

Workforce Development Strategy

2009 - 2014



South
Derbyshire
District Council



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



Annual update August 2011

Organisational Development

Human Resources

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South Derbyshire Changing for the better

Workforce Development Strategy 2009/14

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INTRODUCTION

The National Joint Council for Local Government Services' National Agreement sets out that Local Authorities should develop local Workforce Development Plans that are closely linked to service delivery, and that training and development should be designed to meet the corporate and service needs of Authorities both currently and in the future.

The Council first adopted a People Strategy in March 2006, following extensive consultation with a range of internal and external stakeholders and an assessment of corporate workforce objectives. Consideration was also given to key challenges facing Local Government and the services provided to the community of South Derbyshire. The People Strategy broadly sets out how we would manage and develop our workforce. In building upon the foundations of the People Strategy, the Council's Workforce Development Strategy 2009/2014 now represents the overarching strategic workforce development framework to ensure a link between the Council's vision and objectives with the development and deployment of the workforce.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

National Context

The pace of change in Local Government has never been greater, driven by advances in technology, reduction in public sector funding, higher customer expectations and demands, increased partnership working across public, private and voluntary sectors, and increased involvement in cross-cutting society issues. This is set against a continued drive to secure efficiencies in service delivery and reduced resources being provided by Government. Therefore, investment in workforce development is essential to the sustainable improvement of Local Government services to meet the changing demands of the public.

This Workforce Development Strategy addresses the following five priority areas set out by Government's Pay and Workforce Strategy that was updated in 2010 and are seen as critical to improving the delivery of customer focused services:

- 1) Organisational development:** Addressing the workforce dimensions of organisational transformation to deliver citizen-focused and value for money services, in partnership.
- 2) Leadership development:** Building visionary, ambitious and effective leadership to make the best use of political and managerial roles, in a partnership context.
- 3) Skills development:** With partners, developing employees' skills and knowledge, in an innovative, high performance, multi-agency context.
- 4) Recruitment and retention:** With partners, taking action to: recruit and retain the right workforce; address key future occupational skill shortages; promote jobs and careers; identify, develop and motivate talent and address diversity issues.
- 5) Pay and rewards:** Implementing effective approaches to reward the workforce while controlling employment costs to reflect budget and efficiency requirements, as well as new ways of working and innovative working patterns, encouraging a total reward approach to promote high performance.

These national key themes are aligned with the Council's strategic objectives to facilitate effective and accurate workforce planning.

Local Context

South Derbyshire is a rural District in central England covering an area of over 100 square miles. Its population is growing and currently stands at 93,900 (Office of National Statistics, mid year estimate 2010). It has increased by over 1000 people for each of the last five years.

For many years the District has been the fastest growing in Derbyshire, and is currently one of the fastest growing areas in England. Official forecasts anticipate the population increasing to just under 110,000 by 2026. This is driven by the continuation of a high housing requirement and reflects the fact that the area offers a high quality of life and is a place where people want to live.

On 31st March 2011 the Council employed 291 employees, who are based across a number of sites within the District, with the highest proportion located at the Council's Civic Offices in Swadlincote.

Services provided by the Council centre on Housing and Environmental Services; and Community and Planning. These are supported by the Council's own Corporate Services, and Northgate Public Services, who have been in Partnership with the Council since 1st August 2010 when 84 employees were transferred from the Council. These posts were in Human Resources, Policy and Communications, Finance, Customer Services, Revenues and Benefits, Information Technology and Business Improvement.

This partnership will realise benefits for the Council in terms of investment into the service areas, efficiency gains, cost savings as well as the development of a regional hub leading to additional jobs into South Derbyshire.

The projected rise in the population in the coming years will result in even greater demand upon the services provided by the Council. Our workforce has to be equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge and experience, and be deployed in the right places to deliver the Council's vision and objectives to best serve the community of South Derbyshire now and in future years. This will ensure that members of the community receive the level and standards of service they require at a price that is viewed as offering best value.

Going forward, the Council's Workforce Development Strategy updates and action plans will need to consider how this affects the make up of the Council's workforce.

The Solution

This Workforce Development Strategy determines how we will recruit, support, develop and retain employees to enable the Council to meet the current and future demand for services. To do this, it is necessary to:

- Establish what we know about our current workforce, identifying the staff and skills we currently have;

- Anticipate workforce needs of the future, identifying the staff and skills that will be required to provide services to meet the needs of the South Derbyshire community over the next 5 years and beyond;
- Undertake workforce planning to ensure we can deliver Council services in the future effectively and efficiently, setting out an action plan to address any identified employment and skills gaps.

