

**FALKIRK COUNCIL**

**Subject: WORKFORCE STRATEGY**  
**Meeting: EXECUTIVE**  
**Date: 15 March 2016**  
**Author: DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & HOUSING SERVICES**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 As Members will be aware, as part of the recent Audit of Best Value, it was recommended that the Council update its Workforce Strategy. The purpose of this report is to present a revised version of the Workforce Strategy to the Executive Committee for approval.

**2. WORKFORCE STRATEGY**

- 2.1 The Workforce Strategy is an important document for the Council and provides a framework for the future direction of workforce actions and issues. It sits as part of the Council's strategic planning and management framework and links directly to the Council's Corporate Plan, budget strategy and Service Plans. A revised copy of the Workforce Strategy, for Members' consideration, is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
- 2.2 The Strategy has been developed by taking into account the key factors which are currently influencing the Council's leadership and management of its workforce. For example, the Strategy considers actions the Council will take to achieve the necessary changes in workforce numbers in line with the budget strategy. In addition, the Strategy sets out a number of commitments, linked to the Council's values, which will be undertaken to progress changes and support the workforce.
- 2.3 Given the strategic nature of the document, the Strategy does not include any workforce data or any indication of how the number of employees will change over the next few years. Whilst it is important for the Council to consider and review such information, such details are already available through other sources. For example, information on changes to workforce numbers is an implicit part of the Council's budget strategy, for the period relevant to this. Information on matters such as absence, turnover and severance details are all reported to JCC. In addition, more detailed information on the operational management of such matters is reported to CMT to ensure a regular review by the management team.
- 2.4 For information, it should be highlighted that the Trade Unions were provided with a copy of the revised Workforce Strategy and given an opportunity to comment on it.

**3. WORKFORCE PLANNING**

- 3.1 Within the revised Strategy, Members will note the reference to workforce planning. It is important for the Council to make more use of documented workforce planning for the purposes of designing the workforce of the future, and to ensure appropriate support for the workforce to enable them to achieve what is expected.

- 3.2 Workforce planning is a process involving an analysis of a particular area of service delivery. It involves an assessment of the current workforce profile for that service (e.g., numbers, skills, age, etc), the key influencers/changes that are projected for the service area, the future workforce profile that will be needed, the future skill requirement that will be needed, a gap analysis and a plan for how to implement change and bridge any gap.
- 3.3 The revised Strategy sets this out in more detail. Subject to Member agreement of the Strategy, a template for workforce planning will be developed along with guidance for managers. It is anticipated that as a minimum, managers will develop workforce plans to support their work in areas such as the teaching workforce, various areas of social work adult services and other functions of social work. In addition, workforce plans will also be developed, as required, where significant workforce change is anticipated such as service reviews with employee implications and in some instances, those areas being considered by Improvement Groups. The important factor in determining the use of workforce plans is that they should add value rather than being done as a matter of course with no added benefit.

#### **4. ACTION PLAN**

- 4.1 The revised Workforce Strategy is very much a high level document. It sets out how the Council will move its workforce forward. There is however, a need for an action plan to be developed to support the implementation of the Strategy and to ensure the relevant actions are implemented by all Services. This will be developed subject to the Strategy being agreed by Members.

#### **5. RECOMMENDATION**

- 5.1 **It is recommended that the Executive Committee agree the revised version of the Council's Workforce Strategy, as attached as Appendix 1 to this report.**

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**DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & HOUSING SERVICES**

Date: 18 February 2016

Ref: AAB150316 - Workforce Strategy

Contact Name: Karen Algie, Extn 6223

#### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

**FALKIRK COUNCIL**

**WORKFORCE STRATEGY**

**ONE COUNCIL**  
**ONE WORKFORCE**

**2016 - 2020**

**MARCH 2016**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Falkirk Council is ambitious for its area and wants to deliver the best that it can for the communities it serves. Like all local authorities, it continues to face significant challenges to deliver first class services within reducing budgets. Key to the Council's success in achieving this, is its workforce.

It is through the Council's workforce that we deliver our services. Our communities engage with the Council through our employees and the services they deliver. It is essential that as an employer, we are ambitious for our workforce, the achievements and successes they can have, and the support they will need to do their jobs.

