

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

FRIDAY 22 MARCH 2002 AT 2.00 P.M.

PERSONNEL AND EMPLOYMENT BEST VALUE REVIEW

Report of the Corporate Director (People and Property)

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Report author: Alan Warner "

Executive Member: David Beatty

1. Purpose of report

To present the recommendations and implementation plan arising from the Best Value Review of Personnel and Employment.

2. Summary

There are 3 sets of recommendations concerning:

- 1) Learning and Development standards
- 2) Policies, procedures and advice
- 3) Process improvement

There is continuing work to develop recommendations on Training Administration.

These recommendations emerge from the following processes:

- Information collection and analysis, consultation, comparison and challenge
- Hypothesis development, based on the review teams findings on current performance of the service
- Hypothesis Testing

The hypotheses and resulting recommendations are explained in the relevant sections of this report.

Conclusion

Cabinet is invited to consider the recommendations of the Review.

Background

The Member Review Group did not look at recruitment and retention, which is the subject of a detailed review by a Recruitment and Retention Panel, nor the Human Resources Information System which following a recent review will be replaced.

The Recruitment and Retention Action Plan agreed at the meeting of the Recruitment and Retention Panel is attached as Appendix 4. This will now be incorporated into the Best Value Review of People and Employment Improvement Plan and monitored both through the Best Value process and by the Panel

3. Scope and process

The objective of the review has been to ensure best value from the activities and processes required to employ staff and to support changes in the way staff are organised and developed.

The detailed terms of reference are attached as Appendix 1.

4. Position Statement

The overall assessment of what is provided is that it is a good service.

The evidence for this assessment is as follows;

- We have a clear people strategy.
- We have well developed and comprehensive policies.
- Over the years there have been a number of externally granted awards recognising good work e.g. the regional Health and Safety award announced at County Council on 14th February
- There is widespread possession and application of the national Investors in People standards.
- Employee and industrial relations are good, assessed on the basis of consultation with Trade Unions and on the fact that there have been no disputes or days lost through industrial action in recent years.
- We have lower than average absence statistics.
- We are one of two County Councils to reach level 3 of the CRE Standards.

Notwithstanding the above, consultation with managers, staff and trade unions and the contributions from our external challenger have highlighted areas to be improved. The recommendations attempt to build on our strengths and tackle our weaknesses.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Minimum Standards for Learning and Development

5.1.1 The Issue

- During staff consultations concerns were raised about inconsistencies in learning and development policies, procedures and access to opportunities both within and across departments.
- Members underlined the importance of learning and development and their experience of inconsistencies in levels of application.
- Line managers expressed concerns about the need for greater support in their staff development role – simpler procedures, clearer and more accessible guidance, better information.
- HR colleagues also focussed on the lack of emphasis on and the absence of sanction if line managers do not fulfil their staff development role.
- Data collected by benchmarking organisation Saratoga, points to a concern amongst senior managers that learning and development activities are not sufficiently effective in meeting needs.
- The link between Learning and Development and the Recruitment and Retention difficulties that the County Council is facing have been recognised by the Cabinet Panel and a number of activities incorporated into the Action Plan (Appendix 4).
- Exit survey data shows that 30% of leavers are currently identifying career development issues as their main reason for leaving.

5.1.2 Hypothesis One

If we re-focus the learning and development function to establish a core framework for planning and monitoring people development, based on minimum standards, we will ensure consistent standards of people development and improved retention of staff.

5.1.3 Testing the Hypothesis

A team of senior managers and learning and development professionals were brought together to test the hypothesis.

The recommendations set out:

- Minimum standards
- Implementation and promotion of minimum standards
- Monitoring arrangements

5.1.4 Recommendation

The Council should establish minimum standards for people development supported by a clear implementation plan and consistent monitoring procedures.

The Development Charter, issued initially in 1997, is the current statement of standards for developing people. Whilst this document is considered to be very positive it requires updating. In its present form it can lead to unrealistic expectations because it does not focus on the key issues or emphasise the need to deliver learning and development to support the aims of the organisation. Draft amendments are given in Appendix 2.

The Development Charter needs to be supported by:

- improved induction processes into the job, the service and the whole organisation
- easy to use performance management processes
- simplified policies and procedures such as secondment schemes, sabbaticals, mentoring
- guidance and easy access to information about development opportunities and different methodologies
- development for line managers in their role as developers – in particular managing performance and coaching skills
- improved support from learning and development staff
- a communication strategy

There also needs to be a consistent framework for planning people development to ensure that learning and development is pro-active and appropriately resourced and that it addresses:

- key strategic issues for the whole organisation
- issues emerging from the service planning and unit planning processes
- individual needs emerging from the performance management process
- career development and succession planning
- organisational development issues and team development need.

