

Title of Report:	Recruitment and Selection Policy, Procedure and Guidance	Item 4
Report to be considered by:	Personnel	
Date of Meeting:	17 July 2009	
Forward Plan Ref:	N/a	

Purpose of Report: To seek Personnel Committee's final approval of the recruitment and selection policy, procedure and guidance

Recommended Action: Personnel Committee is recommended to approve the recruitment and selection policy, procedure and guidance.

Reason for decision to be taken: This report introduces a new policy and procedure covering the whole of the recruitment and selection process. It does not introduce major policy changes, but sets out current good practice and replaces all previous management guidance on recruitment. The Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure have been discussed and ratified by Management Board and require final approval by Personnel Committee.

Key background documentation: None

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Plan Theme:

CPT14 - Effective People

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Plan Priorities and Themes by:

Ensuring that the Council is able to recruit the right staff with the right skills and experience to deliver its services, ensuring that it observes its duty to safeguard vulnerable adults and children, and equality of opportunity in the selection process.

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Implications

- Policy:** This report proposes a new HR policy
- Financial:** There are no financial implications arising from the approval of this policy.
- Personnel:** This report is proposed by Human Resources
- Legal/Procurement:** There are no new legal or procurement issues arising from the proposed policy. The Council contracts with an advertising agency using approved procedures.
- Property:** n/a
- Risk Management:** The approval of this comprehensive policy, procedure and management guidance will reduce the risk of problems arising from the recruitment and selection process, which could include allegations of discrimination or breach of contract.
- Equalities Impact Assessment:** An equality impact assessment was carried out on the final version of the new policy. It identified the need to carry out analysis of equality monitoring data gathered in the recruitment process to ensure that any trends are identified and acted upon.

Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:		
The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Item is Urgent Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The new recruitment and selection policy, procedure and guidance have been written to record current processes within the Council and to reflect best practice in the field. The document replaces previous management guidance which was written in 1999 and which has not been widely available for reference by managers and HR in latter years.
- 1.2 The document brings together a policy statement and procedures and guidance for managers in one place. This was done at the request of the management consultation group.
- 1.3 The purpose of the policy is to ensure that West Berkshire Council recruits the right employees;
 - Fairly and efficiently
 - In line with agreed staffing levels
 - Within agreed recruitment and advertising budgets
 - To meet its operational requirements and strategic aims
- 1.4 The policy aims to ensure that the Council's workforce reflects the community that it serves, whilst providing promotional opportunities to current employees.
- 1.5 The procedures provide step by step instructions to support those involved in recruitment and selection, with guidance on best practice.
- 1.6 Appendices one and two (pending) provide additional advice on safeguarding to recruiting managers from regulated services (working with children and vulnerable adults).
- 1.7 The new policy and procedure will be supported by a completely revised training programme for recruitment and selection, with a day on procedures run by internal HR professionals and a separate day on interview skills run by an external training consultant. This replaces the previous two day course run entirely by external consultants and will reduce costs whilst improving the content and relevance of the course.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 The Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure have been discussed and ratified by Management Board. Final approval is now sought from Management Board.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 Personnel Committee is recommended to approve the recruitment and selection policy, procedure and guidance.

Appendices

Appendix A – The recruitment and selection policy, procedure and guidance.

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: n/a

Officers Consulted: Corporate Board and managers in the HR management consultation group.

Trade Union: Unison and GMB.



Recruitment and Selection Policy, Procedure and Guidance

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the recruitment and selection policy is to ensure that West Berkshire Council recruits the right employees;
- fairly and efficiently;
 - in line with agreed staffing levels;
 - within agreed recruitment and advertising budgets;
 - to meet its operational requirements and strategic aims.
- 1.2 The policy aims to ensure that the Council's workforce reflects the community that it serves, whilst providing promotional opportunities to current employees.

2. Policy and supporting documentation

- 2.1 This document consists of:
- A policy statement which sets out the Council's approach to the recruitment and selection of employees (sections 1-6).
 - Procedural guidance to be followed when filling vacancies in line with the Recruitment and Selection Policy ([sections 7 - 39.](#))
 - [Appendix One](#) – special requirements for regulated services (Adults Services)
 - [Appendix Two](#) – special requirements for regulated services (Childrens Services)
 - [Appendix Three](#) - a process chart showing the stages of recruitment and selection and the responsibilities of all those involved.
 - [Appendix Four](#) – an interview checklist for recruiting managers.
 - [Appendix Five](#)– candidates' frequently asked questions
 - [Appendix Six](#) - advertisement template
 - [Appendix Seven](#) – Pre-employment checks checklist
- 2.2 This document has been the subject of consultation with Heads of Service and Trade Unions. The Chief Executive and Corporate Board have approved the Recruitment and Selection Policy.
- 2.3 Other related documents are listed at the end of the policy. All documents are available from the Human Resources pages of the intranet.

3. Applicability

- 3.1 The Recruitment and Selection Policy applies to:
- 3.1.1 All non-school based employees working for the Council, including those working from home or at non-Council locations.
- 3.1.2 Potential employees of West Berkshire Council.
- 3.2 Separate procedures apply to teachers and school based employees. (Further advice is available from Human Resources).

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1 The overall responsibility for recruitment and selection within West Berkshire Council rests with the Chief Executive.
- 4.2 The Head of Human Resources is responsible for maintaining and reviewing this policy and procedure, in line with changes to legislation and codes of practice and for providing advice and guidance on its implementation.
- 4.3 All those involved in the recruitment and selection process are responsible for:
- Familiarising themselves and adhering to the recruitment and selection policy, procedure and guidance
 - Carrying out recruitment fairly and without prejudice
 - Attending training as required
 - Keeping applicants' personal details confidential as appropriate
- 4.4 All managers are directly responsible for implementing this policy within their service areas, and for the adherence of their staff to the policy.
- 4.5 All recruiting managers should attend the 'recruitment and selection' course on the corporate [Training Programme](#) before undertaking recruitment activity,
- 4.6 Where the recruiting manager has not attended the corporate recruitment and selection course, at least one member of the short listing and interview panel must have attended this course. The role of this person is to ensure that the selection activity is carried out in accordance with West Berkshire Council's policy and good recruitment practice.
- 4.7 In the case of a disagreement between the trained person and the recruiting manager, the trained person should try to resolve this with the recruiting manager in the first instance. Where the trained person remains concerned he/she should contact Human Resources (HR) for further advice.
- 4.8 Recruiting managers in regulated services are responsible for ensuring compliance with additional requirements for recruitment and selection. For further information see appendix one (Adult services) and appendix two (Childrens services).
- 4.9 HR is responsible for:
- Providing support, administration and advice to recruiting managers
 - Carrying out Criminal Records Bureau checks and ensuring that all other pre-recruitment checks are completed
 - Monitoring diversity data and providing strategic advice on equality in recruitment
- 4.10 HR will assign a Human Resources Assistant (HRA) to the vacancy at the start of the recruitment process. The HRA will normally carry out all HR responsibilities throughout recruitment to the vacancy and should be the recruiting manager's first point of contact within HR.

5. West Berkshire Council Recruitment and Selection Policy

- 5.1 West Berkshire Council is committed to establishing an effective and appropriate workforce to enable it to achieve its operational requirements and strategic aims.
- 5.2 It is the Council's policy to carry out all recruitment and selection activities to ensure that;
- Selection for interview and appointment is based solely on the qualifications, skills, experience and abilities necessary to do the job;
 - Opportunities for promotion for existing employees are encouraged by advertising suitable vacancies internally only in the first instance;
 - Disabled applicants who meet the minimum selection criteria for the job are guaranteed an interview;
 - The Council works towards a workforce which matches, as closely as possible, the demographic make up of the population of West Berkshire.

Equalities

- 5.3 The Council is committed to recruiting employees on the basis of their qualifications, skills and experience relevant to the job, regardless of their sex, transgender, marital or civil partnership status, race, sexual orientation, religion or belief, disability or age, in accordance with the [Equality in Employment Policy](#). Care will be taken to ensure that selection methods do not unlawfully discriminate.
- 5.4 Recruitment and selection will be conducted as an evidence based process and candidates will be assessed against selection criteria, based on relevant knowledge, skills, competencies, experience and qualifications required to perform the job as specified in the job description and person specification.
- 5.5 Where a candidate has a known disability reasonable adjustments will be made so that the interview and any tests can take place fairly.
- 5.6 HR will gather equality data from applicants to monitor recruitment processes to ensure they do not discriminate against certain groups. HR will not normally disclose such data to the recruiting manager, or others involved in making the selection decision, prior to the decision being made. An exception will be made where a disabled applicant who meets the minimum selection criteria for the post has not been short-listed for interview or where reasonable adjustments need to be made to enable him/her to fairly take part in an interview and/or tests.

Before advertising

- 5.7 The recruitment and selection process will not commence until an evaluation of the need for the role in the context of the team and service area's strategic plans and budget has been completed. Managers must obtain authorisation from the Portfolio Holder for their service before starting the recruitment process.
- 5.8 Recruiting managers will comply with the [job evaluation procedure](#) when writing new and/or amending existing job descriptions to ensure that all jobs are evaluated and remunerated appropriately.

- 5.9 Increases in grade and/or budget must be appropriately authorised, as described in [section eight](#) of the recruitment and selection procedure and guidance below, before the recruitment process begins.

Advertising

- 5.10 All vacancies will be advertised, unless the post will be filled by an existing employee whose employment is at risk due to redundancy or ill-health (redeployment).
- 5.11 Vacancies will normally be advertised internally via the internal vacancy bulletin, before being advertised externally. Applications will normally only be accepted from internal applicants in the first instance. Where there are no suitable internal applicants the post will be advertised externally. This will create career development opportunities for existing employees.
- 5.12 Simultaneous internal and external advertising may be authorised following agreement with a trade union representative.

Relocation expenses

- 5.13 Assistance under the Council's relocation scheme will only be offered to employees where it has been included in the advertisement. The cost of the relocation package will be met by the service budget. For more details see [the Relocation Scheme](#).

Applications

- 5.14 Applicants will be given sufficient information about the vacancy to enable them to make a realistic decision about applying for the job.
- 5.15 All applicants must complete a standard application form. Curriculum Vitae (CVs) will not be accepted.
- 5.16 Applications from ex-employees of the Council who received a severance payment or premature retirement benefits, or who were dismissed on grounds of misconduct or lack of capability, or who have resigned in circumstances where sufficient evidence existed to convene a formal hearing to consider dismissal, will not be accepted unless they meet the exceptions specified in the [Re-Employment Policy](#).

