g. 37 for full time employees. FWH beyond this maximum will be lost and there are no circumstances under which they can be credited or paid for.

5. Recording and settlement Periods

The recording periods are 4 weekly. This is the point at which the 'bank' of hours must be within the agreed limits.

There is no settlement period for permanent employees i.e. a maximum of their normal weekly contractual hours may be held in the bank for the continuance of their employment.

Fixed term and temporary employees must clear their bank before their last day of employment.

Permanent employees should clear their bank before their last day of employment however, in exceptional circumstances, and by prior authorisation of the Head of Service, a payment may be payable with their final salary payment.

6. Credit Absence - Normal

There is no maximum to the credit absence that may be taken provided adequate hours have been 'banked'. An employee may go into deficit of up to 2 of their standard working days but this can be carried forward for a maximum of 2 recording periods after which any excess will be deducted from pay.

7. Credit Absence – Emergency Circumstances

An employee may take agreed credit absence at short notice for emergency circumstances by agreement with, and at the discretion of, their line manager.

8. Doctor/Dentist/Optician Appointments

No additional time is credited for these appointments.

9. Hospital Appointments

The Council recognises that attendance for hospital appointments can be time consuming and that the timing of such appointments is outside of the control of the individuals. Employees will therefore be credited reasonable time for hospital appointments on production of hospital letter or appointment card.

10. Training

The Council considers the provision of training to be a benefit to employees and will generally support such training by paying course fees and providing paid time off for attendance. Attendance at training away from your normal working environment should be recorded as 7.24 per day and 3.42 per half day.

11. Meetings

Employees who are required to attend meetings away from their normal workplace will be credited with reasonable excess time for travel etc. less normal travel to work time.

12. Abuse of Flexible Working Hours

The system of FWH is based on trust between the council and its employees and is operated as a benefit that may be withdrawn at management

discretion. In cases where there is proven abuse or non compliance with the FWH scheme, disciplinary action may be taken. Such cases must be reported to Human Resources prior to action being taken.

13. Responsibilities of Line Managers

It is the responsibility of all line managers to manage the day to day operation of the FWH scheme and to ensure that credit and deficit balances are within the agreed limits at the end of each period.

Line managers are also responsible for ensuring that the work environment is adequately staffed during office hours.

14. Queries Relating to Flexible Working Hours

Employees are reminded that FWH is a benefit and that they are obliged to work hours to suit the nature of the service. Where there are queries or issues relating to FWH, employees and their line managers should work together to achieve resolution. In the event that resolution cannot be achieved at this level the Staff Complaints Policy should be followed.

15. Time Recording

It is a requirement of FWH that all time is recorded on Wintime. Where this is impossible due to the complexities of the working time required, a local variation on this policy will be agreed.

CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL

PERSONNEL AND GENERAL COMMITTEE
17th September 2008REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES
STAFF COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE**1 Introduction and Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report seeks approval for a revised staff complaints policy. This policy will replace the current grievance and harassment and bullying procedures.

2 Wards Affected

None

3 Effect on Policy

- 3.1 None

4 Contact Officers

- 4.1 Anne-Marie Scott, Head of Human Resources, extn 1731

5 Background

- 5.1 The current policies for dealing with staff grievances and allegations of bullying and harassment were developed many years ago and no longer fully reflect employment legislation, the structure of the Council or good practice.

- 5.2 In order to provide a simple vehicle for staff to raise any issues the policies have been combined into a new staff complaints policy.

- 5.3 The main focus of the policy has also been changed to encourage and facilitate early and informal resolution of issues.

- 5.4 Employee Side have been consulted, as has the staff consultation group, and they endorse the new policy.

6 Risk Assessment, Financial Effects and Contribution to Efficiency Savings

- 6.1 The following details have been approved by Denise Westlake and Rosemary Watts

6.2 Risk Assessment

The risk associated with not approving the recommendations contained in this report is that the Council's policies do not reflect legislation and good practice and that complaints and issues are not dealt with quickly and positively.

6.3 Financial Effects

There are no financial effects arising from this report.

6.4 **Efficiency/Savings**

There are no efficiency savings arising from this report.

7 **Recommendations**

7.1 The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to resolve to approve

- (1) The new staff complaints policy and procedure attached at appendix 1.