These strategic plans for learning and development should be in a broadly consistent format based on an agreed template and timed to fit in with the budget cycle. Service and corporate learning and development staff should then work together to produce programmes to meet needs.

The Learning and Development community needs to work together more effectively to plan and deliver provision. The capability and capacity of resources available to deliver the recommendations will require review to ensure that:

- the roles are appropriately defined
- we have the right people in the right jobs
- the level of resource is appropriate

to ensure that there is proper monitoring, Members and SMB will agree the corporate priorities for Learning and Development and receive an annual report on implementation. The Human Resource Board (with board level representation) will be the group that determines, addresses and monitors any key strategic issues relating to Learning and Development and reports into SMB. The importance of the manager's role in developing staff will be reflected in individual performance agreements and managed through that process. IIP will continue to provide external monitoring of learning and development and will continue to be supported.

This will require:

- improved and consistent record keeping
- Personal Development Plans to be collated and reviewed at a departmental level
- improved personal records systems via the new human resources system
- more rigorous evaluation of learning and development to demonstrate added value
- continued use of exit interviews to identify the percentage of staff leaving for reasons related to career development
- the use of attitude surveys to reflect changing views about learning and development provision

5.2 Training Administration

5.2.1 The Issue

It emerged from an initial review of training venues used and the procurement arrangements for trainers that there may be potential for improvements and economies. This would include better utilisation of County Council premises, reducing the amount of time staff take to organise venues for events and rationalising the way we go about purchasing suppliers in the market place.

Further detailed work is required before a firm recommendation can be made.

5.2.2 Hypothesis 2

‘If we streamline policies and procedures for the procurement of learning and development, to deliver a single venue / course booking service, and use approved training providers for generic training we will reduce costs and increase efficiency and effectiveness.’

5.2.3 Testing the Hypothesis

A team of staff has been analysing data in order to establish sufficient information to prepare a business case.

To evaluate the feasibility of this hypothesis we require detailed information on volume and spend on venues. It has been a time consuming exercise and is not yet complete. We have not therefore been able to make any firm recommendations.

However some initial conclusions have been drawn from the data we already have. HCC venues such as New Barnfield, Offley Place and Wheathampstead are currently under-utilised. There are more than 70 external venues being used by HCC.

It may be possible to set up a single booking operation. This would:

- Help us achieve full utilisation of HCC venues

- Establish an approved list of external providers with whom we would look to negotiate discounts
- Reduce administration
- Create a speedier booking service using quality assured venues

The final business case will test the feasibility of including delegate administration and ascertain the actual spend on venue booking. This will also take into account the needs of the Schools Inspection and Advisory Service that have been raised in the Services to Schools best value review. We will report back once this work has been completed.

The hypothesis was also looking at the possibility of organising and procuring Generic Trainers in the same manner. As with the venue bookings the potential benefits of this would be quality controlled providers, the possibility of gaining preferential discounts and reduced administration. However until we can establish actual definitions of the usage and costs of generic trainers there can be no firm recommendations. Work on this area is still progressing.

5.3 Procedures and Advice

5.3.1 The Issue

Service managers and personnel staff told us we sometimes provide inconsistent information and advice which is often not in a user friendly format. The review therefore recommended we examine how to better support managers and that we review the arrangements for communicating policies and providing advice and information.

5.3.2 Hypothesis 3

'If we simplify policies and procedures and improve the way we deliver advice:

- *By making maximum use of technologies and*
- *Developing minimum standards for organisation wide advice and support, which allow departmental flexibility and managerial judgement wherever appropriate*

...we will ensure greater clarity and consistency for both personnel officers and line managers.'

5.3.3 Testing the Hypothesis

There were two main parts to this hypothesis:

- To simplify policy guidance and advice to clearly set out both what is required of a manager and in which areas s/he can exercise judgement
- To see if we can make better use of available technologies to deliver guidance and advice directly (and clearly and consistently) to managers and staff as well as to personnel officers

The first part of the testing involved a group of HR professionals assessing the level of usage of existing personnel policies and procedures and the risk to the County Council if those policies did not operate as they should. That enabled the group to prioritise the current personnel policies and consider the likely level of maintenance.

The testing also involved a variety of people simplifying the Maternity Leave, Parental Leave, Disciplinary and Fit For Work policies down to two page guidance documents. This task was allocated to a number of individuals within the organisation from HR professionals to a communication specialist. The results suggested that with more refinement to ensure the policies were robust, it would be possible to simplify the policies and make them more accessible. Further work is now required to finalise a suitable format and decide who will be responsible for the simplification of the policies.

The second part of the testing involved the analysis of a staff survey completed by Personnel Officers and Assistant Personnel Officers on the queries they received over a given period. We analysed over 100 sets of forms, detailing over 1200 queries.