Short-listing and Interviewing

- 5.17 At least one member of the short-listing and interview panel will be the line manager or someone at the level of the line manager of the vacant post or above.
- 5.18 Applications will be assessed against only the criteria listed on the person specification.
- 5.19 Normally only those people who meet all the essential criteria on the person specification, measurable from the application form, will be invited to interview.

Where more people than can be reasonably interviewed meet the essential criteria, only those who also meet some of the desirable qualities will be called for interview. (Except in cases listed in 5.20 below)

- 5.20 HR will identify any disabled applicant who has not been short-listed for interview and assess with the recruiting manager whether he/she meets the minimum criteria. Where the applicant does meet the minimum criteria he/she will be invited to interview.
- 5.21 At interview the suitability of each applicant will be assessed against the requirements of the job as specified in the job description and person specification. Interview questions will be based upon these requirements.
- 5.22 All interviews for the same post will normally be conducted by the same people.

Testing

- 5.23 Any tests used in the selection process should be directly related to the vacant role and measured against objective criteria. Care must be taken to ensure that tests do not unlawfully discriminate.
- 5.24 Psychometric tests will be carried out by a suitably qualified person. The same assessors will normally assess the tests of all candidates.
- 5.25 Candidates will be notified of the details of any tests to be used when they are invited to interview.

Pre-employment checks

- 5.26 The Council will carry out appropriate pre-employment checks for applicants prior to appointment as specified in the pre-employment checks procedure and the advice to managers on avoiding illegal working. See [recruiting and appointing staff](#) on the HR Intranet.
- 5.27 All successful candidates working with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults will be subject to criminal records bureau (CRB) checks along with other relevant employment checks. In certain circumstances an employee may start work before a CRB check has been obtained as long as he/she is suitably supervised and measures are put in place to protect children, young people and/or vulnerable adults for whom the Council has a duty of care. Managers should comply with the requirements of the [CRB Disclosure Application Procedure](#). Managers of regulated services should also refer to section 5.33 and 5.34 below.

Reaching a decision

- 5.28 Recruitment decisions will be based on evidence gathered during the recruitment and selection process.
- 5.29 Where an internal candidate and an external candidate score equally in the interviewing and testing (where used) it is the Council's policy to offer the post to the internal candidate.

Offers of employment

- 5.30 Offers of employment must comply with the Council's pay, terms and conditions of employment and other policies and procedures relevant to the role .
- 5.31 A contract of employment will normally be offered on a permanent basis. Where temporary employment is to be offered recruiting managers will comply with the guidance in [Using Casual, Fixed Term and Agency Staff](#).
- 5.32 If a vacancy arises in the same job role within six months of the original appointment the recruiting manager may offer the vacancy to another suitable applicant from the original recruitment process, unless the vacancy would provide suitable redeployment for an employee whose employment is at risk due to redundancy or ill-health. Where no further suitable applicants are available the recruitment process should start from the beginning.

Special requirements for regulated services

- 5.33 Services that are regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CSCI prior to 1st April 2009) such as care homes, domiciliary care and adult placement, must comply with additional specific requirements and guidance. See [appendix one](#) and the [Guidance logs](#) on the Care Quality Commission website
- 5.34 Services regulated by Ofsted must comply with additional specific requirements and guidance. See [appendix two](#) for further information.

Feedback

- 5.35 Unsuccessful applicants at all stages of the recruitment process have the right to receive feedback from a member of the recruiting panel on request.

Records and monitoring

- 5.36 Records of selection decisions will be kept for six months from the date of appointment.
- 5.37 Applicants' personal details will be kept confidential as appropriate. Details of successful applicants will be kept on their personnel files, details of unsuccessful applicants will be destroyed six months after the post is filled.
- 5.38 The Council will monitor:
- The time taken to recruit to a vacancy to ensure that it is effective and timely
 - The effectiveness of advertising media
 - Equality data about candidates to ensure that the recruitment process is not discriminating against certain groups
- 5.39 Under the Data Protection Act applicants have the right to request to see records held about them.

6. Failure to comply with WBC Recruitment Policy

- 6.1 Adherence to this policy is a condition of working for the council or using its assets.
- 6.2 All those involved in the recruitment process are responsible for familiarising themselves with, and complying with, the Recruitment and Selection Policy, Procedure and Guidance.
- 6.3 Failure to follow the policy may result in:
- Informal disciplinary processes
 - Formal disciplinary action (in accordance with the disciplinary procedure)

The above section is the policy of the Council.

The section below contains the procedure and guidance that should be followed when implementing the policy during recruiting and selecting applicants to fill vacancies.

DRAFT

Recruitment and Selection Procedure and Guidance

The recruitment and selection procedures and guidance in sections 7 – 38 should be followed by all those involved in the recruitment and selection process to ensure that employees are fairly and efficiently recruited in line with the Recruitment and Selection Policy.

7. Avoiding discrimination

[back to para 2.1](#)

7.1 All those involved in the recruitment process should avoid taking any action or making any decision that discriminates on grounds of sex, transgender, marital or civil partnership status, racial group, sexual orientation, religion or belief, disability or age.

7.2 Discrimination can be direct or indirect.

7.2.1 Direct discrimination involves deliberately treating someone less favourably because of a particular characteristic; for example because someone is disabled.

7.2.2 Indirect discrimination is usually unintentional but happens where a requirement is applied to applicants that makes it significantly harder for a group to meet the requirement. For example requiring applicants to have 10 years management experience may make it harder for young applicants to meet the criteria as they have not been in the workplace as long as older people, or for women to meet the criteria as they are more likely to have taken career breaks to care for children.

7.3 Recruiting managers and short-listing and interview panels should ensure that the criteria set are actually required for someone to do the job to a satisfactory standard, and that the decisions that they make are based on how applicants meet those requirements. Recruiting managers and panel should consider whether any of the criteria, any questions and/or tests that they intend to use could unlawfully discriminate. Further advice can be sought from HR.

7.4 Interview panels should avoid asking for personal information or views irrelevant to the job as these could potentially be discriminatory; for example age related questions or those about an applicant's intention to have children.

7.5 Where an applicant requests flexible working this should be allowed where possible within [current flexible working policies](#) and where it will not have a detrimental effect upon service delivery. Information about job sharing contracts can be found in [Job Sharing - advice for managers](#).

8. Starting the recruitment process

8.1 If creating a new post or amending an existing post the manager should complete an [EC1 Change to Establishment Form](#). The form needs to be authorised by the Head of Service, authorisation must also be obtained from the portfolio member

for the relevant service and the Leader of the Council or his representative via the Budget Monitoring Panel.

- 8.2 The recruitment and selection process for any vacancy should not commence until an evaluation of the need for the role in the context of the team and service area's strategic plans and budget has been completed.
- 8.3 Line managers should review
- The on-going requirement of the type of work being done and how this meets the requirements of the service and any team plans
 - Any foreseeable future changes
 - The way in which the work is done
 - The skills and experience that the post holder will need to have in order to succeed in the role
 - The current job description and person specification
 - The budget
- 8.4 The recruiting manager should write a job description and person specification for the role, or review existing ones where these exist. Further information can be found in [Writing job descriptions and person specifications - advice for managers'](#)
- 8.5 New or significantly changed job descriptions should be evaluated using the Council's job evaluation process. Authorisation of the Head of Service must be obtained before a grade to an existing post is increased. More information can be found in the [Job Evaluation Procedure](#) and [Writing job descriptions and person specifications - advice for managers](#).
- 8.6 In order to start the recruitment process, the recruiting manager should complete an [EC5 Recruitment Form](#) and gain authorisation as specified on the form. Managers should also ensure that they comply with any local arrangements for gaining authorisation to recruit within their own services.
9. **Advertising vacancies – general information**
- 9.1 The purpose of recruitment advertising is to attract suitable applicants to apply for the vacancy.
- 9.2 Where appropriate the recruiting manager should decide whether to use the Council's relocation scheme as a method of attracting suitable people to apply for the role. Where the relocation scheme is to be used it should be stated in the advert. The cost of any relocation package will be met by the service and the amount offered is at the discretion of the Head of Service, up to the maximum of the scheme. More information can be found in the [relocation scheme](#).
- 9.3 All posts will normally be advertised internally within the Council via the internal vacancy bulletin, before being advertised externally. This will help provide staff with opportunities for career development, retaining the skills and expertise of staff. A period of ten working days will normally be allowed for expressions of interest from internal applicants.
- 9.4 In exceptional circumstances a vacancy may be advertised internally and externally at the same time; for example where there is no obvious skills match

within the Council and the likelihood of filling the vacancy externally is probable. Agreement from a trade union representative must be sought before this can take place.

- 9.5 The requirement to advertise positions will be waived if necessary to enable the Council to fulfil its duty to seek redeployment for employees whose employment is at risk due to redundancy or ill-health.
- 9.6 In order to place an advert the recruiting manager will need to provide HR with the following documents and information via email:
- An accurately completed and authorised EC5 and EC1 form (Where appropriate)
 - The wording for the advert
 - An up to date job description and person specification
 - The closing date for applications. A period of two weeks is normally allowed between the advert being published and the closing date. This can be extended where necessary, for example where the advert is being placed over the summer and it is likely that applicants may be on holiday. If a recruiting manager wishes to have a closing date of less than two weeks from the publication date he/she should discuss this with the HR assistant.
 - The names of the people on the panel who will short-list the applications. It is important that the recruiting manager ensures that panel members will be available to short-list applications within 7 working days of the closing date.
 - The date(s) on which interviews will be held and the names of those who will be on the interview panel. The recruiting manager should make sure that all panel members are available to attend the interviews on the date(s) specified.
 - Any additional information to be included in application packs (See section 11 below for further information).
 - Following the closing date HR will email the application forms that have been received. If the recruiting manager would prefer to receive paper copies of these he/she should inform HR.
- 9.7 Advertising is currently done on a fortnightly basis, although this may be subject to change (Further advice can be sought from HR). HR need to have received all the above information by 5pm on Tuesday in order to place an advertisement in the next internal vacancy bulletin and, where appropriate, in the local papers. Where a recruiting manager wants to advertise in national papers and/or specialist journals he/she should discuss the deadline for paperwork and publication dates with the HR Assistant.
- 9.8 Where positions are advertised externally they will be advertised using the most appropriate and cost effective medium to maximise the number of suitably qualified candidates. This may include local, national and/or international publications and web sites. Recruiting managers should seek advice from HR about the style and content of adverts, where to advertise and how to minimise the cost of advertising.
- 9.9 Vacancies that are advertised in external publications will also be advertised in the vacancies section of the Council's website.