Staff Complaints Policy and Procedure

Policy Statement

It is the policy of Cherwell District Council that everyone should be treated fairly and without discrimination regardless of gender, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status (e.g. age, disability or sexuality).

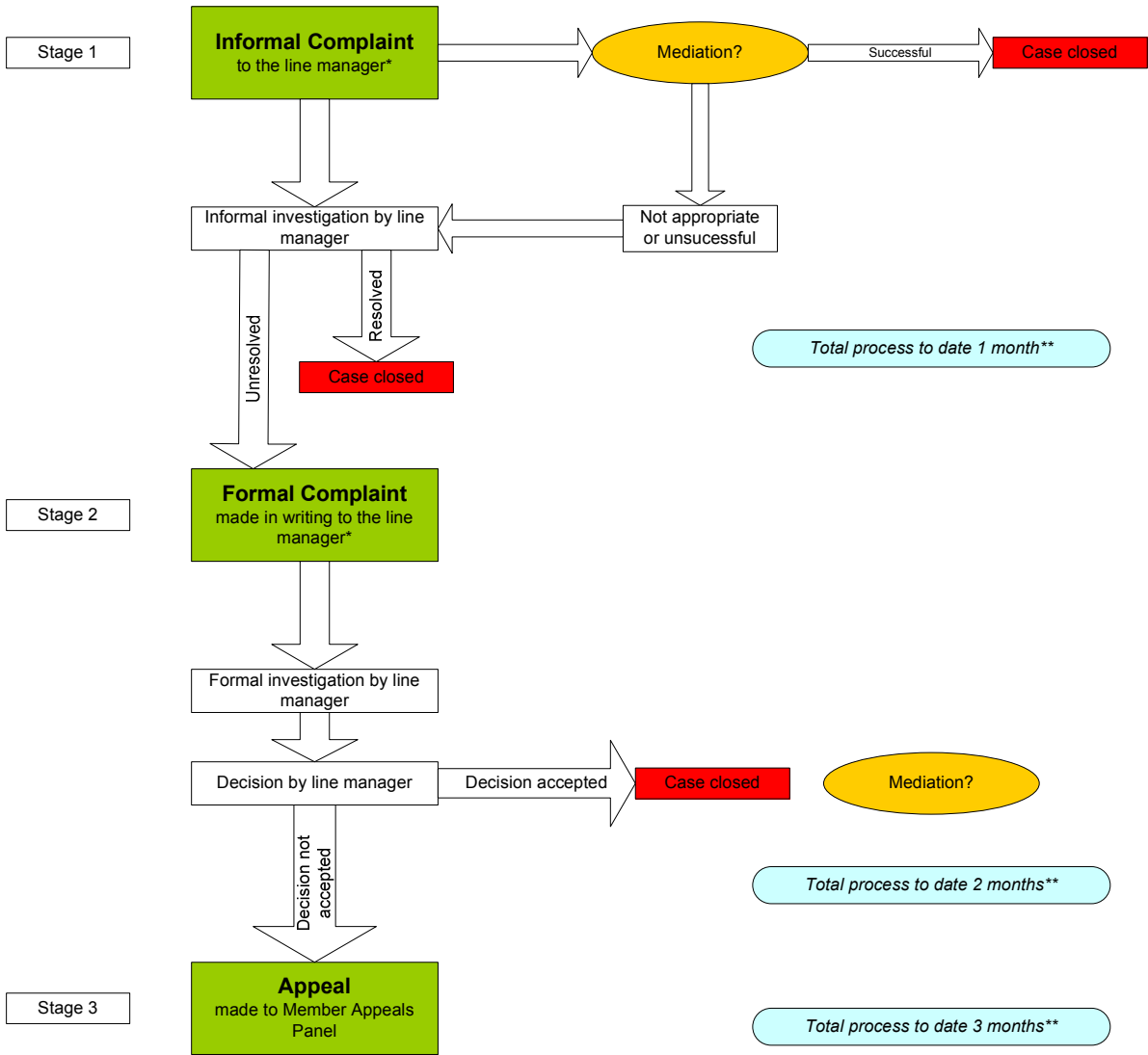
We will not tolerate processes, attitudes or behaviour that amount to any form of discrimination, including harassment, victimisation and bullying through prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, stereotyping or any other reason. This commitment will be demonstrated from the most senior to the most junior positions within the Council.