5.3.4 Recommendation

We should immediately simplify those policies and procedures that currently raise the most queries from staff and managers, and in time we should clarify and simplify all policies and procedures.

Analysis of the survey showed that answers to 71% of the queries were contained within existing policies and guidelines. 59% of the queries were received by telephone. It also illustrated 6 main topic areas that the majority of queries focus around. These areas are:

- Sickness & Ill Health
- Contracts of Employment (Inc Grade/Salary queries, Continuous service)
- Annual Leave & Extra Statutory and Concessionary Days
- Maternity Provisions
- Recruitment (Inc. Getting it Right, Advertising, Interview costs)
- Health and Safety

5.3.5 Recommendation

To ensure the best possible and most consistent service for our customers we should train and develop our HR staff to help them to achieve agreed levels of competence.

This would mean people would have to be given the necessary training before dealing with enquiries on key areas. We will make sure that we take account of the skills and knowledge that people already have. Refresher training will be given as appropriate. This training will ensure minimum levels of competence, creating consistency of advice across the County Council.

5.3.6 Recommendation

Where possible we should use technology to deliver policies procedures and advice.

This should be based on the principle of helping individuals to serve themselves first, before approaching their manager or Personnel/Training/Health and Safety Officer. 'Technology' would include delivery by telephone, intranet and CD ROM or other means.

5.3.7 Recommendation

We should develop a human resource community across the County Council.

A human resources community will create opportunities for learning and career development and the sharing of best practice and knowledge across the authority. We will create an environment where resources are more effectively used across all units in the Council including Personnel, Training, Health and Safety and Occupational Health. We will be more flexible with our resources, enabling us to manage more efficiently the peaks and troughs in our work by moving people around.

5.4 Process Improvement

5.4.1 The Issue

It was evident from the consultation that there are a number of processes that are both time consuming and inefficient causing delays and frustrations. The systems are often paper based and resource intensive. Processes to achieve the same end are sometimes carried out in different ways in different departments.

5.4.2 Hypothesis 4

'If we re-engineer personnel and employment administrative processes we will reduce costs and increase efficiency and effectiveness.'

5.4.3 Testing the Hypothesis

A team of staff has looked at 2 major processes, medical clearances and the engagement of staff (both involve multiple activities).

5.4.4 Recommendation

There should be a systematic review of our personnel and employment processes with a view to improving performance and efficiency.

This task will involve detailed mapping and description of the existing processes followed by rigorous analysis. The same outcomes can be achieved by changing the steps taken or eradicating them altogether.

Sufficient evidence has emerged that this type of 're-engineering' could significantly improve performance.

An underlying theme will be the exploration of E-technology

6. Recruitment & Retention

It was agreed at the beginning of the Best Value Review that the then Select Committee for Resources would take on the work of reviewing the County Council's performance on recruitment and retention. After one session the changed constitution left this topic temporarily without a home although a Cabinet Panel has now picked up the reins at a meeting on 26th February 2002.

The Panel looked at various pieces of data including staff turnover, vacancy information, reasons for leaving, recruitment performance and measures being taken to improve the situation.

The action plan was drawn up taking into account:

- Consultation with staff.
- How well the County Council compares with our Best Value Review comparators.
- Professional advice from recruitment specialists.
- The role professional staff supply organisations i.e. Manpower can play.

Whilst therefore the recruitment and retention work has been conducted outside of the Best Value framework it has followed the '4 C's regime. There has also been a crossover of officers involved in both pieces of work and there are no overlaps. Indeed two of the Best Value final recommendations, Learning and Development Standards and Process Improvement are integral to the Panel's action plan.

The minutes of the Cabinet Panel (Appendix 5) and the agreed action plan will now be incorporated into the Best Value Improvement Plan. The Panel has agreed to meet again in June to review progress. Key points arising from the Panel were:

- The need to target initiatives and activity on the most difficult to recruit to jobs. Members were particularly concerned about teachers and social care jobs.
- The need to recognise that there were different solutions for different employee groups, levels and sometimes locations.
- The need to improve information on vacancies particularly in regard to specific locations and the need for clarity on 'absolute' vacancies i.e. where jobs are not covered by temporary staff.
- The need to identify and monitor the effects that the current situation is having on service delivery.
- The need to continue to pursue all options for affordable housing (including rental properties) for key workers.
- The need to ensure that career development opportunities offered were both genuine and supported.
- The need to maximise the 'plus points' of working for the County Council including benefits e.g. pension schemes, holidays, flexible working etc.
- The need to have a continued dialogue with staff and leavers so that we are aware of their feelings.

The recommendations from this Best Value Review will contribute to improving the council's position on recruitment and retention in the areas of induction, training and administrative processes.