- 9.10 Human Resources monitor the response to advertisements placed in different publications and can advise recruiting managers on which advertising media are likely to result in the best response, and on the cost of these.
- 9.11 There is a central budget for advertising; this is allocated to vacant posts according to grade band. The grade bands are:

Grade of vacant post	Maximum total advertising costs paid from central budget
A-C	£642
D-E	£693
F-H	£1,311
I-K	£2,624
L-M	£3,114
N and above	£4,043

Where the vacant post has a grade that crosses more than one of the above grade bands, the lower banding will be used. For example a post which is grade D to F will come under grade banding D-E and will be allowed a maximum advertising cost of £693 from the central budget. This is the total amount allowed from the central budget, **not** a cost per advert.

- 9.12 Where a manager wishes to spend more than the amount allocated from the central budget the additional cost must be paid by the service. Recruiting managers should obtain authorisation from their Head of Service before advertising.
- 9.13 If a manager needs re-advertise after failing to recruit from a first advert a new charge can be made to the central budget up to the maximum listed for the grade of the vacant post. Before re-advertising the recruiting manager should contact HR to jointly review the wording of the advert and where it should be placed.

10. Advertising vacancies – writing an advert

- 10.1 Recruiting managers should send the wording for the advert to HR with the documents listed in point 9.6 above. [Appendix five](#) contains a template which can be used for the advert wording.
- 10.2 The Council uses a recruitment agency to design recruitment adverts, based on the wording provided by the recruiting manager, and to place adverts in the chosen publication(s). Adverts are usually created using a standard corporate style. In exceptional circumstances individually designed adverts can be created, however this is normally more expensive for the service area and must still comply with the Council’s corporate branding standards.
- 10.3 Advertising costs are normally based on the size of the advert to be placed so recruiting managers should ensure that adverts are concisely worded to give sufficient information to attract suitable candidates. HR can provide advice on wording adverts effectively and cost saving initiatives such as combination adverts for the same roles within a directorate.

- 10.4 The recruiting manager should refer to the up to date job description and person specification when writing the wording for an advert. This will help to ensure that the advert can be worded to accurately to reflect the requirements of the job.
- 10.5 The advert should give information about the type of vacancy the recruiting manager is seeking to fill, basic terms and conditions and information on how to apply. This should include:
- Job title
 - Grade
 - Salary range
 - Location of the post
 - Type of employment contract (If anything other than permanent)
 - Main duties
 - Essential qualifications, experience and any special skills required – this should be based on the essential criteria of the person specification
 - How to apply and who to contact for further information
 - The closing date for receipt of applications
- 10.6 Where the advert is to be placed in specialist journals or the national press the recruiting manager should consider how, within the corporate style, he/she can make the advert stand out from other similar ones advertising comparable jobs in the same publications. It can be useful to look at previous editions to see how similar jobs have been advertised.
- 10.7 Recruiting managers should consider how he/she can describe the key points of the job in an interesting way to encourage suitable applicants to apply. However, care should be taken to ensure that the advert reflects the actual vacancy and does not mislead applicants by over emphasising small 'exciting' areas of the job.
- 10.8 Care should be taken to ensure that the wording does not unlawfully discriminate against groups of people. Phrases such as 'mature person' or 'would suit newly qualified person' should not be used as this could imply age discrimination.
11. **Advertising vacancies - Information to include in the application pack.**
- 11.1 The aim of recruiting is to find a suitable employee who feels that he/she has made the right decision in choosing to work for the Council. To achieve this it is important that recruiting managers provide applicants with relevant information to make an informed decision about whether they would like to work for the Council, about the vacancy and so that they can assess whether they have the required skills, knowledge and experience.
- 11.2 Applicants can download, or ask HR to send them a 'Candidate Information Pack'. This contains the following information:
- Information about West Berkshire
 - Information about the Council
 - The Council's senior management structure chart
 - An overview of the Council plan, priorities and values
 - Guidance on filling out the application form

- Information about the recruitment process
- A copy of the terms and conditions of employment
- An application form
- An equal opportunities monitoring form

11.3 Recruiting managers may wish to include further information in the pack – for example information about the service and its priorities, details of projects related to the vacant post. Recruiting managers should send any additional information to HR with the other advertising information.

12. **Advertising vacancies – action following placement of the advert**

12.1 HR will contact the recruiting manager to confirm when the advert will be published.

12.2 HR will contact the recruiting manager half way between the advert being placed and the closing date to let him/her know how much interest there has been in the vacancy so far.

12.3 On the closing date HR will email the details of applicants, applications received and short-listing forms to the recruiting manager. If the recruiting manager is not going to be available on the closing date he/she should let HR know in advance who this information should be sent to

12.4 If the recruiting manager has requested paper copies of the application forms these will be sent by internal post instead of via email.

13. **Applications**

13.1 Applicants can access application packs via the Council's website. Human Resources will send out a paper version of the application pack to those requesting them.

13.2 All applicants must complete a standard application form in full and return it to HR. This can either be done electronically or as a paper version. Where an applicant applies electronically the recruiting manager should get him/her to sign and date their application form at interview.

13.3 CVs are not accepted. This is to ensure that all applicants respond to the same questions and to make it easier to compare applicants during short-listing.

13.4 Applications will normally only be considered if they are received by the closing date for the vacancy, although this is at the discretion of the recruiting manager.

13.5 If an employee involved in the recruitment process has a close personal relationship or familial relationship with an applicant he/she must declare this to his/her line manager. The line manager may arrange for another person to handle the recruitment process.

13.6 HR will check all applications received against a log of ex-employees who

- Received a redundancy, severance payment or premature retirement benefits.

- Were dismissed on grounds of misconduct or lack of capability, or who resigned in circumstances where sufficient evidence existed to convene a formal hearing to consider dismissal.

13.7 Where an applicant left the Council's employment in the circumstances described in point 13.6 above, HR can advise the recruiting manager on how to meet the requirements of the [Re-employment Policy](#).

14. **Short-listing**

14.1 Short-listing is the process used to choose which applicants to invite to interview.

14.2 Short-listing should be carried out by at least two people, including the recruiting manager or someone at the same grade as the recruiting manager. At least one member of the panel should have attended the corporate Recruitment and Selection course. All applications for the same vacancy should normally be short-listed by the same people.

14.3 Short-listing should normally be completed as soon as possible after the closing date and within seven working days at most.

14.4 The short-listing panel will assess all applicants equally against the criteria listed on the person specification, in order to select which applicants will be invited to attend an interview.

14.5 Normally only those people who meet all the essential criteria on the person specification, measurable from the application form, will be invited to interview. Where more people meet the essential criteria than can be reasonably interviewed, only those that also meet some of the desirable qualities will be called for interview. (Except in cases described in section 14.7 below)

14.6 The short-listing panel will record all their decisions on the [short-list decision form](#). Completed short-list decision forms should be sent to HR with the rest of the recruitment paperwork at the end of the recruitment process.

14.7 The Council is committed to interviewing all disabled applicants who meet the minimum short-listing criteria. Following short-listing by the short-listing panel, HR will identify any disabled applicants who have not been short-listed for interview and will ask the recruiting manager to explain why he/she was felt not to meet the minimum criteria. Where the applicant does meet the minimum criteria he/she will be invited to interview.

14.8 Following short-listing the recruiting manager will confirm interview dates, times, venue, and details of any tests to be used with HR. Recruiting managers should provide this information and confirm the names of those on the interviewing panel at least 10 working days before the interview date in order to give enough time for HR to invite the candidates to interview. Where applicants are to be asked to make a presentation at the interview the recruiting manager should provide HR with details of the topic for the presentation and of any equipment that the applicants will be able to use at the interview; for example flip charts, lap tops and projectors, USB port for memory sticks, disk drive etc, so that this information can be included in the invitation to interview.

- 14.9 When deciding upon the times of interviews it is important that recruiting managers should allow sufficient time to interview each applicant, answer questions asked by the candidate and to make notes.
- 14.10 The invitation to interview letter will ask applicants if they have any special requirements for the interview and any testing to be used. Where a disabled applicant states that he/she has special requirements these must be accommodated where it is reasonable to do so in order to ensure that he/she has a fair opportunity to take part in the interview and testing. For example, an applicant with a hearing impairment may need to be able to clearly see the person speaking to them, so adjustments may need to be made to the seating arrangements for the interview. Further advice is available from HR.
- 14.11 Applicants who have provided an email address and who are not short-listed for interview will be informed by HR of this via email. Applicants who have not provided an email address and are not short-listed are not normally contacted. Applicants who have not been contacted within 21 days of the closing date should, therefore, assume that they have not been successful on this occasion.
- 14.12 Recruiting managers should offer feedback to internal applicants who are not short-listed.
- 14.13 Recruiting managers may be contacted for feedback by applicants who have not been short-listed for interview.
15. **Interviewing**
- 15.1 The purpose of the interview is to gather further information about applicants so that the interview panel can assess their suitability against the requirements of the job as specified in the person specification. The interview also gives applicants the opportunity to gather information about the role and the Council so that they can decide whether they would accept the job if it is offered to them.
- 15.2 It is important that interviewing takes place fairly. All applicants should feel that they were given a fair opportunity to present themselves at the interview. If an applicant feels that the interview was unfair he/she is likely to tell others and this could affect the reputation of the Council as an employer and the Council could also potentially face a discrimination claim.
- 15.3 Interviews should be conducted by a panel of at least two people, one of whom should normally be the recruiting manager. Interviews for the same post should normally be conducted by the same people.
- 15.4 At least one member of the interview panel should have attended the corporate Recruitment and Selection course. There is also a corporate interviewing skills course that are strongly advised to attend.
- 15.5 Before the interview the recruiting manager should:
- Ensure that a suitable room is available in which to interview, there is a suitable place for any tests to take place and that any equipment required will be available. Rooms should be private and free from interruptions

- Ensure someone is available to meet applicants and that there is a suitable place for them to wait.
- Decide the weighting to be apportioned to the interview and to any tests that will be used. This will depend upon the requirements of the job and the types of tests being used. Further information about scoring the interview can be found on the [interview assessment form](#). More information about testing can be found in section 17 below and from HR.
- Examine all applications again to ensure that they have been fully and properly completed. Any anomalies, discrepancies or gaps in employment should be noted so that they can be investigated at interview and in the pre-employment checks. Reasons for repeated changes in employment should also be explored.
- Agree the questions to be used with the members of the interview panel. All applicants should be asked these questions. More information about questions can be found in section 16 below.
- Prepare an interview assessment form and immigration form for each applicant, and the paperwork for any tests to be used.
- Ensure each member of the interview panel understands what will happen during the interview, his/her role, who will chair the interview, who will ask which questions and how notes will be taken.
- Ensure that all panel members are aware of the importance of not asking questions that unlawfully discriminate.
- Prepare to answer any questions that interviewees may ask during the interview. It is important that applicants are given correct information that complies with the Council's current [terms and conditions of employment](#) and other policies. Ensure that a copy of the terms and conditions of employment are available, and copies of the [relocation scheme](#) and car allowance schemes where appropriate (Available from Payroll).
- Ensure that any reasonable adjustments agreed to enable applicants to participate fairly in interviews and/or tests are in place.