The purpose of the Complaints Procedure is to promote a working environment where all staff are treated with dignity and respect and where complaints, whatever their nature, are taken seriously and dealt with promptly, effectively and sensitively.

In practice this means:

- there will be clear and effective ways of raising any complaint, in confidence and without fear of recrimination;
- wherever appropriate, necessary steps will be taken to ensure the individual safety of the complainant;
- complaints can be informally/formally investigated and/or mediation used to resolve problems wherever appropriate;
- staff making a complaint can choose to be represented/accompanied at any part of the process;
- staff will be informed of any complaints made against them. They can be represented/accompanied and respond at any time during the investigation;
- all complaints will be monitored;
- there is a right to appeal.

Staff Complaints - Stages 1 - 3



* unless complaint about line manager in which case refer to Service Head or Director (who may delegate to another manager)

** these are maximum time scales, every effort should be made to deal with complaints as quickly as possible

NOTE: if anyone is uncomfortable raising their complaint through the line management chain it can be made directly to Human Resources.

Introduction

This Staff Complaints Procedure **applies to all Council staff** and replaces the existing Grievance Procedure and the existing Harassment and Bullying Procedure. All staff complaints will be managed in accordance with the new procedure set out here.

1. The Manager's role and responsibilities

Managers will:

- implement this complaints procedure;
- ensure the Council's equalities policies are actively supported;
- attend appropriate training in the handling of staff complaints;
- be aware of the law and understand what constitutes discrimination (including harassment, victimisation and bullying);
- set and monitor standards of behaviour in the workplace;
- provide advice and support to any member of staff making a complaint;
- aim to deal with complaints at an early stage and, wherever possible, informally;
- ensure they are fair and equitable in their dealings with staff.

Working arrangements will include:

- all informal/formal complaints will go to the line manager unless the complaint is against the line manager. In this case, it will go to the Service Head or Strategic Director who may delegate dealing with the complaint to another senior manager;
- all informal/formal complaints will normally be dealt with within one month. It is important that those individuals involved in this process have their expectations managed. This can be achieved by drawing up an outline time frame, which can be the subject of change if circumstances dictate, but that does in the first instance enable members of staff to participate in the process whilst understanding how long it may take. Where the original timescales are likely to be exceeded the investigating manager must notify Human Resources with a rationale for the extension. An explanation must also be given to the complainant for the delay and told when a response can be expected;
- the manager may refer the complaint to mediation before, during or after investigation;
- on behalf of the individual, the manager can seek external counselling or other support from Occupational Health via Human Resources;
- steps will be taken to ensure the immediate safety of the complainant and their future safety, where this is necessary;
- appropriate action is taken against the offender(s) if the complaint is upheld;
- action will be taken against the complainant if the complaint is found to be malicious;
- action taken for formal complaints will be tracked and monitored at both service and corporate level.

2. The role of Human Resources

Human Resources has responsibility for advising managers on all aspects of the operation of this policy and for helping to maintain consistency in its application. Therefore, a HR Manager should be consulted when dealing with any staff complaint.

Human Resources will provide links to Mediation and other Occupational Health services where appropriate.

Human Resources will monitor the outcome of all complaints made under this procedure. Remedial action will be taken wherever necessary as part of the Council's commitment to tackle and eradicate inequitable treatment in the workplace.

3. Training

The Council recognises that it employs a diverse workforce with many staff likely to have very different expectations of the kinds of behaviours that are acceptable at work. The Council accepts that it has a responsibility to provide training for those staff in a supervisory position in how to recognise, prevent and deal with complaints. This training is to be mandatory for all employees who have supervisory or line management responsibility. Service Heads will identify this need through Personal Development Plans and it will be available through the regular corporate programme. All new staff will be made aware of the Complaints Procedure through induction.

4. Confidentiality

Strict confidentiality must be maintained when dealing with complaints. **All those involved in the complaint** including managers, the complainant, colleagues, witnesses and representatives must maintain strict confidentiality **at all times** in order to ensure the integrity of the investigation process.

Records should be kept detailing the nature of the complaint raised, the response, any action taken, and the reasons for it. These records should be kept confidential and retained in accordance with the Data Protection Act, which requires the release of certain information to individuals on their request. Copies of any meeting records should be given to the individual concerned, although in certain circumstances, some information may be withheld (for example to protect a witness).