Panel members recognised that the council is competing for some staff where there are national shortages and were keen to ensure that Hertfordshire nevertheless managed to secure its share.

There is no single solution to the problems we are experiencing (except perhaps a significant increase in supply) and therefore the measures in the action plan should be viewed as a package.

As mentioned both SMB and the Cabinet Panel will review progress and Members expressed a particular wish to see improvement in the 'difficult areas' first.

7. Information System

The current personnel system is outdated and was reviewed alongside the Walker System replacement. Consultants examined our needs and based on their findings it has been agreed to tender for a new personnel system. The tender process was delayed to ensure that the final specification was consistent with this Best Value Review.

The recommendations have now been checked against the specification and the tender process can now proceed. Funding has been signalled as a bid for inclusion in the capital programme.

8. Management of the Authority Best Value Review

The outcomes from this Personnel and Employment Best Value Review are consistent with the scope of the Management of the Authority Best Value Review that starts in April.

9. Implementation Plan

Attached as Appendix 3.

10. Financial Implications

The review has been taking place on the basis of it being cost neutral. If the recommendations are agreed they will be progressed within our existing resources. There are proposals for improvements and efficiencies but at this stage it has not been possible to quantify their financial value.

Any investment in change, in terms of time and I.C.T will similarly be counterbalanced by savings in processes and procedures. Recommendation two regarding training administration is still being worked upon. When the data is available a proper business case can be prepared which should provide financial savings to the County Council.

Best Value Review of Personnel and Employment

Scope of the review

This review will seek to ensure best value from the activities and processes required to employ staff and to support changes in the way staff are organised and developed.

In reviewing these processes, the review team will assess current effectiveness in relation to:

- the Council's promises to the people of Hertfordshire, and
- the Corporate People Strategy, which has as its building blocks of success:
 - ✓ *Employer of Choice*: We will aim to be an organisation that people aspire to work for.
 - ✓ *Developer of People*: We will develop the organisation through its people
 - ✓ *Making Connections*: We will enable all the elements of this strategy to be delivered by embracing new information and communication technologies. People practices in the organisation will become more effective and more efficient
 - ✓ *Influencing change*: We will continuously influence the success of organisational change
 - ✓ *Valuing Diversity*: We will value and embrace the creativity and uniqueness of all employees

They will also consider the relationship and respective roles of central and devolved personnel services and will seek to ensure that personnel policies are implemented effectively and consistently across all services.

Review Methodology

The review will follow the standard HCC methodology and will be carried out in four stages: preparation, information collection, hypothesis testing and reporting. At each stage the core officer review team will research information and develop proposals. These will be tested with external challengers at 3 Workshops during the course of the review, before being presented to the Member Reference Group (MRG) for decision.

The suggested approach to the 4Cs contained in this paper was developed during the preparation stage. It will be tested with a wider reference group at a Scoping Workshop on July 12th 2001 and revised before being presented to Members for decision.

Between now and 7th November 2001 the core review team will collect information on service provision and performance which will involve consultation with users, research into comparator organisations and alternative providers. Based on the information collected, a Position Statement will be produced setting out a description of the service(s) under review, information on cost & performance, together with an

assessment of areas where performance is strong and areas where improvement is required. This Position Statement will be tested with the wider reference group and external challengers and will be the basis for focusing efforts on those areas where action is needed to improve performance.

Hypotheses for improving performance will be developed at a Challenge Workshop in late November 2001, and tested during the Hypothesis testing stage. This will culminate in a set of draft recommendations, which will be tested at a Recommendations Workshop before being presented to Members for consideration. The final recommendations of the review will be agreed by the MRG before going to Cabinet in March 2002.

Approach to the 4 Cs

Challenge: Challenge will be designed into all aspects of the review process.

External challenge will be provided by:

- Andrew Mayo (for specific expertise in training and development of staff)
- A personnel director from a comparable public sector organisation.

Consultation: In stage 1 of the review we will consult:

- HR Staff
- HCC staff, including representatives of specific minority groups, new staff and leavers
- Service managers, including Head Teachers and Governors
- External users and stakeholders, such as:
 - Suppliers, and
 - Job applicants
- Unison and other unions

Comparison: We will seek to compare with both private sector and public sector models, seeking advice from external challengers on appropriate private sector contacts. We will compare directly with the following local authorities:

- Surrey
- Hampshire
- Essex

In addition we will compare ourselves directly with a large government department, (Inland Revenue), and a private sector organisation. We will also look for good practices in other organisations.

We will also use data collected by the Saratoga consultancy from HCC and other authorities to compare our performance more widely in specific areas.

Competition: In stage 1 of the review we will compare our current mix of in-house and externally procured services with public and private sector models and we will make a general assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the market for HR services.