Our workforce strategy provides a framework for this to happen. Our strategy is directly linked to the Council's corporate plan, budget strategy and business transformation strategy, as shown below in our strategic planning and management framework:



Within this framework, our workforce must adapt and change to enable the Council to meet its future challenges. It is inevitable that the Council will look, feel and be a different organisation over the next few years. Some of this will be in response to our budget strategy and the need to reduce our workforce and change the services we deliver. To support this, we may need a different skill profile if we are to continue to deliver good quality services.

There will be a need for us to reflect on the profile of our workforce too. For example, we know the age profile of the workforce and we continue to assess the benefit as well as risks that this brings, and respond to these. We have a great wealth of experience within our workforce, but we must ensure that this experience and knowledge is not lost as new employees become part of our

team. We must respond to the expectation of our workforce. These will vary over time too. For example, we have seen in recent years greater expectations in our workforce for tools which enable them to be more flexible and mobile in the way that they deliver their services.

We are one workforce, and we must work together in partnership if we are to succeed in delivering the best that we can for the communities we serve.

This Workforce Strategy provides the Council with a framework to plan for the future in terms of its workforce, utilising management approaches which benefit our workforce and ultimately our communities. The Strategy will also help us add value to our services, recognising the vital contribution that employees have in the delivery and achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan.

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**Mary Pitcaithly**  
**Chief Executive**

## INTRODUCTION

With one of the largest workforces in the Falkirk Council area, the Council delivers a diverse variety of services to its communities. The Council is committed to providing high quality services and will do the best that it can with the resources that it has, to deliver its services and in particular, support those in the area who are vulnerable, at risk and who need extra support and care.

The Council's vision for the Falkirk Council area is to be the 'place to be'. We want everyone to share and be part of that vision, including our workforce.

It is through our employees that we deliver services to achieve our vision. This is demonstrated by the fact that c60% of our net revenue budget relates to employee costs.

The Council regards itself as a good employer and can evidence this in a number of ways such as:

- Paying the living wage, even when budgets are difficult;
- Having an extensive and competitive range of terms and conditions;
- Ensuring employees have access to good quality pension schemes and actively encouraging enrolment in the schemes;
- Putting in place a number of flexible and voluntary benefits packages for employees to access;
- Having employment policies and procedures which comply with and in some cases go beyond legal requirements;
- Enabling access to good quality training and development for our employees and their managers;
- Taking care of our employees through a range of health, safety and well-being support;
- Providing increased opportunities for employees to work flexibly.

The Council recognises the importance of maintaining a commitment to be a good employer and in particular, an employer of choice. This has become increasingly difficult in recent years given the financial pressures faced by most public sector organisations. It is however, essential for the Council to continue to attract and retain the right number of quality employees, with the skill range and attitude required for its workforce of the future, if it is to continue to deliver on its vision.

This workforce strategy sets out the aims of the Council in achieving this commitment, to ensure its workforce is fit for the future, as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan, budget strategy and transformation programme. It is also linked directly to the work Services require to undertake to implement change across the Council, as set out in Service Plans, and includes a model for services to develop workforce plans, as appropriate.

## **WORKFORCE VISION**

The Council's workforce is key to the successful delivery of the Corporate Plan: One Council, One Plan. Our vision for our workforce is: One Council, One Workforce.

It is essential that our workforce considers themselves to be in a single team, delivering to the best services the Council can, with the resources it has, to the communities of the Council area.

In promoting this vision, the Council wishes to be an employer of choice with a workforce who are 'happy, healthy and here'. We need to have the right employees, with the right skills, to be in the right place at the right time.

### **The Workforce We Want to Have**

To be a vibrant and innovative Council, we need to have a workforce which is focused on delivering high quality services to our communities. We need our workforce to be ambitious, resilient, open to change and flexible.

To do this, our employees will be engaged and empowered to make decisions and be self-reliant. The Council's workforce of the future will be look, feel and be different, with fewer employees and a smaller management team, focusing on strong strategic leadership, good communication and managing outcomes. The Council will be a more exciting and challenging place to work in delivering for our communities.

Our values will shape the workforce we want to have: Public Service, Performance and Partnership.