5. Types Of Complaint

There are many forms of grievance that staff may have. They can range from complaints by staff about work related issues, to complaints concerning the Council's fellow workers' or a clients' actions that affect them. They can also cover terms and conditions of employment; health and safety; relationships at work; new working practices; organisational change and equal opportunities. Whilst not exhaustive, the following list identifies the main complaints that can be brought under this procedure.

Types of complaint may include:

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Direct disability discrimination
- Victimisation: race, sex and disability (age, religion and belief and sexual orientation?)
- Terms and conditions of employment
- Unfair application of Council policy
- Health & Safety complaints

- Violence complaints
- Complaints about racial abuse
- Harassment & bullying

To provide an exhaustive list is not possible. Staff should use their judgement when applying Council standards and policies, but should also be guided by the principle that the determining issue is how the member of staff is affected, not the intention.

This procedure covers all types of complaints **except** those relating to grading, pensions or disciplinary issues for which separate procedures exist.

If the manager investigating the case reaches the conclusion that formal disciplinary procedures should be implemented, a formal disciplinary hearing will be scheduled. The investigation will form the basis of the management case and the disciplinary procedure will be invoked at the stage of convening a hearing. The panel hearing the disciplinary cannot include the manager who investigated the original complaint but they can present the management case where appropriate.

Staff Complaints Procedure

Stage One

1. Informal route

- most routine issues are best resolved informally in discussion with the immediate line manager, where both parties may find it helpful to keep a note. Most routine complaints can usually be resolved at this level.
- informal procedures concentrate on conciliation, not sanctions. For example, asking someone to stop doing something or to apologise. Managers must take any issue raised with them seriously.
- it should take no more than approximately a month to deal with an informal complaint. If the complainant is not satisfied with the handling of the complaint or timeliness, then they should consider making a formal complaint.
- in most instances, there is an expectation that staff will attempt to resolve their complaints informally, before making a formal complaint. When staff make a formal complaint and complete the complaint form (Appendix 1), they are asked what date they made their informal complaint.

2. Mediation

- if both parties are willing and the matter is appropriate for mediation, the mediation process will be considered.
- mediation can be used at most stages (if it is felt appropriate), apart from during a formal investigation. If it is deemed appropriate the manager or Human Resources can approach the parties concerned to determine if they are agreeable to mediation and explain what it involves. If the parties are agreeable Human Resources will arrange mediation.
- the aim of mediation will be for both parties to reach a mutually acceptable outcome, and to feel able to maintain their working relationship. If this is not possible, then the complaint can still be dealt with under the formal complaint procedure as described below.
- if the manager is referring staff to mediation it may be sometimes necessary to undertake a preliminary informal investigation to determine whether mediation is appropriate. For example, if the complaint were of a serious nature and would most likely lead to formal disciplinary action for serious misconduct, mediation would not be appropriate. The manager can ask the complainant what outcome they are seeking from their complaint.
- if mediation is not deemed to be appropriate or is not acceptable to all parties, the manager can still informally/formally investigate the complaint. Similarly, if having commenced mediation it becomes apparent to the mediator that it is not appropriate, the issue will be referred back to the manager (via Human Resources) to investigate.
- mediation can be used not only to resolve complaints, but also as a key tool to building better working relationships and assisting in improving a difficult situation.
- mediation can help resolve issues which:

- the parties have the power to settle;
 - the parties are prepared to work out;
 - the parties have equal power to negotiate and resolve;
 - do not require any expert knowledge.
- some examples of mediatable disputes are those about:
 - behaviour, management/work styles;
 - working arrangements;
 - environmental conditions.

Stage Two

1. Complaint in Writing

- this complaints process commences formally when the matter is raised in writing which must be done within three months of the event or issue occurring. The complainant should complete a staff complaint form, (which can be found at Appendix 1).
- the complainant's line manager will deal with all complaints, unless the complaint is against the line manager personally, in which event it will start with the Service Head or Director who will be responsible for ensuring that the complaint is dealt with. The staff member making the complaint should send the complaints form (Appendix 1) to this person. The Service Head or Director may delegate the matter to a senior manager not involved in the complaint. Similarly if the complaint is against the Director personally, the process will start with the Service Head, Human Resources.
- the complainant should also send their complaints form to their HR Manager for monitoring purposes.
- Service Heads and Directors will need to ensure that any investigation is objective and seen to be objective. For example, that the investigating manager is not closely associated with the complainant or any person complained about.
- a manager from another service area or even from outside the Council can be used where it is agreed that this is appropriate and necessary. This might be appropriate where, for example, particular expertise is required such as technical skills or the ruling out of criminal possibilities.