15.6 On the day of the interview the recruiting manager/chair of the interview should

- Arrange the room so that the applicant will feel at ease – where possible the interview should not take place across a desk and the applicant should not be given a lower chair than those used by members of the interview panel
- Welcome the applicant and introduce those present
- Explain what will happen at the interview; for example when any tests will take place, when the applicant can ask questions and whether he/she will be taken on a tour of the workplace to meet the team after the interview.
- Ensure that photocopies are taken of certificates of qualification and of identity documentation; as specified on the [pre-employment checks form](#) and in '[Preventing Illegal Working - advice for managers](#)'. The applicant **must** show original copies of the documentation, photocopies can not be accepted. The recruiting manager/chair should ensure that the photocopies that are taken of the original documentation at the interview are sent to HR. HR is unable to issue a contract to the successful applicant without these.

15.7 The panel members should

- Ask questions (See section 16 below for more information)

- Listen carefully to the applicant's responses and take notes of the key points of his/her answer. The applicant should be allowed to do most of the talking. It is important to avoid filling in silences too quickly and to allow the applicant time to think.
- Ask follow up questions, where appropriate, to clarify the applicant's response. A note should be kept of all follow up questions that are asked.
- Ask about any anomalies, discrepancies, gaps in employment and/or frequent job changes and record the applicant's responses (on the application form). It is important that the candidate has given satisfactory reasons for leaving all previous employment listed on the application form.
- Ask the applicant if he/she would like to ask any questions and answer these.

15.8 It is important that each applicant is assessed on his/her own merits on the basis of the information that he/she provides. The panel should listen carefully to each applicant and assess each on the basis of his/her qualifications, skills, abilities and experience and its relevance to the requirements of the job. The panel should avoid:

- Comparing the applicant with others during the interview – this should be done after all the interviews have been done; using the interview assessment form.
- Stereotyping – for example assuming that older people are not able to learn new skills, or that younger applicants do not have the ability to manage older team members.
- Making a decision based upon first impressions of the applicant.
- Giving unfair preference to applicants who are similar to panel members – for example because they have a similar background, personality or attitude.
- Being biased against someone as they are not similar to panel members.
- Taking into account what is known of an applicant outside the recruitment and selection process.

15.9 At the end of the interview the recruiting manager/chair should close the interview by thanking the applicant for his/her attendance and explaining when and how the applicant will be informed whether or not he/she has been successful.

15.10 Panels should use the [interview assessment form](#) to record and score each candidate's answers. These forms should be sent to HR once a decision about who to appoint has been made.

16. **Questioning**

16.1 The aim of asking questions is to allow applicants to talk about their skills, abilities and experience so that the interview panel can gather evidence about the applicant's suitability for the vacancy.

16.2 Questions should be planned as part of the preparation for the interview. When deciding upon the questions to ask the panel should consider the following points:

16.3 Questions should relate to the requirements of the job as set out in the person specification and job description.

16.4 All those being interviewed should be asked the same main questions so that their suitability for the role can be compared.

16.5 **Ask:**

- Questions about any gaps, anomalies and/or frequent changes of job in the applicant's employment history.
- 'Open' questions. Open questions normally begin with words such as 'how', 'what', 'when' and 'where' and encourage the applicant to give information.
- 'Behavioural' questions. These focus on what the applicant has done in the past and should be used where possible as they allow the panel to find out whether the applicant has used the required skills before and how she/he is likely to react in the future. An example of a behavioural question is 'tell me about a time when you had to make a difficult decision'.
- Follow up questions can be used to clarify the information that an applicant has given in response to a question. For example, to follow up on a behavioural question the panel may want to ask further questions to find out the circumstances in which the applicant took the action he/she described, his/her reaction and what action they personally took. The panel should keep a note of all follow up questions that they ask.

16.6 **Take care when asking:**

- 'Situational' questions. These ask the applicant how they would react in a certain situation, for example 'tell me what you would do if a service user became upset'. These questions may have some value, but do not accurately predict whether the applicant actually would react that way if he/she were actually in that situation.
- 'Closed' questions. These can only be answered with 'yes' or 'no'. Closed questions should normally be avoided, unless panel members are seeking to clarify something that the applicant has already told them.

16.7 **Avoid:**

- 'Leading' questions that indicate the answer that the panel is looking for
- Asking more than one question at a time as the applicant may forget to, or avoid answering some parts.
- Questions that unlawfully discriminate should not be used.
- Questions that can only be answered by an internal applicant should not be used where both internal and external applicants are being interviewed.

17. **Testing**

17.1 Testing can take many forms – from simple exercises; such as in-tray exercises, or tests to assess skills in using particular computer software, to more complex tests which must be carried out by qualified testers; such as personality, numerical or verbal reasoning tests.

17.2 Testing can be used in addition to interviewing to gather more evidence of the suitability of applicants.

- 17.3 All methods of testing used during the selection process should accurately measure skills, knowledge or aptitude required to do the job.
- 17.4 To decide whether testing is appropriate the recruiting manager should review the person specification to see the skills, knowledge and abilities required to successfully do the job and the level at which and context in which these will be used. For example, the post holder may need to be able to write clear and concise reports. The recruiting manager can then decide whether testing would be a valid way of assessing whether applicants have the skills and abilities required.
- 17.5 Tests must be carried out by a suitably qualified person. This will depend upon the type of test to be used. HR can provide further advice and can carry out occupational testing (Please note that there is an extra charge where HR carries out testing).
- 17.6 Care must be taken to ensure that tests do not unfairly discriminate on grounds of gender, race, disability, age, religion or belief or sexual orientation. All proposed tests should be discussed with HR. HR will review the proposed tests to check that they are not discriminatory.
- 17.7 Applicants should be informed of the details of any tests to be used at the interview when they are invited to attend.
- 17.8 Where a candidate is known to have a disability that may put him/her at disadvantage the panel should make reasonable adjustments to tests to enable the candidate to participate fairly. Further advice can be obtained from HR.
18. **Reaching a decision**
- 18.1 Recruitment decisions should be based upon quantifiable evidence gathered during the recruitment and selection process. The reasons for all decisions should be recorded on the interview assessment form.
- 18.2 In reaching a decision the panel should only take into account evidence demonstrated by the applicant on his/her application form, at interview, in test results and gathered through pre-employment checks including references. Knowledge of an applicant outside the recruitment and selection and pre-employment checks process should not normally influence the decision.
- 18.3 Following the interview and any tests the panel should score all the candidates and compare the results. The reasons for all decisions should be recorded on the [interview assessment forms](#).
- 18.4 The panel can take into account how a candidate will fit into a specific team, but such decisions MUST NOT be made on the basis of his/her sex, transgender, marital or civil partnership status, race, sexual orientation, religion or belief, disability or age.
- 18.5 At no point should a suitable candidate be discounted because of his/her disability before advice has been sought from HR and Occupational Health. Advice should be sought about whether there are any reasonable adjustments that could be made that would enable the applicant to perform the role.

- 18.6 The panel should try to reach a consensus decision about who to appoint. Where consensus can not be reached the recruiting manager will make the final decision.
- 18.7 Where an internal candidate and an external candidate score equally in the interview and testing (Where used) it is the Council's policy to offer the post to the internal candidate.
- 18.8 Where appropriate the panel may decide to call candidates for a second interview. For example, where two internal or two external applicants have an equal score. In these circumstances the panel should prepare further questions to ask to all recalled candidates based on the requirements of the job as set out in the person specification.
- 18.9 It is essential that only suitable applicants are appointed. An unsuitable applicant should not be appointed just to fill the vacancy. If none of the applicants is suitable the recruiting manager should agree a course of further action with HR. The recruitment process may the start again.
- 18.10 Once the panel has reached a decision it should promptly inform HR of the details of both successful and unsuccessful applicants. All paperwork relating to recruitment and selection, including completed interview assessment forms, interview notes and test papers should be sent to HR for storage.
- 18.11 The HRA will chase up any outstanding pre-employment checks for the successful applicant.
19. **Pre-employment checks**
- 19.1 Pre-employment checks should be completed for all employees to ensure that they are suitable for employment, appropriately qualified, can be lawfully employed and do not pose a risk to the safety of children, young people and/or vulnerable adults to whom the Council owes a duty of care. A pre-employment checks checklist can be found at appendix seven and should be completed for all candidates being offered employment.
- 19.2 Pre-employment checks will be carried out in accordance with the Council's [Pre-employment Checks Policy](#), [Pre-employment Checks Procedure](#), [Preventing Illegal Working - advice for managers](#), [CRB Applications Procedure](#) and [References relating to job applications - advice for managers](#). These document explain managers' responsibilities in relation to pre-employment checks.
- 19.3 Pre-employment checks should be completed before the candidate starts work. In some circumstances an employee may start work subject to a satisfactory CRB check being received. In these cases measures must be put in place to protect service users and the employee must be fully supervised.
- 19.4 Where the recruiting manager has concerns about an applicant's pre-employment checks he/she should seek further advice from HR.

20. **Applicants unsuccessful at interview**

- 20.1 The recruiting manager should inform HR whether he/she would like regret letters to be sent to candidates unsuccessful at interview, and when he/she would like these sent.
- 20.2 The recruiting manager should arrange for a member of the interview panel to be available to contact unsuccessful applicants by telephone to inform them of the decision and to offer feedback following the interview
- 20.3 It is important that the person responsible prepares the feedback he/she will give. Feedback should be constructive and should give the applicant clear guidance about what he/she could do to improve his/her chances of being successful in the future. The person providing feedback may, for example, advise the applicant about gaining experience of specific types of work.
- 20.4 If an unsuccessful candidate is internal, the recruiting manager should liaise with his/her line manager to draw up a personal development plan to assist the employee in gaining the skills and experience required to be successful in the future.

21. **Offers of employment**

- 21.1 Note: Special conditions apply to making employment offers within regulated services. Managers recruiting to posts within regulated services should follow the advice in appendices one (Adults Services) and two (Childrens Services) below.

22. **Offers of employment – action to take before making an offer**

- 22.1 Before making either a verbal or written offer of employment the recruiting manager should contact HR to ensure that all the required evidence that the selected applicant is eligible to work in the UK has been received and is satisfactory.
- 22.2 The applicant should not normally start work until all the pre-employment checks have been received and are satisfactory. For full details of when it may be acceptable for an applicant to start work before these have been received the recruiting manager should refer to the [Pre-employment Checks Procedure](#) and the [CRB Disclosure Application Procedure](#). Further advice can be sought from HR.