This will all be done under the financial constraints of the Council, and the requirement to continue to improve services, whilst reducing the Council's costs.

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WORKFORCE PROFILE AS AT 31TH MARCH 2011

Our current workforce profile shows that:

- At 31st March 2011 our headcount showed 291 employees (excluding casual, those on contracts less than one year and agency workers), compared to 385 on 31st March 2010, 382 on 31st March 2009 and 377 employees at 31st March 2008;
- Staff turnover (voluntary leavers only) for the year ending 31st March 2011 was 4.47% (this figure has been adjusted to take account of the partnership). The previous year it was 5.22% compared to 7.11% on 31st March 2009 and 7.54% on 31st March 2008;
- 85.22% of our employees work full time. This is an increase from 2010 (82.6%);
- 14.78% therefore work part time, down from 17.4% in 2010. Of those that work part time, 87.37% are female, down from 91% last year and 92.1% in 2009.

The total number of employees across Council services is broken down by gender below.

Division	Males		Females		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.
<i>Community & Planning Services</i>	30	47.6%	33	52.4%	63
<i>Corporate Management</i>	5	71.4%	2	28.6%	7
<i>Corporate Services</i>	10	34.5%	19	65.5%	29
<i>Housing & Environmental Services</i>	115	59.9%	77	40.1%	192
Total	160	55%	131	45%	291

Headcount by gender at 31st March 2010 identified 51.4% female employees and 48.6% male employees. This is a 0.4% move from male to female in March 2009. In March 2011 there was a shift in the other direction, which was due to employees moving from the Council under TUPE that included the Customer Services which are almost exclusively female.

The age profile of our workforce is identified in the table below.

Age Range	No. of Employees at 31/03/09	% of workforce at 31/03/09	No. of Employees at 31/03/10	% of workforce at 31/03/10	No. of Employees at 31/03/11	% of workforce at 31/03/11
16 – 25	24	6.3%	25	6.5%	17	5.84%
26 – 35	72	18.8%	66	17.1%	53	18.21%
36 – 45	104	27.2%	104	27%	70	24.05%
46 – 55	119	31.1%	122	31.7%	80	27.49%
56 – 65	60	15.8%	66	17.2%	67	23.02%
66+	3	0.8%	2	0.5%	4	1.37%
Total	382	100%	385	100%	291	100%

Although the numbers of employees cannot be compared due to the Northgate Partnership, the percentages show minimal movement for 16-35 years olds, a lower percentage of employees aged 36-55 year olds, and an increase in percentage of the workforce for those 55 and above.

Our progress against a range of workforce performance indicators is shown below.

Ref No.	Description	06/07 Actual	07/08 Actual	08/09 Actual	09/10 Actual	10/11 Actual
11a	The percentage of top 5% of earners that are women	22.22%	17.65%	26.92%	27.78%	28.57%
11b	The percentage of top 5% of earners who are from ethnic minority communities	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
11c	The percentage of top 5% of earners who have a disability	N/A	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
12	Number of working days lost due to sickness absence	8.85 days	8.45 days	9.11 days	8.73 days	8.6 days
16a	The percentage of staff declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act definition	4.02%	5.37%	5.24%	3.94%	2.61%
17a	The percentage of local authority employees from ethnic minority communities	0.7%	0.85%	1.45%	1.6%	1.32%

The changes in the above tables can almost exclusively be accounted for by two factors:

1. The transfer of staff with the Northgate Partnership, and
2. The Council management restructure that began in February, to be completed May 2011.

These figures demonstrate that improvements can be made in the following areas;

- The percentage of top 5% of earners from a BME group, who are female, or who have a disability;
- Age balance of the workforce;
- Continued decrease in number of working days lost due to sickness absence;

A local indicator based on training days per employee is as follows:

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Average number of training days per employee	3.35	4	2.99

Prior to the recession and the current financial difficulties facing Local Government, the Local Government Workforce Survey 2009 stated the number of off-the-job training days per employee across all respondent Councils was 1.4 days and 3.1 days for shire districts.

This table illustrates a commitment to training in general, but ongoing assessment of training activity will take place to ensure this is targeted in the right areas of the business.

To explain the reduction in days at the Council, in 2009/10 the Leadership and Management Development Programme led to 370 training days, while this year as the Middle Manager programmes were completed, that is down to 120.