Our workforce will:

- Be focused on our customers and communities;
- Work with partners to provide excellent services that first and foremost meet people's needs;
- Be ambitious for our area and in particular for the children of our area;
- Work together across services to deliver on our priorities and ambitions;
- Encourage and deliver innovation;
- Seek to deliver on our priorities;
- Modernise and be flexible in the way they work and the way they deliver services;
- Ensure resources are appropriately targeted and used to meet priorities.

In all that we that we do, our workforce will be respectful to the diversity of our communities.



## **OUR WORKFORCE, OUR CHOICES**

The Council is undergoing an unprecedented level of change to ensure it can continue to deliver on its Corporate Plan, whilst working within reducing budgets and taking cognisance of the changes required in the way services are delivered. Consideration must be given to our challenges and our choices for the shape of our future workforce.

Workforce change is an essential element of the Council's budget strategy. In implementing change, the numbers, skill mix and flexibility of our workforce must match the plans for future service delivery. Whilst the profile of our workforce must be visionary and fit for the future, it must also align with the Council's budget strategy and Service Plans.

To assist in delivering change, we will use a variety of techniques, engaging with our workforce and Trade Union representatives. Some of these may include but will not be limited to the following:

- Keeping the balance between our permanent and temporary workforce at appropriate levels: whilst a permanent workforce offers more stability for both employees and the Council, flexibility is required to ensure we are able to address future changes in the shape and skills of our workforce.
- Ensuring active vacancy management arrangements: as vacancies arise we will ensure these opportunities are used to best advantage by assessing whether we need to fill the vacancy and if we do, whether our requirements have changed to meet our current service delivery requirements.
- Ensuring flexibility in our workforce: by offering our workforce opportunities for redeployment, particularly where they work in areas which require change as a result of the budget strategy. Redeployment enables change to happen whilst retaining employees in employment.
- Engaging our workforce to ensure effective change: this may be through our programme of Improvement Groups which will be set up as the need arises, to review specific areas of work and assess new and modernised methods of delivery, involving both employee and Trade Union representatives.
- Making use of our voluntary severance scheme: where employees feel they have contributed to the future of the Council and now wish to look at their own future, our severance scheme may be a means which enables an opportunity for this to happen, subject to this also aligning with the requirements of the Council for its future workforce profile.
- Making use of our Flexible Retirement Policy: this enables employees to phase towards retirement and the Council to retain essential skills and knowledge, and can be used where it assists the Council in developing its workforce profile.

We will plan for the future utilising good people management approaches, which benefit services and ultimately our communities. Our strategy recognises the valued contribution that employees make in the delivery and achievement of the Council's priorities.

## **ACHIEVING OUR WORKFORCE VISION**

In achieving our workforce vision, the Council must ask itself:

- What does our future workforce need to look like?
- How can our workforce be as efficient as possible?
- What competencies and skills does our workforce need?
- How do we support our workforce?
- How do we best engage our workforce in all that we do?

The answers to all of these questions link directly to the Council's Corporate Plan, Budget Strategy, Service Plans and vision for its service delivery of the future.

There are however, steps the Council can take to ensure the answers to these questions are delivered in line with such plans, which link directly to the Council's values.

### **VALUE: Public Service**

We will deliver on our value of public service through the following.

#### **Fairness - we will:**

- Review, update and develop our workforce policies in line with legislation and in response to feedback;
- Implement our working practices in line with our workforce policies and by using good management and leadership techniques;
- Undertake equality and poverty impact assessments on policy and other changes which impact on our workforce;
- Mainstream equalities into all of our workforce practices and policies;
- Reward employees appropriately for the job they are required to do.

#### **Listening and Responding – we will:**

- Seek feedback from our employees through our staff survey;
- Seek feedback from our employees through our health needs assessment survey;
- Develop service based action plans in response to our surveys;
- Use innovative ways to promote and support the health and well-being of our workforce.

#### **Being Open, Accessible and Accountable – we will:**

- Implement a feedback process for our employees and managers using our Achievement and Personal Development Scheme;
- Implement a 360 feedback process for our Chief Officers;
- Communicate and consult with our workforce on issues that affect our workforce;
- Encourage and implement open and positive relationships with our Trade Unions.