23. **Offers of employment – making a verbal offer**

- 23.1 Once satisfied that the applicant can legally work in the UK the recruiting manager may telephone him/her to offer him/her the job. It is important that the recruiting manager informs the candidate that the offer is subject to receipt of satisfactory pre-employment checks where these have not yet been received and it is appropriate to allow the applicant to start work before.
- 23.2 It is also important that the recruiting manager ensures that the details of pay, grading and other terms and conditions offered are accurate and in line with the Council's employment policies and procedures and any other policies and procedures relevant to the role. Where the employment will be on a part-time

basis it may be useful to ensure that the applicant is aware of the pro-rata salary that he/she will receive.

- 23.3 A verbal offer forms the basis of the contract of employment. Where the applicant asks about specific details of the terms and conditions of employment it is important that the recruiting manager provides accurate information. If unsure the manager should inform the applicant that he/she will find out and will get back to them.
- 23.4 Employees will normally be employed on permanent contracts of employment, terminable by notice from either party.
- 23.5 In circumstances where it is appropriate to employ staff on a temporary basis the recruiting manager should follow the advice in '[Using Casual, Agency and Fixed-term Staff](#)'. Further information can be sought from HR.
- 23.6 Where a manager wishes to use consultants and/or contractors he/she should seek further advice from the Corporate Contract and Procurement Unit.
- 23.7 Recruiting managers should note that new employees are no longer entitled to free parking at the Council's main buildings unless they are essential car users, car sharers under the [car share scheme](#) or where it has been assessed as a reasonable modification due to a disability.

24. **Generating an offer letter**

- 24.1 Before the HRA can send out an offer letter he/she needs to have received the correct paperwork from the recruiting manager. The recruiting manager should complete an [EC2 - new starter/change to employee form](#) and, where the employment is to be part-time, an [EC3 - working pattern form](#) and ensure that they have been correctly authorised. These forms should be sent hrchanges@westberks.gov.uk.
- 24.2 The HRA will then create an offer letter and send it to the recruiting manager for approval. Once the letter has been approved HR will send it to the successful applicant.
- 24.3 As many applicants will not resign until they have received a written offer of employment it is important that recruiting managers complete the EC2 and EC3 forms, and approve offer letters promptly.

25. **Contracts of employment**

- 25.1 Once the HRA has received all the pre-employment checks and the recruiting manager has agreed that these are satisfactory, he/she will produce a contract of employment. This will be sent to the recruiting manager for approval before it is sent to the successful applicant.
- 25.2 The recruiting manager should inform HR if the employee will be eligible for the [relocation scheme](#). The relocation scheme can only be used where it was mentioned in the recruitment advert.

26. Arrangements for the early stages of employment

- 26.1 HR will book the successful candidate onto Corporate Induction and inform the line manager and the candidate of the date of the course.
- 26.2 The new employee's line manager is responsible for ensuring that he/she receives an appropriate induction, attends all mandatory training courses and that the required probationary assessments are carried out. The requirements for induction and probation can be found in the [Induction and Probation Policy](#), [Induction Procedure](#), and [Probation Procedure](#).
- 26.3 Line managers can use the '[new starters checklist](#)' in conjunction with the Induction and Probation Procedures to plan for the new employee's early stages of employment.

27. Recruiting to the same vacancy within six months

- 27.1 Unless the vacancy would be suitable redeployment for an employee whose employment is at risk due to redundancy or ill-health, should a vacancy arise in the same job role within six months of the original appointment the recruiting manager may offer the vacancy to another suitable applicant from the original recruitment process where other suitable applicants existed. Where no further suitable applicants exist the recruitment process should start from the beginning. Further advice can be sought from HR.

28. Written records and data protection

- 28.1 Written notes should be kept throughout the recruitment process. These notes should be factual rather than subjective and should include:
- Short-listing decisions
 - Weighting allocated to interviews and testing and the reasons for this
 - Questions asked during interviews, including any follow up questions that were asked
 - Answers provided by applicants during interviews
 - Interview scoring and selection decisions following interview
 - Tests used
 - Any reasonable adjustments made to allow disabled applicants to participate in tests and interviews fairly
 - Test answers and scores
 - Selection decisions following testing
- 28.2 These notes should be sent to HR at the end of recruitment. HR will retain the records for a *period of 6 months* for unsuccessful applicants before being destroyed. Records for successful applicants will be kept in their employee file. Special requirements for retaining notes during recruitment in regulated services can be found in appendices one (Adult Services) and two (Childrens Services) below.
- 28.3 Recruiting managers must be able to give feedback to applicants at any stage of the recruitment process. Notes taken throughout the process should form the basis of this feedback.

28.4 It is important that all those involved in the recruitment process record evidence used to make decisions clearly, thoroughly and professionally as applicants may ask to see these records. These records may be needed to defend the Council against a discrimination claim.

29. **Volunteers**

29.1 Managers seeking to recruit volunteers should follow the 'Engaging Volunteers Policy and Procedure' (Pending publication). Further advice is available from HR.

30. **Jointly funded and externally funded posts**

30.1 Jointly funded and externally funded posts are subject to all the recruitment practices set out in the Recruitment Policy, Procedure and Guidance.

30.2 Externally funded posts are normally offered on a fixed term basis for the duration of the funding. Where the duration of the funding is to be for two years or more without a break in employment the employee will normally be entitled to claim redundancy pay when his/her fixed term contract ends, if no suitable redeployment opportunities have been found. The cost of redundancy will be met by the service, so the line manager should build this into the budget at the point of recruitment.

30.3 Where the external funding is indefinite the post will be offered on a permanent basis.

31. **Special requirements for regulated services**

31.1 Services that are regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CSCI prior to 1st April 2009) such as care homes, domiciliary care and adult placement must comply with additional requirements and guidance. Details for adult services are available in appendix one and in the guidance logs on the [Care Quality Commission website](#).

31.2 Details of regulations relating to Childrens Services are available in [appendix two](#).

32. **Tailored recruitment service**

32.1 HR can work with individual service areas to develop recruitment strategies to address specific needs. This may be appropriate where several vacancies occur at the same time within an area or where there has been a problem recruiting to a specific role. If a recruiting manager feels that a tailored recruitment service would be useful he/she should contact the HR Officer in the Recruitment and Information team.

33. **Review**

33.1 This document will be reviewed to respond to any changes in legislation and at least every three years.

Glossary

HR	Human Resources
HRA	Human Resources Assistant
HOS	Head of Service
CRB	Criminal Records Bureau
POVA	Protection of vulnerable adults
POCA	Protection of Children Act
CQC	Care Quality Commission (Formerly CSCI)
CSCI	Commission for Social Care Inspection
NMC	Nursing and Midwifery Council
GSCC	General Social Care Council

Other Relevant Documentation

The CRB Policy and Procedure
Equality in Employment Policy
The Pre-Employment Check Policy
The Re-Employment Policy and Procedure
The Job Evaluation Procedure
The Induction and Probation Policy
The Induction Procedure
The Probation Procedure
Safer Recruitment in Education
Writing job descriptions and person specifications – advice for managers
The use of casual, agency, and fixed term workers – advice for managers
Job-sharing – advice for managers
Car allowances-advice for managers
References relating to job applications
The Relocation Scheme
the 'Engaging Volunteers Policy and Procedure' (Pending publication)

34. Appendix One: Special requirements within regulated services – adult services

[Back to section 2.1](#)

34.1 Services that are regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CSCI prior to 1st April 2009) must meet specific requirements and guidance.

34.2 Regulated services for adults services include:

- Care homes
- Domicillary care (Home care)
- Adult placement (Learning disability services)

34.3 Managers must comply with the requirements specified in the guidance logs on the [Care Quality Commission website](#). These set out the specific requirements for different areas within adult services and what Inspectors expect to see when they visit.

34.3.1 Checks should be carried out for permanent, temporary and casual employees and for volunteers.

34.3.2 Employers are responsible for verifying information provided by prospective employees. General good practice across adult services includes the following areas:

34.4 Pre-employment checks

34.4.1 Recruiting managers should fully explore all employment gaps and any other anomalies on the application form. Reasons given should be recorded on the application and retained on the personnel file of successful applicants.

34.4.2 Recruiting managers should see original copies of documentation to prove:

- Identity
- Confirmation of the right to work in the UK (See pre-employment checks and preventing illegal working)
- Suitability to drive. Where the job requires the employee to drive the recruiting manager must see both parts of the driving license, valid MOT and Insurance in line with the [Checks for car users procedure](#). These must be copied and kept on the personnel file of the successful applicant. An annual check of these documents must be made and copies taken. Additional requirements exist where employees drive Council vehicles, recruiting managers should ensure that they meet the requirements specific to the service and type of vehicle to be driven.
- POCA and/or POVA check where the post applied for is a 'regulated position'
- Certificates of training and qualification – the recruiting manager should take copies to retain on the personnel file
- Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) check if recruiting an employee as a practicing nurse.
- All social workers and social work students must show their certificate of registration with the General Social Care Council (GSCC). The Recruiting Manager must take a copy of the certificate to be held on the personnel file.

- Criminal Records Bureau check which will include a check of the Sex offenders register.

34.4.3 Recruiting managers should ensure that the selected candidate has received medical clearance as described in section 4.4 of the [pre-employment checks procedure](#).

34.4.4 In some specific circumstances an employee may commence work before a full CRB check has been received so long as a clear POVA First check has been received (Details of the circumstances in which this may occur can be found in section 6.2 of the [CRB Disclosure Application Procedure](#). In these circumstances the employee should be fully supervised until a satisfactory check has been received. Induction may begin in this period.

34.4.5 In July 2010 a new Vetting and Barring scheme will be launched for those who work or volunteer with vulnerable adults or children. This will be operated by the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA)

34.5 **References**

- At least two written references should be obtained for external candidates before they are employed, one of which should normally be from the immediate past employer. One written reference should be obtained for applicants already employed by West Berkshire Council. References must be from the applicant's line manager.
- References are checked to ensure that they are addressed to the person requesting them and not 'to whom it may concern', and should be on headed paper where possible.
- References should be given by a line manager or the personnel department of previous employers, not from colleagues.
- References are followed up by telephone to verify the identity of the referee, that he/she wrote the reference and to clarify any concerns that the recruiting manager has. The date, time and details of the conversation should be noted on the reference and signed by the recruiting manager. This will be retained on the personnel file if the applicant is appointed.
- The recruiting manager should discuss any concerns about the validity or content of references with HR and with their line manager, and where appropriate further advice should be sought. Where concerns exist it may result in the applicant not being offered the post .