With the reduction in budgets, there has been a reduction in courses that come with a cost.

Those responsible for delivering training have also been involved in the development and introduction of a new HR, Payroll and Training database system (ResourceLink) and it's self service facility (MyView).

The introduction of MyView will lead to additional training requirements for employees using the self service system in 2011/12.

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ACHIEVEMENT OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

Through its Workforce Development Strategy the Council has been able to retain and achieve a number of national accreditations.

Investor in People

The key national standard being the retention of Investor in People status that the Council has held since 2002.

In the last re-accreditation completed in October 2008, the Council opted for the 'Profile Assessment' that would provide an indication of performance against ten key lines of enquiry. The Council was assessed as excellent in three of the ten areas; management effectiveness, involvement and empowerment, and in learning and development. The Council was rated above the basic standards in six other indicators. This is a clear demonstration of the effectiveness of the Council's approach to the continuous development, management and engagement with the workforce.

In 2009 Investors in People stopped using the Profile Assessments, and introduced three additional levels to be used along with the basic standard; Gold, Silver and Bronze. The Council was scored as a "Silver" employer.

The Council will next be inspected in October 2011. It has decided to formally be measured under the basic standard to reduce costs, whilst internally working towards the highest "Gold" level.

Disability Two Ticks Symbol

This Standard demonstrates the Council's commitment to the employment and retention of disabled employees. Having held this status for over 5 years, it provides a commitment to current and prospective employees regarding the Council's positive approach in this area.

National Equality Framework

In February 2010 The Council obtained 'Achieving' status under the revised National Equality Framework. This supports the delivery of the Council's Corporate Equality & Fairness Scheme and demonstrates to the Community, our workforce, potential employees, partners and other stakeholders that the Council is firmly committed to providing fair and equal access to services and employment.

RoSPA Gold Award (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents)

Through the establishment of a robust Health & Safety management framework, it was agreed to apply for a RoSPA award for the Housing Service in 2008. The outcome was that the Housing Service was assessed as achieving the Gold standard. This success was repeated in 2009, 2010 and 2011.

Using the experiences of these previous awards in Housing, in 2011 the Council pursued a similar assessment for all of its services, and achieved once more obtained "Gold". This illustrates a consistently high level of safe policies and processes across all service areas.

Sunday Times Best Companies Survey / Best Companies National Index

Following on from 2009-2010 Sunday Times Best Companies Survey, where the Council was one of the top 75 best places to work in the Public/Third sector and was named “One to Watch” in the Best Companies National Index, it again took part in 2011.

In 2011 the Council maintained it's place in the Top 75 in the best places to work in the public/third sector, and improved from “One to Watch” to “One Star”.

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KEY OUTCOMES 2010/11 - WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Our key actions are identified under the five priority areas set out in the Local Government Workforce Strategy, which are seen as critical to improving the delivery of customer focused services.

Out of the thirty seven objectives to be achieved over the lifetime of the strategy, ten were stated as priorities to achieve during the year. All except the completion of the Pay and Grading Review have been successfully completed. This will roll into the following year.

The achievements for 2010/11 include;

Organisational Development

- 81% of employees have had PDRs, an increase of 4% the previous year.
- A Skills Audit has been rolled out to all retained services within the Council.
- MyView self service system introduced, with modules in sickness, annual leave, learning and development, and expenses to follow. This will automate a number of manual processes and provide instant access for employees and managers to details regarding employment, training and development and attendance records.

Leadership Development

- Completion of three cohorts of Middle Managers' 18 month programmes.
- 82% of delegates on the Leadership and Management Development Programmes remain in employment with the Council.
- Following from training last year for managers on both updated the Attendance Management Procedure, and the Performance and Development Review Scheme, training on the updated Recruitment and Procedure has been delivered to managers.
- A well-being initiative was launched with a promotional campaign and training on stress awareness provided to help managers and employees recognise the symptoms leading to inappropriate levels of stress in the workplace.

Skills Development

- The Council has signed up to the national "Skills Pledge", demonstrating our commitment to supporting our employees to gain the skills and qualifications that will support their future career and employment and better meet the needs of the Council.
- The Council continues to support employees studying NVQs, with the Recycling Team starting their NVQs in November 2010.
- 100% of candidates on this year's First Line and Aspiring Managers programme have achieved the ILM Management Certificate.