**Promoting our Services using Plain English as far as possible – we will:**

- Ensure that managers lead and act as role models for their employees;
- Provide clear feedback to our workforce on the standards that are expected;
- Encourage employees to be open and honest in their feedback to their managers;
- Advise employees of Council decisions that affect them.

**VALUE: Performance**

We will deliver on our value of performance through the following.

**Providing Quality – we will:**

- Provide access to the Customer Service Excellence programme for our workforce;
- Implement our Customer Service Charter and standards in all Services;
- Develop the management and leadership skills of relevant employees through our ILM development programmes, a coaching culture and the development of core competencies for our managers;
- Work with our employees to ensure up to date personal development plans are in place and active.

**Achieving Value for Money – we will:**

- Seek new and automated ways to deliver our core processes for workforce related transactions, e.g., payroll, recruitment, etc;
- Enhance and promote the use of our e-learning packages as the method of choice for relevant training;
- Undertake service reviews in consultation with our workforce;
- Develop workforce plans in key areas of service to inform our future service and workforce (number/skills/profile) needs and, as required, to help inform the work of our Improvement Groups.

**Promoting Innovation – we will:**

- Consider new models of service delivery which develop our services and achieve efficiencies;
- Implement change projects such as the SSTAR project, and ensure these are developed to meet their full potential;
- Encourage employees to contribute to the development of innovative and new ways of working through Improvement Groups for key areas of change;
- Celebrate our successes and encourage employees to bring forward new ideas.

**Seeking Continuous Improvement – we will:**

- Review our structure arrangements to ensure they meet our future workforce requirements in line with our corporate plan, budget strategy, service plans and workforce plans;

- Promote the development of our workforce to ensure it supports a programme of change and succession planning;
- Encourage the appointment of trainee posts, e.g., modern apprentices, to support a programme of change and succession planning;
- Promote ways of resourcing our workforce to enable workforce flexibility and to improve and promote work life balance.

## **VALUE: Partnership**

We will deliver on our value of partnership through the following.

### **Effective Communication – we will:**

- Talk to our employees about issues that affect them through the use of 1-1s and team meetings;
- Ensure effective employee engagement when developing and managing workforce changes;
- Promote positive engagement and consultation with Trade Unions, as our workforce representatives, through mechanisms such as the Joint Consultative Committee and Service Based Forums;
- Listen to our workforce and respond in ways which help them to achieve their full potential.

### **Sharing Decision Making – we will:**

- Engage with our workforce and Trade Unions on change programmes and new ways of working;
- Engage with our workforce and Trade Unions on new ways to deliver a modern and effective employment package;
- Work with employees and Trade Unions to develop ways to improve attendance;
- Work with external partners to ensure effective workforce practices in joint arrangements, e.g., Health and Social Care Integration, Falkirk Community Trust, etc.

### **Encouraging Partnership – we will:**

- Work with our partners to ensure advantage is taken of joint working opportunities;
- Work with our occupational health adviser to deliver an integrated approach to health promotion;
- Work in partnership with our employees to deliver the best services that we can with the resources that we have;
- Encourage our workforce to work positively with all employees across the Council to deliver on the Council's workforce vision: One Council, One Workforce.