2. Representation

- if the complainant is invited to a hearing/meeting to discuss the complaint, they will be advised of their right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or a work colleague. The complainant can be represented at any part of the process.
- if the complaint is against another member of staff and if the complaint were substantiated (i.e. could result in formal disciplinary action being taken), then that member of staff (alleged perpetrator) should also be advised of their right to be represented at any hearing to discuss the complaint.
- the representative must be permitted to address the hearing, and to confer with the person they are representing during the hearing in order to clarify issues, however, the representative is not entitled to answer questions on behalf of that person.

- the hearing must be postponed if the representative is not available, but they must propose a reasonable alternative date and time before the end of five working days from the postponed hearing date. However, a postponed hearing may proceed if the representative is not available within 2 working weeks of the original postponed hearing date.
- it is not appropriate for someone to insist on a representative whose presence would prejudice the hearing or who might have a conflict of interest.

3. Timing

- a key and essential feature of the Staff Complaints Procedure is dealing with complaints promptly.
- the actual timescale may often depend on the nature of the complaint and the circumstances. However, there are some key stages of the process where a deadline can normally be adopted.
- dependent upon the nature of the complaint, it may be appropriate to deal with it immediately. It may be necessary, for example, to take immediate steps to ensure the safety of the complainant. Such action could include reorganising or relocating work to avoid close or regular contact. In serious cases, pending a short urgent investigation, the member of staff complained about may have to under-go a precautionary suspension.
- Any suspension will be on full pay for a period of not normally more than ten working days. If the investigation is not completed within this timeframe, the suspension period may be extended, subject to a review after each ten day period, with the aim of keeping the period of suspension as short as is reasonably practical.
- following receipt of the complaint form (Appendix 1), the manager should contact the complainant normally within 5 working days. This will be to discuss the complaint and the arrangements for investigation or mediation where appropriate, However, there will be circumstances where this is not possible.
- where it is not possible to respond within specified time periods the complainant should be given an explanation for the delay and told when a response can be expected.

4. Investigation

- **Natural Justice**
 - **in conducting** the investigation and reaching a decision the investigator must follow the rules of natural justice i.e. the employee must:
 - know the complaints against him/her;
 - have the opportunity to state his/her side of the case before any decision is made;
 - have the opportunity to be represented; and
 - must be dealt with fairly, reasonably and impartially at all times.
- the purpose of the investigation is to obtain, collect and analyse all the evidence and information about a situation. This may be something that has happened, an individual incident, a series of incidents etc. Decisions are made on the basis of the accumulated information and evidence, and these decisions determine how the issues are handled. The investigation must gather all the facts which are relevant to the matters under consideration. Decisions are taken on the balance of probabilities.

- those conducting the investigation will be guided by the principles for investigations contained in the Council's Disciplinary Procedure and Policy.
- if an investigation is required, this must begin as soon as possible. Managers may need to justify the time taken in dealing with a complaint, therefore, a record should be kept of the reasons for any delays etc.
- less complex complaints should be dealt with normally within days or weeks - certainly a maximum time of 20 working days.
- if any less complex complaint is not finalised within four working weeks, the manager needs to notify their Service Head/Director and Human Resources:
 - the complaint has extended beyond four weeks; the reasons why;
 - the expected time-frame for completion; and
 - what the complainant has been advised.
- complex cases will depend on the circumstances, but must begin without delay. Two months should normally be the maximum time taken to conclude a complex matter.
- for any form of complaint, the complainant should be kept advised of progress on a weekly basis and given an explanation for any delay, they should also be told when a response can be expected.
- where a staff member raises a complaint about the behaviour of a manager (in the course of a disciplinary case), consideration should be given to suspending the disciplinary procedure for a short period, until the complaint can be considered separately. And/or bringing in another manager to deal with the disciplinary case.
- in situations where action has not been taken within the time-scales and without a satisfactory explanation, the complainant should raise this with Human Resources.
- where the complaint involves equality issues or any other serious allegations, the complaints procedure will be followed to completion, even if the complainant resigns or leaves the service .