Recruitment and Retention

- Maintaining the Disability Two Ticks Symbol.

- New Recruitment and Selection Procedure and Manager Toolkit have been introduced, along with training to assist managers in recruiting high calibre employees.
- Raise profile as an Employer by supporting the National Graduate Programme with offering a work placement for a graduate on the scheme.
- Increase the use of modern apprenticeships with opportunities taken to continue placements within the Council with 5 currently in post.
- 22 work experience placements for school children, university students and unemployed.

Pay and Rewards

- A range of flexible working options are in place, including flexi time, homeworking, and special leave options.
- All posts have been jointly evaluated with Trades Unions under the Pay and Grading Review and posts have been rated in readiness for pay lines and bands to be introduced.
- An employee benefits package is being developed following from an action learning set researching the topic.
- Employment Policies have been subject to Equality Impact Risk Assessments (EIRA) to ensure that they are fair and non-discriminatory.

NATIONAL AND LOCAL CHALLENGES

A number of factors act as key drivers in anticipating workforce needs of the future. The Council need to understand and estimate the impact of these factors to identify the resources and skills that will be required to provide services to meet the needs of the South Derbyshire community over the next five years.

These include specifically contextual factors relative to our operating environment; the impact of reviews to Local Government finance arrangements and in particular the possible impact of the Comprehensive Spending review in October 2010; emerging Government Policy impacting on the public sector; our Vision and Corporate Plan and the Sustainable Community Strategy for South Derbyshire 2009-2029.

These factors, in addition to considerations regarding the availability of labour and skills within the District, are considered in our workforce planning processes. This will enable the Council to anticipate its future workforce needs relative to our strategic objectives to determine the resources needed to provide services in the future.

A major change in the Council's workforce has come into effect with the partnership with Northgate Information Solutions UK Ltd, with 84 employees transferring from South Derbyshire District Council to Northgate in August 2010.

This has reduced the headcount within the Council by over 22%. Where this affects statistics this will be made clear throughout this document. This could involve reprioritising areas for action to address any subsequent gaps or significant changes to the profile, skills and knowledge within the Council's workforce. The Council will work in partnership with Northgate to identify and propose actions to address these matters.

Operating Environment – a different way of service delivery?

The demands on Local Government are constant. The Council has to meet the increasing expectations of the community as well as Government initiatives in particular making efficiency targets during this "age of austerity".

The predicted increase in the District's population, coupled with a reduction in funding will place increased pressure upon the Council to maximise current resources to ensure the continued delivery of high quality services. Development and retention strategies and current initiatives in managing absence remain important factors.

In addition, to meet and exceed the challenges we face requires consideration and exploration of new ways of working. Hence, increased partnership working across private, public and voluntary sectors is evident, along with consideration toward new models of service delivery.

These challenges require the adoption of different leadership models to drive forward change in the sector and engage in a partnership environment, developing leadership and management skills and characteristics that reflect a more shared, empowering and transformational leadership model.

DISTRICT PROFILE

The availability of labour and skills within the District also informs our workforce planning. The best practical guide to local skills levels is the level of qualifications. Skills and qualifications are not the same. Some people can have skills that are not backed up by qualifications, and these skills are not systematically recorded.

Unemployment statistics show that like the rest of the UK, Derbyshire has been affected by the economic downturn. However, within the County, unemployment in the South Derbyshire District remains the second lowest rate in Derbyshire (see Figure 1).

The table also shows that South Derbyshire is only one of two districts in Derbyshire where employment has fallen in the last year.