34.6 **Storage and retention of CRB Disclosures**

34.6.1 The following specific procedures were agreed with CSCI (Now the Care Quality Commission) for the storage and retention of CRB disclosures for the following services:

- Home Care
- Chestnut Walk Care Home
- Notrees Care Home
- Walnut Close Care Home
- Willows Edge Care Home

34.6.2 The Council will work within the following procedures in relation to the storage and retrieval of Disclosures:

- The records required to be kept in the service as set out in the pro-forma (Annex 4 to the CQC Guidance) will be kept in the service. Each service will decide whether they wish to use the pro-forma, an adapted form of the pro-forma or their own system.

34.6.3 For security reasons CRB disclosure documents are kept in HR in Market Street as this is safer than (As specified in 33.6.2 above. Inspectors will have access to these as follows:

- i. Access to the office between the hours of 8.30 am to 5pm Monday to Thursday and 8.30am to 4.30pm without notice
- ii. Records couriered to the care service within two hours of the request made by an officer of the Commission
- iii. Records to be made available at each announced inspection date where requested

34.6.4 HR will retain all disclosures until the next inspection has taken place. As soon as this has been completed the relevant manager will inform HR (whether or not the Inspector has asked to view the CRB Disclosures). HR will then destroy all disclosures that have been held for more than six months. HR will only destroy Disclosures for the specific service that has been inspected.

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35. Appendix Two: Special requirements within regulated services – childrens services

(This will be similar to the advice for adult services in appendix one above)

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36. Appendix Three: Recruitment Process Chart

Stage of the process	Recruiting manager(RM)/panel action	HR action
Vacancy arises	RM evaluates need for the role in relation to team, service strategic plans and budget	
	RM writes/reviews job description (JD) and person specification, asks HR to arrange for it to be evaluated where these are new or significantly changed	Arrange for a new or significantly changed job description and person spec to be evaluated when requested by RM
	RM completes EC5 form and EC1 if the job is new or a change to the establishment, and gains required authorisation. Sends completed forms to HR	
Advertising	RM instigates the advert by providing HR with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correctly completed and authorised EC5 form, and EC1 where appropriate • Draft advert wording • Jd and person spec • Closing date for applications • Names of those on the short-listing panel • Dates of interviews (These must be at least 10 working days after short-listing will have been completed) • Any additional information to be included in the application packs • Notification that the relocation 	On request HR can provide the RM with advice on wording adverts and where they should be placed

	<p>scheme is to apply to the vacancy where required, and authorised by the HOS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise HR if he/she would prefer paper copies of the application forms received rather than normal emailed versions 	
		<p>Arrange for vacancy to appear in the internal vacancy bulletin (HR must receive all required information by 5pm Tuesday for inclusion in the next bulletin.)</p>
		<p>Send advert to the recruitment agency to be designed. Return draft advert to the RM for approval</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm approval of the advert to HR • Obtain HOS approval for advertising costs where the directorate's central budget has been exhausted 	
		<p>Contact recruitment agency to confirm advert placement</p>
		<p>Send out application packs</p>
		<p>Contact RM half way between advert appearing and closing date to confirm interest received</p>
		<p>Check all applications against log of past employees who received a severance payment, premature retirement benefits or were dismissed on grounds of misconduct/ lack of capability, or who resigned where enough information existed to hold a hearing. Where an applicant appears in the log the HRA will</p>

		advise the RM on the re-employment policy and procedure
		On closing date, email RM with applicant's details, application forms and short-listing forms
	Panel should declare any close relationships with any of the applicants	HRA should declare any close relationship with any of the applicants
Short-listing	Panel shortlists against the criteria on the person specification, within 7 working days of the closing date	
	Panel records all decisions on the short listing decision form	
	Panel informs HR of the applicants short-listed for interview	HR checks applicants not selected for short-listing to see if any have a known disability. Where this is the case HR will contact the RM to discuss why the applicant (s) did not meet the minimum criteria. Where the applicant(s) meet these they will be invited to interview.
	RM confirms the date, times and venues of the interviews at least 10 working days before the interview date	
		Invite short-listed applicants to interview
		Email unsuccessful applicants who have provided an email address to inform them that they have not been short-listed
	Provide feedback to applicants unsuccessful at short-listing stage upon request	
Before the interview	RM to : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-examine applications to highlight any anomalies/gaps that need more investigation • Write interview questions based 	Upon request advise upon interview questions and testing

	<p>upon the person specification.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange any tests based upon the requirements of the job • Decide upon weighting for tests and interview • Ensure panel members know their role including importance of not unlawfully discriminating • Arrange for someone to greet interviewees • Prepare required information to answer interviewees' questions accurately • Prepare the room 	
<p>At the interview</p>	<p>RM/Chair to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open interview (See interview checklist) • Take copies of original qualifications and identity documentation • Close the interview at the end <p>Panel to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask prepared questions and follow up questions • Make notes of candidates' responses and any follow up questions used 	
<p>Testing</p>	<p>Administer tests as required</p>	<p>Administer tests as required</p>
<p>After the interview</p>	<p>Panel to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Score all candidates and compare results 	<p>Provide advice upon reasonable adjustments and seek advice from Occupational Health where requested by</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record decisions on the interview assessment form Seek advice about reasonable adjustments where the best candidate has a disability and requires adjustments to be able to do the job Advise HR which, if any candidate they would like to appoint Return all recruitment paperwork to HR for storage 	the panel.
	The RM must ensure that a member of the interview panel contacts all unsuccessful applicants to inform them of the decision and to provide feedback	
	RM to inform HR whether he/she would like regret letters sent to unsuccessful applicants and when.	Send regret letters as requested by the RM
	RM to liaise with the line manager of unsuccessful internal applicants to design a development plan	
Before an offer is made		Chase up any out standing pre-employment checks for the selected applicant in line with the 'Pre-employment checks Procedure' and 'CRB Disclosure Application Procedure'
	RM should check the selected candidate's pre-employment checks and discuss any concerns with HR	Advise upon concerns the RM has about pre-employment checks
	Contact HR to ensure that sufficient evidence has been obtained of the candidate's eligibility to work in the UK	Ensure that adequate evidence of the candidate's eligibility to work in the UK has been obtained
	In regulated services; ensure that any	

	special requirements have been met	
Making a verbal offer	Once all pre-employment checks and proof of eligibility to work in the UK required before an offer can be made have been received and are satisfactory, the RM may telephone the candidate to offer the job. RMs must ensure that the terms and conditions offered are correct and in line with WBC terms, conditions and policies.	
Generating an offer letter	RM to send the completed and authorised EC2 form, and EC3 for part-time roles to HR	
		HR will generate an offer letter and send it to the RM for approval
	RM approves offer letter	
		HR send out offer letter
Generating a contract of employment		
	RM confirms any relocation package offered to the successful candidate (The relocation scheme must have been stated in the advert)	
		Once all pre-employment checks and proof of eligibility to work in the UK required have been received and the RM has confirmed that they are satisfactory HR will draft a contract and send it to the RM for approval
	RM approves the draft contract	
		HR sends the contract to the employee
		HR files all recruitment paperwork – on the Personnel file for successful applicants, for 6 months for unsuccessful applicants after which it will be destroyed

		or according to specific regulations for regulated services.
Arrangements for the early stages of employment		HR books the successful applicant onto Corporate Induction and informs him/her and his/her line manager when this will be.
	Line manager makes arrangements for service induction, attendance at mandatory courses and probationary assessments	

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37. Appendix Four: Interview Checklist

Before the interview the recruiting manager should:

Book a suitable room in which to interview, and a suitable place for any tests to take place. Rooms should be private and free from interruptions.	
Ensure that any equipment required will be available	
Ensure someone is available to meet applicants and that there is a suitable place for them to wait.	
Decide the weighting to be apportioned to the interview and to any tests that will be used. This will depend upon the requirements of the job and the types of tests being used.	
Write questions based on the person specification and job description. (See question writing guide below)	
Ensure all panel members understand their role at the interview, which questions they will ask and the importance of not unlawfully discriminating	
Arrange for someone to keep notes of candidate's answers and any follow up questions that are asked	
Review the application form to ensure that any gaps or anomalies can be investigated during the interview	
Prepare an interview assessment form and immigration form for each applicant, and the paperwork for any tests to be used.	
Ensure that any reasonable adjustments agreed to enable applicants to participate fairly in interviews and/or tests are in place.	
Arrange seating – avoid interviewing across a desk	
Review the terms and conditions for the job and gather information to enable you to answer candidate's questions accurately. Have the following information/documents available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job description and person specification • Pay scale • Terms and conditions of service • Relocation scheme (Where applicable) • Relevant car scheme Note: New employees are no longer automatically entitled to a parking space	
Ensure that arrangements for testing are in place where these are to be used	

At the interview

The recruiting manager/chair of the interview should welcome the applicant and introduce those present	
The recruiting manager/chair of the interview should explain what will happen at the interview; for example when any tests will take place, when the applicant can ask questions and whether he/she will be taken on a tour of the workplace to meet the team after the interview.	
The recruiting manager/chair of the interview should ensure that photocopies are taken of certificates of qualification and of identity documentation; as specified on the Pre-employment Checks Form and in 'Preventing Illegal Working - advice for managers' . The applicant must show original copies of the documentation, photocopies can not be accepted. The photocopies that	

are taken of the original documentation at the interview are sent to HR.	
Panel members should ask pre-prepared questions and follow up questions required to clarify the candidate's response.	
Panel members should listen carefully to the applicant's responses and take notes of the key points of his/her answer. The applicant should be allowed to do most of the talking. It is important to avoid filling in silences too quickly and to allow the applicant time to think.	
Panel members should clarify any gaps/anomalies from the application form.	
The designated note taker should keep notes of the candidate's responses and any follow up questions asked.	
The recruiting manager/chair of the interview should ask the applicant if he/she would like to ask any questions and answer these accurately.	
The recruiting manager/chair of the interview should explain what will happen next and when the candidate will hear whether or not they have been successful	
The recruiting manager/chair of the interview should thank the candidate and close the interview	

After the interview:

Score all candidates using the interview assessment form	
Compare candidate scores and inform HR of selected candidate	
Send all recruitment paperwork to HR for storage	