Membership of Core Team & Reference Group

Core Team:

Alan Warner (Director of People and Property - Lead officer)
Mick Connah (CSF)
John Cooper (ACS)
Gillian Hibberd (Corporate Personnel)
Carole Grimwood (Corporate Personnel)
Ian Bailey (Project Manager)
Susan Young (Corporate Personnel)

Wider Reference Group:

External Challengers (Andrew Mayo and others)

HR Managers:

- Elaine Hart (County Supplies and Contract Services)
- Mandy Trenchard (Corporate Services)
- Russell Swaby (Environment)
- Vicky Alvedro (Community Information)
- Paula Harrison (Fire and Rescue)

Service Managers:

- Heidi Ebrahim (Assistant Director of Community Information)
- Mike Curtis (Assistant Director of Adult Care Services)
- John Evans (Deputy Director, Children, Schools and Families)
- Peter Hazeldine (Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Operational))
- Mike Collier (Assistant Director of Environment (Resources))

Others:

- David Moses (Head of Safety, Emergency and Risk Management Unit)
- Steve Thornley (Unison)
- Simon Bygrave (Fire and Rescue BV Project Director)
- Clare Kaye (Assistant Chief Executive)

Members:

- Bernard Lloyd, Conservative, (chair of MRG)
- Gerald Game, Conservative
- David Beatty, Conservative
- David Billing, Labour
- David McManus, Labour

Also in attendance

- Paul Goggins, Lib Dem
- Reg Smith, Labour
- Maria Green, Labour

Event	Date
Scoping Workshop	12 July 2001
MRG 1	30 th July 2001
Challenge Workshop 1	7 th November 2001
Challenge Workshop 2	21/22 November 2001
MRG2	28 th November 2001
Recommendations Workshop	25 th January 2002
MRG 3	30 th January 2002
MRG 4	27 th February 2002
Cabinet	22 nd March 2002

DRAFT

DEVELOPMENT CHARTER

As an employee of the County Council I will be working for an organisation where learning is valued and where there will be equality of opportunity. I will be supported to undertake the learning and development which I need to help me to achieve and maintain a high standard of performance and so help the organisation deliver the best possible services to the people of Hertfordshire.

I AM ENTITLED TO:

- An induction programme into my own job and services as well as the wider organisation
- A manager who will support me in understanding my contribution within a performance management framework by providing:
 - Clear and measurable objectives for my work
 - An annual review of my performance
 - A personal development plan which addresses my development needs

I WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO UNDERTAKE:

- appropriate learning to support my performance plan
This will take account of any qualifications I need for my work and my career development and may be delivered in a variety of ways including work experience, coaching, secondments, training courses.

I RECOGNISE THAT LEARNING IS A PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND I WILL THEREFORE:

- play and active part in the performance management process
- share responsibility for identifying my development needs
- recognise and take advantage of development opportunities
- recognise that there are many different ways of learning
- share my learning with colleagues.

Implementation Plan

Recommendation	Outcomes	Actions	Who	When (Estimated)
<i>The Council should establish minimum standards for people development</i>	A revised Development Charter will be published and issued to all staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult widely on draft document and agree amendments • Publish Development Charter 	Carole Grimwood	June 2002 July 2002
	100% of staff will have effective induction into their job, service and whole organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and revise corporate and departmental induction processes • Develop checklists to help managers and new employees • Explore potential for e learning to improve induction processes • Monitor levels of implementation and quality on an annual basis 	Carole Grimwood And Human Resource Board (HRB)	June 2002 June 2002 Oct 2002 April 2003
	Through participation in performance management schemes 100% of staff will have a clear understanding of their role, measurable objectives and a personal development plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and develop simplified performance management processes with consistent minimum standards • Implement revised processes supported by appropriate training. • Introduce consistent departmental monitoring arrangements to ensure full implementation of the schemes • Ensure the line manger's responsibility for staff development is reflected in all performance agreements and job 	Carole Grimwood and HRB	June 2002 Sept 2002 Sept 2002 April 2003

		descriptions and that this is reviewed annually		
	All staff will receive development to support their performance plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L&D teams will monitor to ensure that all staff have personal development plans • L&D teams will receive details of development needs of all staff as the basis for planning and monitoring delivery 	Carole Grimwood and HRB	<p>June 2003</p> <p>June 2003</p>
	Line managers will be supported and developed in their role as developers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplify policies and procedures – e.g. secondment • Provide improved information and guidance for managers and staff about development • Implement programme to develop line managers as developers through training courses and coaching • Review and if appropriate improve support for line managers from L&D teams 	Carole Grimwood and HRB	<p>Sept 2002</p> <p>June 2002</p> <p>June 2002</p> <p>Sept 2002</p>
	Learning and Development priorities will be planned in a consistent way to ensure that it supports the needs of the business and that it is adequately resourced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce service strategic plans for learning and development in a consistent format. • L&D teams will work collaboratively to provide development opportunities to meet needs 	Carole Grimwood and HRB	<p>Sept 2002</p> <p>Dec 2002</p>
	People Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish regular monitoring 	Carole Grimwood	June 2002