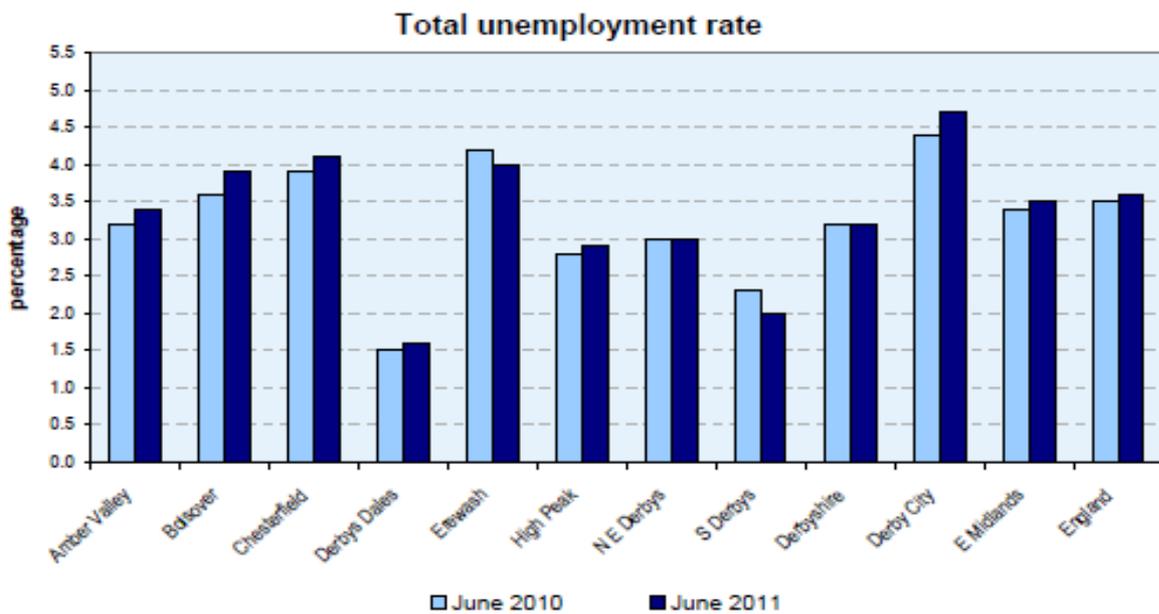


Figure 1: Unemployment rates based on unemployment benefit claims as at June 2011 (Derbyshire County Council Monthly Unemployment Statistics at June 2011)

Nevertheless, unemployment amongst people aged under 25 in South Derbyshire is above the national average (see Figure 2 below).

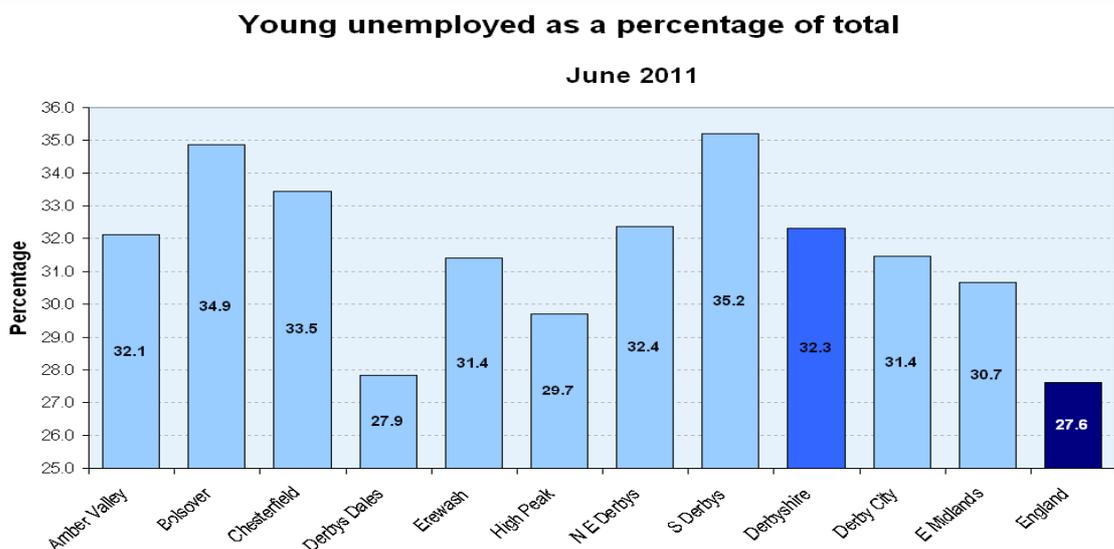


Figure 2: Young Unemployed as a percentage of the total at June 2011 (Derbyshire County Council Monthly Unemployment Statistics at June 2011 where the rates have been calculated using population figures from the 2006 Mid-Year Population Estimates.)

Young Unemployed figures from 2010 also show South Derbyshire at 35%. Again, they showed that the district's percentage was higher than regional and national levels. However, since 2010 the district has moved from second highest in the region to highest and is an area for real concern.