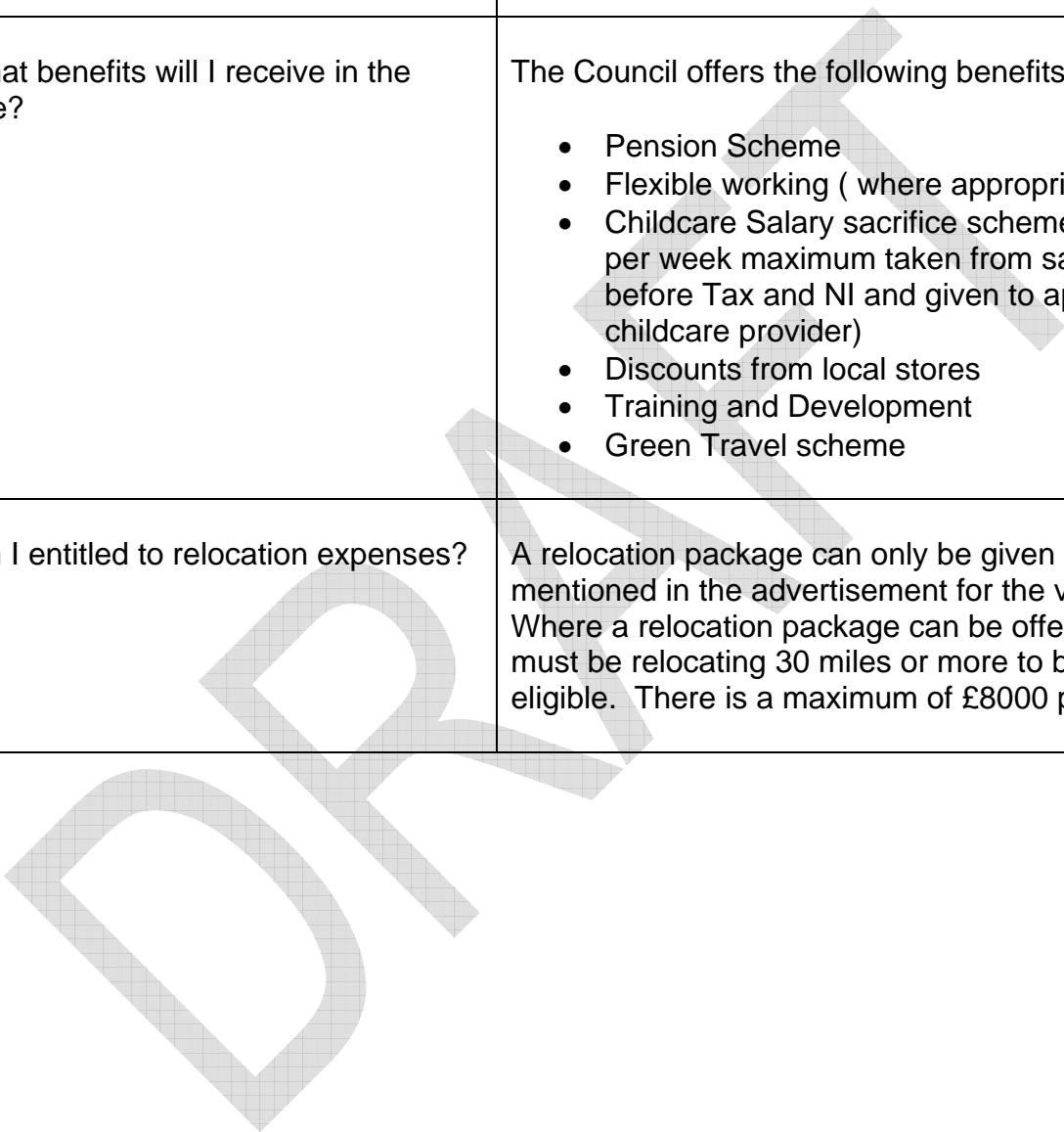
It is important that each applicant is assessed on his/her own merits on the basis of the information that he/she provides. The panel should listen carefully to each applicant and assess each on the basis of his/her qualifications, skills, abilities and experience and its relevance to the requirements of the job. The panel should avoid:

Comparing the applicant with others during the interview – this should be done after all the interviews have been done; using the interview assessment form.
Stereotyping – for example assuming that older people are not able to learn new skills, or that younger applicants do not have the ability to manage older team members.
Making a decision based upon first impressions of the applicant.
Giving unfair preference to applicants who are similar to panel members – for example because they have a similar background, personality or attitude.
Being biased against someone as they are not similar to panel members.
Taking into account what is known of an applicant outside the recruitment and selection process.

38. Appendix Five: Candidate’s Frequently Asked Questions Guide

<u>Questions you may be asked by an applicant</u>	<u>Answer</u>															
<p>Will I receive a car allowance?</p>	<p>This is dependant on your job role. If your post will involve driving over 1500 miles per annum you will be classed as an essential user and therefore receive an essential user car allowance or lease car. If you do not you will be classed as a casual user and will be paid mileage as and when you do it. (There are some limited exceptions when essential user status is given to posts that do not undertake 1500 miles per annum)</p>															
<p>Will I receive car parking?</p>	<p>You will only receive car parking if you are classed as an essential car user or if you are going to be car sharing. A car sharing space is available if you share a car with a colleague on your journey to work.</p>															
<p>What will my leave entitlement be?</p>	<p>This is dependant on your grade.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Salary Band</th> <th>less than 5 years LG service:</th> <th>5 years LG service or more:</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>A to C</td> <td>26 days</td> <td>31 days</td> </tr> <tr> <td>D to G</td> <td>27 days</td> <td>32 days</td> </tr> <tr> <td>H to K</td> <td>28 days</td> <td>33 days</td> </tr> <tr> <td>L to CD</td> <td>29 days</td> <td>34 days</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Part time employees will be entitled to leave on a pro rata basis.</p>	Salary Band	less than 5 years LG service:	5 years LG service or more:	A to C	26 days	31 days	D to G	27 days	32 days	H to K	28 days	33 days	L to CD	29 days	34 days
Salary Band	less than 5 years LG service:	5 years LG service or more:														
A to C	26 days	31 days														
D to G	27 days	32 days														
H to K	28 days	33 days														
L to CD	29 days	34 days														
<p>Am I subject to a probationary period?</p>	<p>Yes. All new staff to the Council, regardless of continuous local government service, are subject to a six month probationary period. Reviews with their manager will take place at one month, three months and five months.</p>															
<p>What will happen following the interview?</p>	<p>If you are successful you will be contacted by phone and made a verbal offer. If you accept verbally the recruiting manager will send your details to HR who will chase your pre-employment checks and send you an offer of employment. A statement of the main particulars of your contract of employment will be sent to you</p>															

	<p>once all of your pre-employment checks have been received.</p>
<p>What will the starting salary for the role be?</p>	<p>The starting salary will be one of the spinal column points in the grade for the role and will be negotiable with the line manager. New employees normally start on the lowest spinal column point on the grade.</p>
<p>What benefits will I receive in the role?</p>	<p>The Council offers the following benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pension Scheme • Flexible working (where appropriate) • Childcare Salary sacrifice scheme (£55 per week maximum taken from salary before Tax and NI and given to approved childcare provider) • Discounts from local stores • Training and Development • Green Travel scheme
<p>Am I entitled to relocation expenses?</p>	<p>A relocation package can only be given if it was mentioned in the advertisement for the vacancy. Where a relocation package can be offered you must be relocating 30 miles or more to be eligible. There is a maximum of £8000 payable.</p>



39. Appendix Six: Advertisement Request Form

Job title and post number:
Service area and location:
Grade, salary range and hours:
Permanent or Fixed Term post and end date:
Contact Name, telephone number and email address:
<p>Details about the role:</p> <p>This should be no more than 150 words and include some key points about the role, why someone would want to join and key qualifications or personal traits they will require.</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 48px; opacity: 0.2; transform: rotate(-30deg);">DRAFT</p> <p>For an informal discussion, please contact on For an application form please call 01635 519122 or email recruitment@westberks.gov.uk quoting the post reference number 02234. CVs will not be accepted.</p> <p>Closing Date: Interview Date:</p>

40. Appendix Seven: Pre-employment Checks Form

Candidate's name.....

Type of check	Action	Verified by and date
Application Form	<p>The candidate has completed an application form, including the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act declaration and has signed and dated the form. Managers should get applicants to sign electronic versions of the application form at interview.</p> <p>The application form must be sent to HR following recruitment to be placed on file</p>	
Employment History	<p>The candidate has provided information on their employment history and, if appropriate, has adequately explained the reasons for any gaps in their employment.</p> <p>The application form and any notes from interview must be sent to HR following recruitment to be placed on file.</p>	
Right to work in the UK	<p>The candidate has provided satisfactory evidence, in accordance with sections 15-26 of the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006, that they have the right to work in the UK, or that they meet the criteria to apply to the UK Border Agency to be able to work in the UK, and to undertake the type of work on offer.</p> <p>Managers should follow the guidance in 'Avoiding Illegal Working'</p> <p>The recruiting manager must see and take a photocopy of original documents. Photocopies must be sent to HR following recruitment to be placed on file.</p> <p>List evidence seen and copied:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	

<p>Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure</p>	<p>HR will carry out this check where the recruiting manager asks them to do so.</p> <p>Where the candidate has previously lived outside the UK he/she must provide evidence of clearance from the countries they resided in.</p> <p>Disclosure certificate number:</p> <p>Date of issue:</p> <p>A copy of the outcome email will be retained by HR</p>	
<p>List 99 check (Children's Services only where appropriate)</p>	<p>HR will carry out this check where the recruiting manager asks them to do so.</p> <p>A copy of the outcome email will be retained by HR</p>	
<p>Academic and professional qualifications</p>	<p>The candidate has provided original qualification certificates and/or copies certified by the awarding institutions and evidence that they have obtained all academic and professional qualifications required for the role.</p> <p>The recruiting manager must see and take a photocopy of original documents. Photocopies must be sent to HR following recruitment to be placed on file.</p>	
<p>Membership of / registration with professional bodies (Where required e.g. GSCC, GTC, Law Society, RICS)</p>	<p>The candidate has provided original documentary evidence that they are members/registered with the required professional body.</p> <p>Membership/registration number:</p> <p>The recruiting manager must see and take a photocopy of original documents. Photocopies must be sent to HR following recruitment to be placed on file.</p>	
<p>Health</p>	<p>The appropriate level of medical screening form has been completed and where required verification has been obtained from Occupational Health that the candidate has the health and physical capacity to undertake the post (With reasonable adjustments where the candidate has a disability)</p>	
<p>References</p>	<p>References which are satisfactory to the recruiting manager have been taken directly from the appropriate referee, which includes the candidate's most recent employer.</p>	

<p>Driving licence</p>	<p>If applicable, the candidate has provided evidence that they hold the appropriate and valid driving licence and are adequately insured for business purposes.</p> <p>If applicable, the recruiting manager must see and take a photocopy of original documents. Photocopies must be sent to HR following recruitment to be placed on file.</p>	
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This form should be completed by the recruiting manager. Once complete it should be sent to HR to be kept on the new employee's personal file.