5. Making a decision

- investigation and decision making must be thorough and objective. The decision, and what action is to be taken, must be based on evidence collected and not hunches, suspicions or any prejudgement. The decision must be arrived at on the balance of probabilities.
- the complainant (and any other party(s) involved), should normally be advised of the decision within 5 working days of the decision being made.
- if the manager investigating the case reaches the conclusion that formal disciplinary procedures should be implemented, a formal disciplinary hearing will be scheduled. Its purpose will be to determine whether specific charges are substantiated; the severity of the incident(s), and if formal sanctions are required. The investigation will form the basis of the management case and the disciplinary procedure will be invoked at the stage of convening a hearing. The panel hearing the disciplinary cannot include the manager who investigated the original complaint.

6. After the Investigation is complete

- the complainant (and any other party(s) involved) should be seen by the manager (wherever practicable) and informed of the outcome of the investigation and the appeals procedure. This should be confirmed in writing.
- at the end of the investigation, the manager will draft a report normally within 10 working days, outlining the process followed, the decision reached and the reasons for the conclusions.

the report will be made available to:

- the complainant
- any alleged offender
- this investigative report will be the basis of the case file. It may also be used as a management statement of case for any formal disciplinary hearing or used at any appeal hearing under this complaints procedure.
- if there is no case to answer, all records of the matter will be disregarded entirely.
- if the Council's disciplinary procedure is invoked and the allegation is upheld, then action will be taken up to and including summary dismissal.
- if an allegation cannot be substantiated following a formal investigation, and there is a reasonable belief that the complainant acted maliciously, disciplinary action may be taken against him or her. The complainant should be reminded before the investigation begins that making a malicious allegation constitutes a disciplinary offence. However, this would be only if there were firm grounds to believe that the claim was vexatious, not only on the basis that a complaint or appeal was not upheld.
- in cases where the parties are to remain in the service of the Council, and are from the same work area, it may be necessary for them to be separated. Wherever possible, it will be the offender who is moved if a complaint has been upheld against him/her. Even if the complaint is not upheld, the complainant and the alleged offender may still be separated, where practical, in the interests of good relations.
- Resistance to the complaint, either by confrontation by the alleged offender or by complaint to management, can sometimes result in further victimisation of the complainant. This may include hostility, criticism of work performance, transfer, loss of promotion or job. The Council views such victimisation as wholly unacceptable and, if founded, such allegations could lead to summary dismissal of the victimising party through the disciplinary policy.

Stage Three

Appeal

- the complainant can appeal against the manager's decision following the investigation. This appeal must be made to the Head of Human Resources in writing **on the form found at appendix 2** within 5 working days of receiving the decision in writing (this time may be extended if there are extenuating circumstances which prevent the appeal being logged in time).
- the manager will then be asked to make a statement in response within 5 working days.

Appendix 1

- this appeal will be heard by the Appeals Panel who will convene a hearing to examine the findings of the investigation **once all statements have been received**. Each party will be expected to attend the appeal to answer any questions.
- a panel date may be postponed if representation is not available but must be reconvened within 1 working week of the original date. If either party fails to attend without prior notice the appeal will be decided in their absence.
- the Appeals Panel should give a decision within 5 working days. This decision is final.

Staff Complaints Form

Your Name	
Your Job Title	
Your Service Area and Line Manager	

Details of your complaint (Please continue on separate sheet if required)

When did you speak informally to your line manager about your complaint?	
Why are you dissatisfied with the response?	
What do you think should be done to put things right?	

Name of trade union/other representative (if appropriate)	
---	--

Signature	
Date	

Please send or give this form to your line manager, Service Head or Strategic Director and send a copy to Human Resources.

Appeal Statement

This statement should be completed only if you have reached the end of Stage 2 of the Complaints procedure and wish to appeal against the decision. You should attach copies of all supporting documentation to this form.

Your Name	
Your Job Title	
Your Service Area and Line Manager	

Details of your appeal (Please continue on separate sheet if required)

Why are you dissatisfied with the response?

