

**HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION - SERVICE PLAN 1998/99
END OF YEAR REPORT**

Accountable Officer and Author: Bev Bithell (Head of Human Resources) MK 253849

1. **Purpose**

1.1 To report the achievements of the 1998/9 Service Plan for the Human Resources Division (HRD)

2. **Summary**

2.1 The HRD Service Plan was presented to this Committee on 23 March 1999. Each area of Council service is required to report on the achievement of the Service Plan at the end of the year. This report details those key achievements for each section of the Division.

3. **Recommendations**

3.1 To note this report.

4. **Background**

4.1 The Human Resources Division centralised on 1 April 1998. This move brought significant challenges to the division particularly in light of the reduction in staffing by 43% which accompanied it.

4.2 Considerable progress was made during 1998/99 to implement the new structure, despite the sickness and ultimate retirement of the Head of Human Resources. However, due to continuing high workload levels in HR, strategic and operational difficulties arose during the year which could not have been entirely foreseen. This has clearly impacted on the Division's ability to achieve all the objectives detailed in the service plan.

Objective

Comment

Divisional Objectives

To move into level 3 of Saxon Court so that all the Division's staff work from the same location. This will enable the best use to be made of the flexibility in the use of staff and the economies of scale provided by the centralisation of the HR function - target date for completion 30 June 1998

completed

To develop its internal communication and information systems to ensure that HR services to directorates are provided according to the needs of our clients, and where appropriate within measurable timescales

ongoing

To review the operation of the new HR structure and consult all of our clients, to enable us to produce a detailed Service Plan for 1999/2000

completed

To implement Time Recording and Performance Management systems for all Sections to enable the Division to accurately assess the workloads for each of our clients and to be in a position to agree SLA's which reflect the true costs of providing the service

completed

To invest time in developing teams and individuals within the Division so that the appropriate levels of knowledge, skill and effective team-working are in place to deliver high quality services to the Council and its directorates

ongoing

To allocate individual accountabilities to members of staff through the staff development and appraisal system

ongoing

To establish the services to be put out to CCT, prepared the tender documentation, consult with likely competitors, advertised for tenderers and prepare a short list of tenderers

Not required

To implement in full the Single Status Scheme to provide a harmonised pay and remuneration package for all employees

Achieved for the majority of staff negotiations ongoing regarding School Based non-teaching staff.

Operations Section Objectives

To integrate the Payroll and HR functions to provide:

- (a) a one stop enquiry line for clients
- (b) an electronic link between payroll and personnel systems
- (c) payroll, personnel and finance systems provide the same (accurate) staffing data

To establish systems to provide management information in relation to staffing within the following deadlines

- (a) all requests for standard management reports met within 5 working days
- (b) all unique requests for management information met within 10 working days

To streamline operational procedures in accordance with the following targets:

- (a) a 20% reduction in HR generated paperwork managers are required to complete
- (b) all employment contracts issued within 8 weeks of appointment, 80% within 4 weeks of appointment

To manage a 40% reduction in staffing effectively

None of the original objectives of Operations Section were achieved. This was due to three reasons:

- (a) the new computerised payroll and personnel system had not been implemented. Delays were due to both staffing and technical problems;
- (b) even the reduced number of posts were not filled. It is proved impossible to find short term replacements for key staff. A senior HR Officer was on maternity leave. One of the 4.5 HROs was also on maternity leave. One .5 HRO was on

long term sick; and

- (c) the HR Manager (Operations) was heavily involved in a high profile grievance/ ET claim.

However, the following tasks, which were not detailed in the Service Plan, were achieved

- (a) contained a greatly increased volume of work with a greatly decreased number of staff
- (b) integrated payroll and four directorate teams into a single unit.
- (c) integrated Neighbourhood Services payroll function into centralised team.
- (d) standardised claiming procedures for casual employees.
- (e) payroll deduction reconciliation process transferred from Corporate Finance.
- (f) established a temporary centralised recruitment team.
- (g) increased revenue from advertising through payroll by £10000.
- (h) undertook groundwork in preparation for the introduction of Open Door with existing resources.
- (i) assisted with restructuring exercises in each directorate.
- (j) processed approximately 120 ER/VRs
- (k) produced a pack of generic job profiles in consultation and for schools in preparation for the introduction of single status.

Employee Development Section Objectives

To produce a strategic plan, fully endorsed by all directorates, which maps out how the Employee Development function will support the achievement of the Council's strategic aims and service objectives	ongoing
To implement a new approach to senior management development	ongoing
To review all training and development policies in consultation with clients, trade unions and professional associations and communicated the agreed policies throughout the organisation	completed
To implement a revised appraisal scheme	completed
To produce a clearly stated framework for employee development, which enables all employees and their managers to identify individual and group development needs in the context of their service area and job roles	completed as part of appraisal scheme

To manage the delivery of the annual in-house training programme and supported directorates in the achievement of their training plans completed

Employee Relations and Corporate Support Services Section Objectives

To complete the production of all HR Policies for the new Council Completed with commitment to review some policies ongoing

To prepare easily understood HR Practice Notes for Managers

To ensure that formal consultation and communications mechanisms are in place and are effective throughout the Council completed

To complete outstanding Job Evaluations for DSO, Schools non-teaching staff, home-carers and other manual posts completed but schools support staff job evaluations being examined in greater detail

To consult on and negotiated terms and conditions which are to be agreed locally in accordance with the provisions of the Single Status Agreement (Green Book) completed with the exception of schools support which are ongoing

To project manage the Job Evaluation Appeals process, including training for Appeals Panel members to ensure that all Appeals are processed completed

To review the Occupational Health Contract in the light of operational needs and risk assessment requirements completed

To manage the introduction of the new childcare scheme completed

4.3 All of the above were achieved alongside the provision of the full range of day to day HR services.

4.4 Many clients have acknowledged the difficulties faced by the HR Division, and expressed their thanks for the support offered by HR during the year. Their feedback has been appreciated by all HR staff. Unfortunately, resource constraints and the Division's consequent inability to perform at the required level meant that there was also much criticism of the service being delivered. This feedback, whilst not particularly welcome, helps us to see clearly what is valued by clients and what is not and was used in the formulation of the 1999/2000 Service Plan.

5. Implications

5.1 Environmental

None.

5.2 Equalities

None.

5.3 Financial

None.

5.4 Legal

None.

5.5 Staff and Accommodation

None.

6. **Conclusions**

6.1 1998/99 was a challenging year for the organisation and the HR Division. 1999/2000 will be equally challenging but HR staff, both established and newly appointed, are committed to taking a key role in the Council's drive to attain service excellence and efficiency.

Background Papers: Service Plan 1998/99