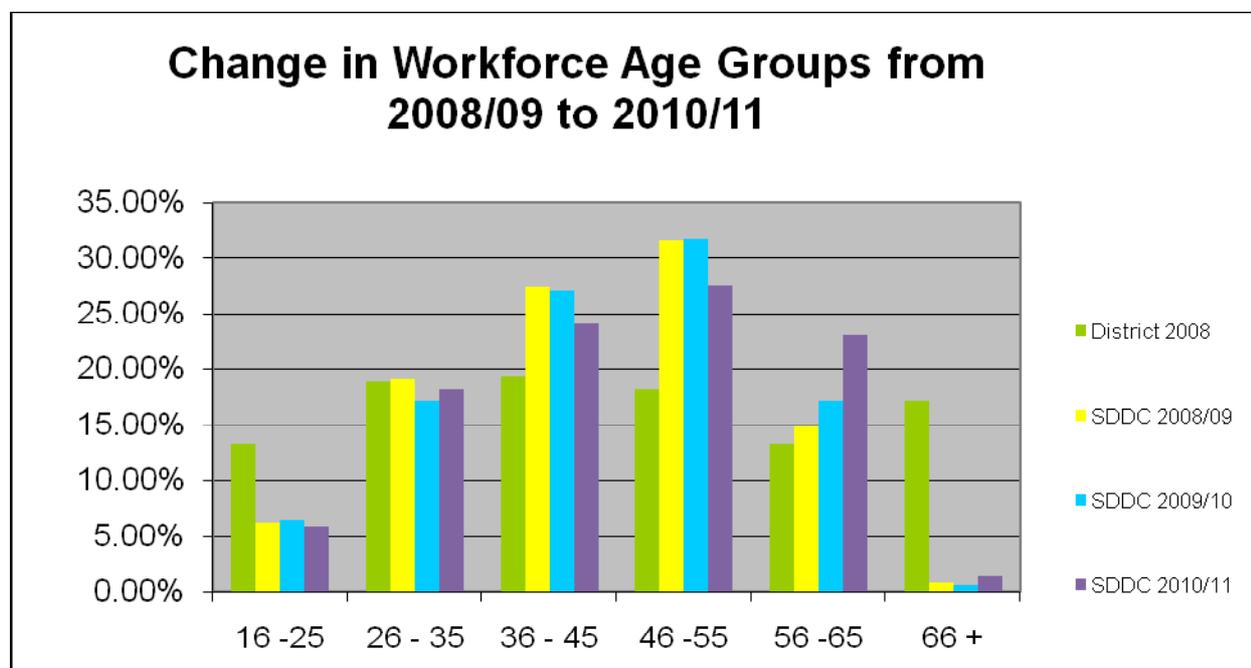


Figure 3: Comparison between the South Derbyshire District Population (from 2001 Census) and the Workforce of South Derbyshire District Council by Age Group at 2009, 2010 and 2011.

It is evident from the age profile of our current workforce that the largest proportion of employees are aged between 36-55. Figure 3 compares our district population against our workforce by age group, illustrating the lower numbers of those aged 16-25 years and 66+ years within our current workforce.

Attempts to redress this imbalance have included development of Modern Apprenticeship and trainee posts; working with other public sector bodies in seeking to attract young people to public sector careers; working with partners in the community, for example local schools and colleges in work placement and work experience opportunities.

Our efforts to encourage young people into Local Government careers must be further maximised and are outlined in the Workforce Development Action Plan.

Work also needs to be carried out to retain staff at the other end of the age spectrum to hold onto skills of more experienced employees who may otherwise consider retiring at 65 years old. To support this, in line with changes to employment legislation, all Council employees have the option to continue working beyond 65. In addition, the Council uses provisions in line with the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations, to enable a range of flexible retirement options for employees.

Unemployment statistics are not able to determine accurate rates relative to the ethnic origin of those unemployed, as claimants do not consistently supply information regarding their ethnic background.

In terms of the District's ethnic profile, the 2001 Census data identifies that 97.23% of the district's population was white, compared to 2.77% from other ethnic groups. With 1.03% of our workforce declaring they are from an ethnic minority, it suggests our workforce is not currently representative of the district's population. This has changed from 1.6% last year.

It should be noted that the figure of 1.03% is based upon those employees who have declared their ethnicity, rather than the total workforce, and 10.65% have not stated their ethnicity. Continued work in this area will include delivering the action plan from the Corporate Equality and Fairness Scheme, completing Equality Impact Risk Assessments across all Council Services and the continuation of learning and development opportunities for the Council's workforce.

Whilst our performance in the employment of employees with a disability is 2.75%, there is still 16.49% of the workforce, whose disability status we do not know.