What do you think should be done to put things right?

Name of trade union/other representative (if appropriate)	
Signature	
Date	

Please send this form to the Head of Human Resources **within 5 working days** of receiving your complaint decision in writing.

PERSONNEL AND GENERAL COMMITTEE
17TH SEPTEMBER 2008

REPORT OF STRATEGIC DIRECTOR, CUSTOMER SERVICE AND RESOURCES

SERVICE HEAD RECRUITMENT: FINANCE

1 Introduction and Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report seeks approval for changes to the job description for the Head of Finance and the addition of a separate allowance for the S151 Officer role.

2 Wards Affected

- 2.1 None.

3 Effect on Policy

- 3.1 None.

4 Contact Officers

- 4.1 Julie Evans, Strategic Director, Customer Service and Resources
Anne-Marie Scott, Head of Human Resources

5 Background

- 5.1 Our recent restructure of the finance function established a small focussed finance team with various functions grouped under 2 distinctive areas:

A Corporate Finance Function, line managed by the Head of Finance (Statutory 151 Officer). The focus of this function is on statutory and technical accounting functions such as the production of the annual accounts and incorporates the recently approved technical accountant function and operational areas such as debtors and creditors. This area has a contemporary public sector focus and requires expertise in statutory and technical financial practices

A business finance function, line managed by the Chief Accountant who in turn reports to the Head of Finance. This function operates a very commercial focus and incorporates our service accountants providing a contemporary management accountancy function focusing on operational areas of the business.

- 5.2 This is the second time in recent months we will have sought to recruit to our statutory 151 officer post, and the technical skills and public sector background needed; we are taking this opportunity to revisit the allocation of functions between the 2 areas in order to secure the right mix of skills within the team as a whole.
- 5.3 We have recently added the Procurement function to the Business Finance team on an interim basis and propose this transfer is agreed on a permanent basis. In addition, given the commercial focus of the team and the council's dependency on investment income, following consultation with the team as a whole we feel this area belongs within this team.

- 5.4 On the Corporate side we want to increase our expertise and corporate competence in some key statutory areas such as cash-flow management, VAT, Tax and Pension issues.

We propose to transfer the payroll function into this team, which lends itself well to the financial transactions element already within the team. In addition the system administration function for Agresso will rest within this team.

The addition of the Pensions, VAT and Payroll functions to this team will ensure the portfolio of services attracts candidates to the Head of Finance post of the calibre and technical background required.

- 5.6 There is a shortage of competent and experienced finance professionals within the sector and it is critical that the right appointment is made to the vacant Head of Finance post to protect both service delivery and the reputation of the Council. The following specific measures are therefore proposed:
- Re-focus the job description and supporting information to emphasis compliance and statutory responsibilities;
 - Increase the salary by adding a separate allowance for the S151 responsibility. This would be in line with the allowance paid for the role of Monitoring Officer and make the salary more competitive;
 - Appoint an external recruitment agency to search and assess candidates for this post with a specific brief to include a technical interview.

- 5.7 Indicative timescales

- September 2008 – appoint agency
- October-November – search and assess candidates
- December (early) – final interviews with P&G committee

This should allow for a start date ahead of the new financial year.

6 Risk Assessment, Financial Effects and Contribution to Efficiency Savings

- 6.1 The following details have been approved by Julie Evans

6.2 Risk Assessment

The risk associated with not approving the recommendations contained in this report is that the Council is not able to secure a new permanent Head of Finance and S151 Officer.

6.3 Financial Effects

There will be an additional salary cost of £5150, representing a separate 151 officer allowance in addition to the approved salary.


6.4 Efficiency/Savings

There are no financial savings arising directly from the recommendations in this report although the integration of the payroll function will provide operational efficiency opportunities post transfer. The timing of the implementation of these efficiencies will be agreed with the Head of Human Resources in order to ensure minimum impact and disruption to staff by utilising vacant posts as savings opportunities.

7 Recommendations

- 7.1 The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to resolve to approve

(1) The revised job description, grade and proposed recruitment process for this post.