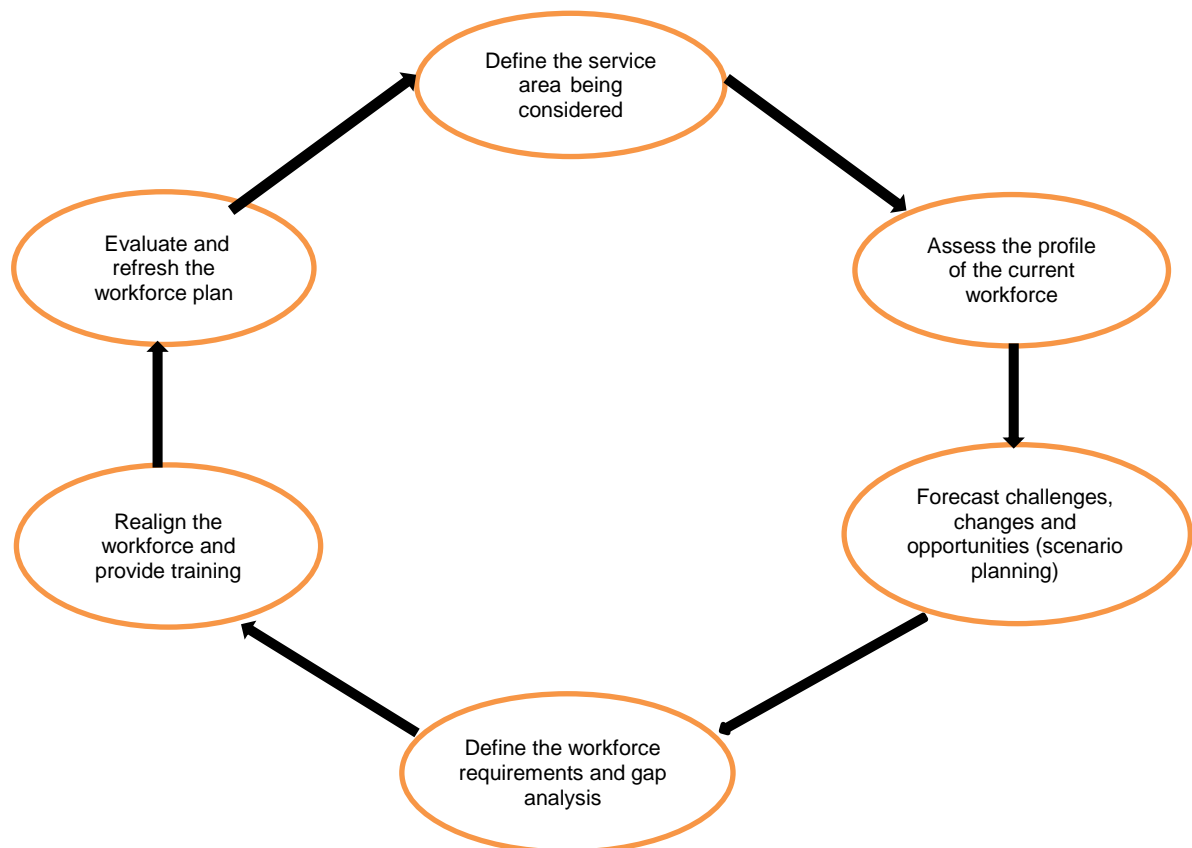
## WORKFORCE PLANNING

Workforce planning is the process used to ensure the right people with the right skills, knowledge and attitudes are in the right place at the right time.

This is essential in all that we do and is integral to the role of a good manager. On a small scale, this is managed through our normal and developmental 1-1 process, as well as team meetings, whilst looking at our future needs, linking to our Service Plans.

Where however, there are future service changes and pressures, it is important that a consistent approach is adopted to ensure the Council is making best use of its workforce, and planning appropriately for the future. Such an approach also assists with succession planning.

The workforce planning process adopted by the Council can be outlined as follows:



A template and guidance will be provided to Services to enable a consistent approach to be implemented when undertaking a workforce planning exercise within their Service.

## **Monitoring and Review of Our Workforce Strategy**

The Council's Workforce Strategy will guide our workforce practices over the next 3 to 5 years, and will be amended to reflect developments in our approach to leading our workforce.

It must be read in conjunction with the various workforce policies and practices, which are the responsibility of employees across our workforce.

It will be adapted to reflect any changes in our Corporate Plan or Budget Strategy.

It will be monitored by our Chief Executive and Directors, in consultation with our Head of Human Resources & Business Transformation, to ensure the strategy for our workforce remains fit for the future.

There is a wide range of information which will help to inform any review. This includes but is not exclusive to the following:

- Feedback from survey returns – both employee and customer focused surveys;
- Workforce profile statistics such as employee numbers, age profile and skill profile;
- Management information such as absence statistics and turnover statistics;
- Internal and external audits;
- Benchmarking;
- Feedback from other external agencies, e.g., Healthy Working Lives.

Importantly, feedback from our workforce and Trade Unions will be essential to informing developments in our strategy.