However, it is evident that health considerations will remain a key priority. Therefore ongoing support for current and potential employees will be provided and the Council retains its commitment to the recruitment and retention of disabled employees through the commitment to the Two Ticks Disability Symbol.

The Leadership and Management Development Programmes has provided the opportunity for employees to enhance their personal and career development, and although the programmes are all almost complete, other initiatives will follow to build on this. This should promote effective succession planning for the Council, and being open to all employees should present continued opportunities for those who are currently underrepresented at a senior level.

The needs and profile of the community are diverse and the Council needs to reflect these as closely as possible, ensuring fair and non-discriminatory employment practices. Our Workforce Development Plan identifies actions that seek to address under-representation.

THE COUNCIL'S VISION, CORPORATE PLAN AND SERVICE PLANNING

Our vision is:

“To make South Derbyshire a better place to live, work and visit.”

In order to achieve this vision, we have a Corporate Plan that sets out our aims, objectives and priorities. The plan covers all aspects of life in the District.

Actions to deliver the overall vision are grouped into 4 themes:

1. Sustainable Growth and Opportunity

- 1.1. Economic development – skills, training and job creation
- 1.2. National Forest and beyond – tourism and industry
- 1.3. Sustainable Development – affordable housing, environment and planning

2. Safe and Secure

- 2.1. Promoting independence, security and inclusion through the provision of decent housing
- 2.2. Safer neighbourhoods

3. Lifestyle Choices

- 3.1. Promoting healthy facilities and lifestyles
- 3.2. Supporting cultural events and activities
- 3.3. Helping the community to reduce its environmental footprint

4. Value for Money

- 4.1. Meeting community needs
- 4.2. Increasing efficiency
- 4.3. Development of staff and Members
- 4.4. High standards of corporate governance
- 4.5. High performing services

The Workforce Development Strategy supports the achievement of all these key themes through actions set out in the Workforce Development Plan.

Service planning processes also inform workforce priorities, identifying areas to be addressed to ensure our workforce is fit for the future:

- The need to review service structures to maximise the use of resources to meet corporate and service objectives, building capacity and flexibility, and supporting retention of skilled and qualified employees.
- The need to plan for retirements within service areas ensuring knowledge retention and succession planning.

- The need to further develop succession planning processes, developing skills and knowledge of current employees to facilitate a 'grow our own' approach. This will support traditionally hard to recruit posts due to skills shortages in the market, for example Environmental Health Officers, Building Control Officers and Planners. Due to economic factors the shortage is not as apparent, however when the position changes it will revert back and so a longer-term approach is proposed.
- The need to further explore opportunities for flexible working options to maximise the use of resources, technology and support employee retention and knowledge management.
- The need to work in partnership with other Local Authorities or public sector bodies to support recruitment difficulties, pressure on services through reduced funding streams and secure economies of scale through shared service models.
- The need to ensure a continued commitment to training, learning and development across the workforce and support for continuous professional development.
- The need to promote cross-fertilisation, up-skilling and re-skilling employees to develop a multi-skilled workforce supporting generic working, building capacity and resilience.
- The need to ensure that advances in technology are utilised by maximising the use of current software and applications to their full potential.
- The need to review processes through business improvement methodology to maximise resources and secure efficiencies within the Council.
- The need to consider and develop the skills needed in the workforce and its current and potential managers through providing a robust management competency framework.

WORKFORCE PLANNING 2009/2014 – THE FUTURE

Our key actions for the life span of this Strategy are seen as critical to improving the delivery of customer focused services.

This is set out in greater detail in the Workforce Development Action Plan.

Organisational Development

In 2011 the Council aims to maintain the Investor in People Standard, which reflects our continued good practice in people management, learning and development.

Working with our partner, Northgate Information Solutions UK Ltd, investment has already been made into IT solutions that will make efficiencies in a number of employment related transactions. This will automate a number of manual processes and provide instant access for employees and managers to details regarding employment, training and development and attendance records. Support and training will follow throughout 2011/12 as necessary.

A review of the Disciplinary Procedure will be completed and training will follow. This will ensure employees are treated fairly and within the law while providing an effective mechanism for the Council to investigate and act on any disciplinary matters.

The Workforce Development Strategy Action Plan sets out the measures that we will take to continue to develop the organisation to achieve excellence in people and performance management, partnership working and the delivery of customer focused services.

Leadership Development

Efforts to build leadership and management capacity across the Council have been progressing for some time.