	will be regularly monitored to ensure implementation and effectiveness	<p>arrangements for L&D at Service, SMB and Member levels. This will be to agreed standards with consistent data.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All departments will continue to achieve the IIP award • Agree and implement mechanisms and programmes for evaluating L&D • Exit surveys will continue to be implemented and used • Conduct annual staff attitude surveys 	and HRB	On-going
<i>Currently Testing business case for Hypothesis 2</i>		<p>Business Case for Venues Booking Business Case for Generic Training</p>	Carole Grimwood	June 2002
<i>We should immediately simplify those policies and procedures that currently raise the most queries from staff and managers and in time we should clarify and simplify all policies and procedures</i>	Simplified set of policies and procedures available on the intranet. Manager reporting improvements in clarity and accessibility in Personnel guidance and advice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmarking survey of Personnel and Employment staff • Develop standard format for policies and guidance. • Re-draft Top 6 policies • Make policies available on the intranet • Test redrafted policies across a range of potential users • Create timetable for reformatting of all policies • Re-survey all Personnel and Employment Staff 	Sue Young/ Gill Hibberd and HRB	<p>June 2002 June 2002 Sept 2002 Sept 2002 Sept 2002 Dec 2002 June 2003</p>
<i>To ensure the best possible</i>	Staff to meet agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify minimum levels of 	Sue Young/	Sept 2002

<i>and most consistent service for our customers we should train and develop our HR staff to help them to achieve agreed levels of competence</i>	levels of competence in areas with most frequently asked questions.	competency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create programme for development • Identify individual training needs • Training and development completed • Maintenance arrangements in place 	Gill Hibberd and HRB	Sept 2002 Dec 2002 April 2003 April 2003
<i>Where possible we should use technology to deliver policies procedures and advice</i>	We will be using technologies to deliver policies, procedures and advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review technological options • Create Self Help Intranet 	Sue Young/ Gill Hibberd and HRB	Sept 2002 April 2003
<i>We should develop an HR community across the County Council</i>	Staff consider they are part of a single service. Staff feel they have development opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmark Personnel and Employment staff survey • Consultation and ideas development with staff • Basic support structure in place • Re-survey Personnel and Employment staff 	Sue Young/ Gill Hibberd and HRB	June 2002 Sept 2002 April 2003 June 2003
<i>There should be a systematic review of our personnel and employment processes with a view to improving performance and efficiency</i>	Reductions in cost and increases in the speed and quality of personnel and employment processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify personnel and employment Processes to be reviewed • Publish timetable for reengineering • Reengineering process programme completed • Implementation of new processes 	Sue Young/ Gill Hibberd and HRB	June 2002 June 2002 April 2003 From April 2003

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION – Action Plan Update (January 2002)

Appendix 4

Action	Update since last meeting
<p>1. Improve Management Information</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drill down to identify where the major problems are occurring. 	<p>A detailed breakdown of recruitment and retention data to identify patterns relating to employment group, grade, geography, age, length of service and reasons for leaving to highlight problem areas that are not obvious from the high level statistics is now available. Appropriate action can now be targeted. (Mar 01)</p> <p>Departments are providing monthly vacancy data by geographical area. (Jun 01)</p> <p>ACS have identified 3 residential establishments with most significant recruitment problems for targeted action</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce improved leaver information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carry out exit interviews - Continue postal survey until fully implemented 	<p>Face to face interviews undertaken by line managers for all leavers. (Jul 01)</p> <p>Uses the postal questionnaire as the ‘notepad’ for line managers. Returned to county personnel to input into computer system. Postal survey continues as back up until fully implemented. A revised questionnaire and reporting system is currently being June 02)</p> <p>Postal survey remains for teachers and Shire Catering.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of regular employee attitude surveys to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -provide an early warning of issues that might cause employees to leave - monitor employees expectations of work - allow internal comparison of results - provide data on the effectiveness of HR policy and practice. 	<p>Strategy and Consultancy have carried out survey based on focus groups of key workers. Nov 01</p> <p>Key results and actions are summarised at Appendix 7</p>