	JOB DESCRIPTION	
	Post title:	Head of Finance
	Post No:	F10001

Department:	Finance		
Responsible to:	Strategic Director - Customer Service & Resources	Post No:	SD0003
Responsible for:	All staff in the Finance Team		

Key Objectives:	
1	As a member of Cherwell's Extended Management Team, contribute to the development and delivery of the Council's strategic priorities and objectives.
2	To act as the principal financial advisor to the Council.
3	To be the Statutory Officer under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, and to report directly to the Chief Executive on 151 matters.
4	To ensure that the objectives of the Finance Team are appropriately aligned with Council priorities and objectives, and that these are delivered.
5	To work with the Head of Improvement to ensure that the parts of the agreed Improvement Agenda relevant to Finance are resourced and delivered.

Responsibilities:	
As a member of the Extended Management Team, working closely with the Corporate Management Team:	
1	To communicate the strategic direction of the Council in light of priorities set by Elected Members.
2	To lead the delivery of the Council's 3-5 year Strategic Priorities – 'A District of Opportunity', 'A Safe, Healthy District', 'A Cleaner, Greener District', 'An Accessible, Value for Money Council' via the effective day-to-day leadership and management of the Finance Service.
3	To ensure that goals for corporate and service performance, improvement and innovation are met via the delivery of service goals.
4	To ensure we provide value for money to Cherwell residents across the Finance Service.
5	To ensure that the Finance Team works across internal boundaries effectively and as required for corporate goals to be met.
6	To support the Corporate Management Team in their development of corporate priorities, targets, frameworks and systems and communications.
As Head of Finance:	
7	To work closely with the Executive Member responsible for Finance to ensure that he/she is involved appropriately in decision making and in the development of recommendations to the Executive and Council.

APPENDIX 1

8	To ensure that Members from all parties are engaged with financial issues at appropriate times in their tenure and during the annual business cycle – e.g. at induction, during budget development and other occasions.
9	To provide operational leadership and advice on statutory and technical public finance functions including compliance with ongoing regulatory requirements in particular the SORP and relevant FRS requirements.
10	To provide operational leadership and advice on all areas of the Council's corporate finance function including the preparation of annual accounts, cash-flow management, tax, VAT, Pensions and the related transactional functions including debtors, creditors and payroll.
11	To undertake the duties and responsibilities allocated to the posts of Head of Finance and Section 151 officer in the Council's Constitution.
12	With the Strategic Director, Customer Service and Resources, to prepare and review the Council's 5-Year Financial Strategy to underpin the Corporate Plan, in consultation with the Extended Management Team, the Corporate Management Team and Members.
13	With the Strategic Director, Customer Service and Resources, to prepare and monitor annual revenue and capital budgets for activity across the Council, in consultation with the Extended Management Team, the Corporate Management Team and Members.
14	To work closely and constructively with the Council's appointed Relationship Manager, Auditor and other Audit Commission staff.
13	To prepare an Annual Service Plan for Finance, reflecting Members' Corporate priorities and targets; to ensure that this Service Plan demonstrates that the service does deliver value for money or, if not, the actions in place to do so.
14	To maintain a high quality, customer-focused and accessible focus with good and improving satisfaction ratings.
15	With the Strategic Director, Customer Service and Resources, to prepare and monitor annual revenue and capital budgets for the Finance Service.
16	To deliver in full the Service Head responsibilities for the effective management of the Council's risks and opportunities
17	To lead, develop and motivate the Finance Team to deliver performance.
18	To monitor the performance of the Finance Team and to flag issues and potential solutions in a timely fashion.
19	To operate within objectives of Investors in People, to include the preparation and maintenance of Personal Development plans for all staff, the annual updating of Job Descriptions and the monitoring and completion of Training and Development records.
20	To ensure that key corporate messages are quickly and fully communicated to Finance staff and reactions and views of staff are communicated up to the Corporate Management Team.
21	To deputise for the Strategic Director, Customer Service and Resources when requested.

- Approx number of people managed: 18
- Approx annual expenditure/revenue responsibility: **Gross** £2.47m **Net** £1.1m
- Service Areas Covered:

Service Head	Functions	District/Council strategies with Chief Executive	Community Plan Theme with Chief Executive
Finance	Statutory CFO role; financial advice; all accountancy functions,	Accessible, Value for Money Council	

APPENDIX 1

	including budget preparation, budget monitoring and preparation of final accounts; treasury management; debtors; creditors; bank reconciliation; administration of the financial information system.		
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