Following on from the completion of a number of programmes, a third cohort of the First Line and Aspiring Managers programme be completed.

This will build leadership skills, competencies and behaviours to enable our leaders and managers to respond to the increasingly dynamic Local Government environment and achieve the Council's priority objectives.

Sustaining managers' development through these programmes and through other methods, coupled with continuous review and evaluation is vital to the continued development of leadership and management capability.

Additionally, a review of the competency framework will ensure for it's use by ALL employees, providing greater links to performance management, and greater clarity for succession planning and career development.

The Workforce Development Plan identifies the actions we will take to continue to develop leadership capacity among both Officers and Elected Members, and to attract effective leaders into Local Government from outside the sector.

The Council seeks to be an employer of choice, attracting the best external talent from both the public and private sectors. This is particularly important when staff turnover is so low. It will do this by enhancing its reputation with the public through quality services, improving its pay and rewards structures and maintaining and improving on its many external awards and achievements.

Skills Development

The Council maintains a strong commitment to learning and development and continuous professional development, as demonstrated by its intention to continue to be an Investor in People employer when the Council stands for reaccreditation in October 2011.

The National Skills Pledge demonstrates our commitment to supporting our employees to gain the skills and qualifications that will support their future employability and meet the needs of the Council. This will ensure that all employees are skilled, competent and able to make a full contribution to the success of the Council.

The Council will ensure employees have the correct skills by reviewing its management competency framework to cover all employees and provide a clearer progression path for those involved in developing careers and succession planning.

Recruitment and Retention

Local Government has to compete effectively in the market place to recruit and retain staff. This Workforce Development Strategy therefore reflects a more strategic approach in workforce planning to support recruitment, retention and development in this more competitive environment. This includes consideration of new models of service delivery, such as partnering and shared service options to bolster resilience and support employee and knowledge retention, whilst ensuring value for money.

Whilst some activity in terms of succession planning and retention is evident, this has traditionally reflected a reactive process to resolve current skills shortages and retention issues. Increased awareness and a more pro-active approach is now evident, but this needs to be developed across the whole Council to ensure longer term planning.

The Council is committed to ensuring equality and fairness in the workplace and ensures that its recruitment, selection and development processes ensure fair and consistent treatment of all employees while maintaining fair and non-discriminatory employment practices.

We recognise that the needs and profile of the community are diverse and we need to ensure we reflect these as closely as possible. This is reflected by attaining "Achieving" status under the revised National Equality framework in 2009.

Our performance indicators identify an under-representation against equality and diversity targets but the Workforce Development Strategy Action Plan sets out the measures to seek to address this under-representation.

Our workforce profile identifies that the number of employees aged between 16-25 in the Council is below the national average. Whilst much progress in the development of Modern Apprenticeships and trainee posts has already been made, a national drive to increase the number of apprenticeships in the public sector acts as an incentive to further

increase their number in our workforce. Employees over 65 will also be encouraged to continue to work so that the Council can retain their skills and experience.

The Workforce Development Strategy Action Plan sets out the measures to further enhance the opportunities we provide in the employment of under 25s, as well as the actions we will take to further ensure that we recruit retain and develop our workforce whilst addressing equality and diversity issues.

Pay and Rewards

The Council has been actively engaged in a Pay and Grading Review with full consultation being maintained with the Trade Unions. This is nearing completion and will ensure equity and equal pay across the workforce.

In addition, a range of flexible working options are already in place, including flexi time, homeworking and special leave options.

The Council will also need to consider different approaches towards pay and rewards for its workforce. This will demand considering all of the different facets and the opportunity to present current and prospective employees with clear information of the total pay and rewards package that the Council can offer. This not only includes monetary elements but other non-pay employment incentives.

The Workforce Development Strategy Action Plan identifies the need to review our pay and reward structures to ensure that they attract, retain and develop a skilled and flexible workforce, whilst achieving both value for money in service delivery and equal pay.

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EQUALITY IMPACT RISK ASSESSMENT (EIRA)

An EIRA has been completed on the Workforce Development Strategy in line with the Council's framework. It will be reviewed periodically and any resultant outcomes will be reviewed and changes made to the Workforce Development Strategy or Action Plan as required.

CONSULTATION AND REVIEW

Information obtained from the Council's evidence base is used along with normal consultation methods.

The Workforce Development Strategy and Action Plan will be reviewed on a regular basis as part of the Council's performance management framework.

A review of the outcomes will be reported on an annual basis along a refresh of the action plan.

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