Action	Update since last meeting
2. Improve Recruitment Practice	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a clear and attractive 'Employer Brand' 	<p>Included in the Recruitment Centre Contract. Scheduled to be in place Spring 2002.</p> <p>Work in progress to improve applicant packs</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve information about the benefits 	<p>Benefits Leaflet for applicant pack in print June 2001 To be updated with additional benefits (Revised draft Feb 02)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that we are not overselling jobs and give realistic job information 	<p>Implementation of Recruitment Centre plus improved training of managers. Up to H5 jobs going through RC from June 01 Other jobs from April 2002</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speed up recruitment process (candidate database and web-based recruitment) 	<p>Implementation of Recruitment Centre Fully interactive web-site by May 2002 Further review of internal HCC processes required post RC implementation. CSF have introduced fast track interview process for social workers with a standing interview panel and decision to applicant within 5 working days</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve recruitment techniques – towards an assessment centre approach. 	<p>Training of HR staff and line managers Revised refresher training modules piloted in November and being rolled out from Feb 2002)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore new recruitment media e.g. posters and billboards, ethnic press, leaflet drops, local club publications 	<p>Has already started – more planned as part of the Recruitment Centre Contract Implementation Major leaflet drop campaigns in ACS and CSF In CSF: - qualified staff who have left Hertfordshire in the last 12 months are currently being contacted</p>
Action	Update since last meeting
	- all student social workers on placement with Hertfordshire are

	<p>routinely contacted re career opportunities (78% success rate);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a recruitment open evening at Porters Wood in St. Albans, again backed up by a local leaflet campaign, attracted 76 people - Elsewhere using leaflets and posters to target specific potential applicants. - Work in progress in Shire to use ‘introductory bonuses’ 35 people successfully recruited - CSF and ACS trailing a recruit a friend ‘bonus’ scheme for key shortage skill areas - CSF has set up team to target recruitment difficulties. All Educational Psychologist vacancies have been filled. Now working on Childcare Social Worker Vacancies.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore new recruitment markets e.g. overseas candidates, over 65’s, under 25’s, re-skilling people, New Dealers 	<p>In CSF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a team of 3 managers spent 5 days in South Africa in October interviewing social workers who plan to come to the UK; 11 offers ,9 accepted - Wider use of recruitment agencies for permanent staff being considered for social workers and RSW’s - In ACS piloting ‘Agency Transfer Scheme’ to move to permanent payroll Jan to March 02
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with schools and the careers service to improve our image with young people. 	<p>Improved careers information will be achieved through the Recruitment Centre contract. Nov 01 Other actions to be agreed by HR Managers</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review incentives and non-pay benefits offered to recruits – (including housing) 	<p>The revised relocation scheme introduced from April 2001. Implementation of Starter Homes Initiative (Jan 02) Other housing support measures are under discussion</p>
Action	Update since last meeting
	<p>(Nov 6th 01 Conference) Partnership Group established to develop key worker housing</p>

	<p>strategy Dec 01.</p> <p>Developing proposal to use funding from schools balances to extend affordable housing schemes Dec 01</p> <p>Other benefits are being introduced e.g. the supply of low cost computers, reduced rates for local leisure facilities, preferential deals on insurance, AA/RAC membership.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that starting salary and progression opportunities are attractive. 	<p>The Recruitment Centre provides regular market information</p> <p>Consultant engaged to extend career grade schemes. Report due March 2002</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider markets-forces payments, golden hellos, golden handcuffs, and loyalty payments. 	<p>This will be based on the detailed management information referred to above. Any measure will be related to the market and carefully targeted. Consultant engaged to develop market forces payment scheme. Report due March 2002</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the potential of job re-design changing or redistributing certain duties 	<p>This will be targeted on the detailed management information referred to above.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High temporary staffing levels will continue to be needed in the short term to plug gaps. This will be easier, speedier and cheaper through the Recruitment Centre. 	<p>Implementation of the Recruitment Centre for temporary staff completed Jun 01 -already achieving targeted savings on agency rates. Volumes have doubled in the last year. Unit costs have reduced. Year 2 improvement plan includes simplifying temp pay rates and introducing a better telephone ordering system</p>
3. Improve Staff Retention	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve Induction 	<p>Included in BV review - work is in hand with departments to revise information and courses.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce support networks for key staff 	<p>Pilot work is underway with young people focussed on Modern Apprentices.</p>
Action	Update since last Meeting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to training and development. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effective performance and development 	<p>Focus of BV review.</p> <p>HR managers to be brought together to agree an action plan.</p>

<p>schemes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased use of career grade schemes - Help with career planning as more traditional paths disappear - Support for qualification training with day release etc encouraged - Increased secondment opportunities. 	<p>Specific targeted action within in departments.</p> <p>Training Development Survey2001 shows that 98% of staff receive performance appraisal and 84% have personal development plans. Performance schemes are being reviewed to make them simpler and easy to use</p> <p>The development of career schemes is a key outcome of the reward review</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management support and coaching 	<p>This will be focussed on areas of recruitment and retention difficulty with departments providing dedicated HR support to help with problem identification and resolution.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Enrichment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensuring there are opportunities for self and career development - high levels of recognition and feedback - significant levels of autonomy and a high degree of personal responsibility - the opportunity to use a variety of skills 	<p>Included in BV review -HR managers to be brought together to agree an action plan</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get the physical working environment right. 	<p>This will be focussed on areas of recruitment and retention difficulty with departments providing dedicated support to help with problem identification and resolution.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay is likely to be a significant factor in improving retention as it is in attracting staff. The work in hand (above) will address this 	<p>First phase of Reward review is now completed.</p> <p>Market forces and career grade work in hand Reports due March 2002</p> <p>Review of Long Service Awards is underway (Dec 01)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work-life balance needs to be addressed - Lifewise initiative 	<p>The Lifewise initiative will address this issue.</p>

MINUTES of the meeting of the RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PANEL held on Tuesday, 26 February 2002 at 2.30 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Members of the Panel

P T J Channell, K J Coleman, P V Goggins, R Sanderson, A M R Searing, R H Smith, W A Storey

Executive Members

D Beatty

Other members

M Green

Officers

Alan Warner, Corporate Director (People and Property)
Carole Grimwood, Assistant Director of Personnel
Mick Connah, Head of Human Resources, Children, Schools and Families
John Cooper, Head of Human Resources, Adult Care Services
Ian Gibson, Recruitment Strategy Assistant
Mary Lowten, Personnel Manager (Recruitment)
Nikki Patient, Committee Administrator

1. RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION UPDATE

- 1.1 Carole Grimwood introduced the report and advised the Panel of the figures for staff turnover, stability, and vacancies and highlighted the activities that had been undertaken to improve recruitment and retention. The focus is on targeting solutions for specific problems rather than adopting across the board responses.
- 1.2 In discussing the report, the Panel raised a number of issues and queries, these included:
- a) Affordable Housing
 - All options needed to be investigated to ensure that the maximum number of properties are available for key workers and to improve methods of allocation.

Members were advised that a key worker employers, district planning and housing authorities and housing associations are working on a key worker housing strategy, a draft form of which would hopefully be available by April/May 2002. Members endorsed this approach.

- The Starter Homes Initiative (SHI) £10,000 equity loan scheme, which the government had indicated could be made available for up to 57 teachers in Hertfordshire, was welcomed. It was recognised, however, that the County Council would probably need to match the funding to produce a viable scheme and meet the range of other criteria to achieve the funding.

2) Vacancy Levels

- Officers reported that targeted short-term initiatives to recruit into shortage sectors had been most effective. For example, all of the vacancies for educational psychologists had been filled as a result of such an initiative.
- Members requested that service departments report vacancies in a consistent format with a geographical breakdown.
- The vacancy levels set out in the report included posts which were being filled by temporary staff. It was requested that the Panel be provided with the level of absolute job vacancy (where there is no one in post).
- Concern was expressed that temporary staff used by the County Council, especially in schools, should be of a high standard.

3) Reasons for Leaving

- Concern was expressed that 'career development' was increasing as a reason for leaving. Members asked about the opportunities for career development.

Officers reported that a consultant has been engaged to look at the development and effective operation of career development schemes. A report is due at the end of March.

Officers also advised that the staff attitude study had shown that staff training and career development were often motivators for joining the County Council. Concern was expressed in particular about the potential for progressing from

classroom assistant to teacher and from care assistant to qualified social worker.

There are a number of flexible methods of becoming a qualified teacher, which the County Council take advantage of. Similarly, the County Council offer schemes for professional assistants to qualify as social workers.

4) Benefits Package

- It was welcomed that the County Council was re-modelling its benefits package and the information given to employees about the total reward package, which will be presented in a more comprehensive and attractive way.

1.3 Conclusion

The Panel endorsed the Council's current activities and encouraged officers to continue with the targeted short-term approach to recruitment.

2. LINKS TO THE BEST VALUE PROCESS

2.1 Alan Warner explained that the Personnel and Employment Best Value Review Group was due to consider its final recommendations on 27 February 2002, four of which related to recruitment and retention. It was anticipated that the report considered at item 1 would form part of the Best Value Improvement Programme, which would be reviewed by Cabinet.

2.2 Members were encouraged to pass on any ideas or useful information to officers.

2.3 Conclusion

Members agreed that the Panel should meet quarterly to monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the Best Value Review that were specific to recruitment and retention and assess their effectiveness.

3. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting should be held in June 2002 at a date to be arranged.

Nikki Patient
Panel Administrator

February 2002