Managers in Adult Services and Children's Services should also ensure that they comply with any additional requirements referred to in appendix one (Adults) and appendix two (Children's) of the Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure.

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Title of Report:	Workforce Strategy 2009-2011	Item 6
Report to be considered by:	Individual Decision	
Date of Meeting:	17 July 2009	
Forward Plan Ref:	ID1729	

Purpose of Report: To allow the Personnel Committee to discuss the five themes in the Workforce Strategy ("Building Capacity") and the targets and activities attached to each theme.

Recommended Action: To give comments to the Head of HR prior to a decision on 8th August 2008 by the Portfolio Holder to approve the Workforce Strategy 2009-2011.

Reason for decision to be taken: For discussion and comments. Decision rests with Portfolio holder as an ID.

Other options considered: Not to have a Workforce Strategy. This would invite criticism from CAA and other regulators and was discounted.

Key background documentation: Council Plan Refresh 2009. South East Employers' Workforce Strategy. National Employers' Workforce Strategy.

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Plan Themes:

- CPT12 - Including Everyone**
- CPT13 - Value for Money**
- CPT14 - Effective People**
- CPT15 - Putting Customers First**
- CPT16 - Excellent Performance Management**

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Plan Priorities and Themes by:
 setting out the people management priorities that will help to achieve the Council Plan outcomes.

Portfolio Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Anthony Stansfeld - Tel (01488) 658238
E-mail Address:	astansfeld@westberks.gov.uk
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	18 June 2009

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Robert O'Reilly
Job Title:	Head of HR
Tel. No.:	01635 519358
E-mail Address:	roreilly@westberks.gov.uk

Implications

Policy: Actions in the Workforce Strategy may result in new HR policies.
Financial: The activities are funded through existing budgets
Personnel: Contained in report
Legal/Procurement: n/a
Property: n/a
Risk Management: n/a
Equalities Impact Assessment: undertaken as part of the HR Service Plan

Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:		
The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Item is Urgent Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Executive Summary and Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Workforce Strategy for 2009 – 2011 (called “Building Capacity”) is attached as an appendix to this report. The Workforce Strategy sits alongside the Council Plan and the MTFS. It sets out the main focus for people management targets and activities over the remaining Council Plan timeframe. The Workforce Strategy was formerly called the People Strategy and was adopted by the Executive in 2007 and refreshed by Individual Decision in 2008. It is updated and refreshed annually alongside the Council Plan. This is the second such refresh which has changed the name from People Strategy to Workforce Strategy (to reflect CAA terminology).
- 1.2 The Workforce Strategy has five themes and one overall vision which is “Building Capacity”. All the themes are focused on allowing the Council to be more efficient and effective in the light of the financial challenges outlined in the MTFS and the effects of the economic downturn.
- 1.3 The Workforce Strategy sets the strategy in context with respect to the Sustainable Communities Strategy and the Council Plan
- 1.4 The Workforce Strategy then refers to the Council’s corporate values and the importance of partnership work in building capacity.
- 1.5 The Workforce Strategy then sets out the national and regional influences on the strategy and the local challenges and priorities in West Berkshire. The local priorities are based on an extensive workforce planning exercise involving all services in November 2008. The five themes in the national workforce strategy for local government are: **organisational development; leadership and management development; skills development; recruitment and retention; and pay and reward**. The Workforce Strategy uses these themes to set out the targets and activities which will be undertaken to build capacity,
- 1.6 The Workforce Strategy sets out possible longer term themes in workforce planning for the Council and concludes with an implementation section and an action plan. To give the action plan a sharper focus it only highlights key areas rather than all HR activities undertaken in the Council (the full list of all actions to be taken by the HR Service is set out in the action plan in the HR Service Plan for 2009/10).

Note: the term “building capacity” does not imply an intention to increase the size of the workforce; but rather to increase the productive output of the workforce through improvements in leadership and management; employee engagement; employee motivation; and employee skill levels.

2. Proposals

- 2.1 The proposals for people management targets and activities over the period 2009-2011 are listed under the five themes outlined above and are set out in the action plan.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 The refreshed Workforce Strategy is given the title “Building Capacity” in West Berkshire to highlight the key purpose of the document. The Workforce Strategy sets out practical ways in which the Council will seek to be more efficient and effective. Highlights are the increase in productivity through the expansion of mobile and flexible working (“the Timelord Programme”); reviews of staffing structures including a senior management review; a focus on reducing sickness levels in key service areas; improving employees’ skills to increase output; improving leadership and management skills; reducing the costs of recruiting staff; and improving the career prospects of administrative staff.

Appendices

Appendix A - The Workforce Strategy (called “Building Capacity”)

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: n/a

Officers Consulted: All Heads of Service contributed to the Workforce Strategy by their contribution to Service Level Workforce Planning in November 2008.

Ratified by Corporate Board on 9th June 2009.

Ratified by Management Board on 25th June 2009.

Trade Union: Discussed at Effective People Group meetings which include Trade Union representation.

Appendix A to report to Management Board
25th June 2009.



“BUILDING CAPACITY”

Workforce Strategy 2009-11

Document Control

Document Ref:	HRWFS01	Date Created:	March 2009
Version:	2.0	Date Modified:	12 th June 2009
Revision due			
Author:	Robert O'Reilly	Sign & Date:	
Owning Service	Human Resources		

Change History

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
0.1			
0.2			
0.3	01/05/09	Update in light of sickness out-turn for 08/09	
0.4	18/05/09	Update in light of CB views on 12 th May 2009.	ROR
0.5	12/06/09	Update in light of CB views on 9 th June 2009.	ROR

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
0.6	26/06/09	Update in light of MB views on 25 th June 2009	ROR
0.7	03/07/09	Update (minor) prior to going to Personnel Committee for discussion	ROR

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6. Actions	13
7. Longer term workforce planning	13
8. Implementation	15

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1. Foreword

- 1.1. "Building Capacity" (the name for the Workforce Strategy previously known as the "People Strategy") is designed to assist the staff at West Berkshire Council (WBC) to deliver the objectives in the Sustainable Community Strategy (themes: Prosperous, Stronger, Greener, Safer, Healthy) and the Council Plan, with its sixteen outcomes, by building the capacity of the Council to deliver a more efficient and effective service to customers and clients. The term "building capacity" does not imply an intention to increase the size of the workforce; but rather to increase the productive output of the workforce through improvements in leadership and management, employee engagement, employee motivation, and employee skill levels.
- 1.2. The Workforce Strategy sits alongside the *Children's Workforce Strategy* which addresses issues in schools and organisations working with children. The emerging *Adult Workforce Strategy* will also sit alongside this document. The need for a separate workforce strategy for the Children's and Adult's workforce is driven by national government policy.
- 1.3. In West Berkshire Council an exercise was undertaken by all Heads of Service in November 2008 to explore strategic workforce planning issues from the "bottom up". Using a toolkit developed by HR, Heads of Service were asked to consider eleven workforce planning issues and indicate which needed to be addressed now (or in the next few years) to avoid potential problems with service delivery.
- 1.4. This exercise identified three issues which were rated as the most important. Two of the issues can be described as "organisational development", namely the increase in mobile and flexible working (M&FW) and the need to focus on increasing efficiency with regard to staffing costs. The third most urgent issue was "skills development".

2. Introduction

2.1. Purpose

- 2.1.1. The aim of this Workforce Strategy is to describe how the Council will build capacity across the organisation and, working with partners, deliver the changes required to meet the expectations in the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Council Plan.
- 2.1.2. The Workforce Strategy will help managers and employees to work at their best. This means removing obstacles to high performance and allowing best practice to thrive.

2.2. Vision

- 2.2.1. The Workforce Strategy is about delivering the Council's objectives in a way which shows commitment to the Council's values (Respect, Integrity and Ambition). Respect underpins our commitment to promoting equality of

opportunity and diversity in the workplace. Integrity underpins our commitment to open and transparent governance arrangements internally and with our partners. Ambition underpins our commitment to high quality, value for money services for our citizens.

2.2.2. The vision is to build capacity to deliver a value for money service in way which is aligned to the Council's values.

2.3. Partnership

2.3.1. There may be opportunities to work with the Local Strategic Partnership or neighbouring authorities to explore shared workforce challenges (e.g. the development of shared services).

2.3.2. The Workforce Strategy will be used as an agenda with which to engage with partner organisations to draw upon the range of skills and expertise available.

3. Drivers for the Workforce Strategy

Background

- 3.1. West Berkshire Council is a medium sized unitary authority created in 1998 which has continued to improve and achieve successful outcomes for its citizens over the past eleven years, finishing the last Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) rating as a three star authority, improving strongly. The most recent Management Letter from the Audit Commission commended its strong leadership and management, and its clear vision which is shared with staff, citizens and partners. The Council has forged good relationships with parish councils across the district.
- 3.2. West Berkshire is a prosperous, largely rural authority. Until the recent recession its main challenges were coping with the fruits of economic success: the pressure for more housing; better transport; high house prices; inward economic migration; and staff shortages in some key skill areas. Some of these challenges will change as the Council tackles the effects of the recession which started in the autumn of 2008.
- 3.3. The Council Plan has sixteen outcomes and four themes: Economic well being; Environmental well being; Social well being and Organisational effectiveness. The Workforce Strategy by "Building Capacity" will help to achieve progress across all four themes. However its primary focus will be on Organisational effectiveness where the Council plan outcomes are "Putting Customers First"; "Effective People"; "Value for Money" and "Including Everyone".

National issues facing local government

Local government is facing many challenges which include:

- The need to personalise services and provide more choice to service users;
- The need to reinvigorate local democracy;
- The need to tackle climate change;

- A growing elderly population;
- Greater diversity and the need to promote social cohesion;
- The need to overcome barriers which exclude some people from access to services;
- A new threat of poverty from growing unemployment;
- Growing disparity between socio-economic groups in society;
- Migration;
- Social inclusion;
- Health issues (obesity, drugs, alcohol, tobacco);
- Crime and anti-social behaviour;
- Poor basic skills for a proportion of adults;
- The need to improve school performance;
- The need to promote entrepreneurship;
- The need to be ready to tackle emergencies including a terrorist threat;
- and the need to protect the environment.

There is a need to make local government an attractive place to work which is met more from flexible terms and conditions than high salaries compared to the private sector.

The Council's workforce is 40% part time and 75% female which reflects the more flexible terms and conditions in local government which are more "family friendly" than the private sector. Turnover has decreased from 12.04% in 07/08 to 10.41% in 08/09.

National assessment framework

- 3.4. Local government has to meet the challenges above in a new context as a result of the new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) regulatory framework from 1st April 2009. The CAA recognises that resources in local government are limited and the Council Tax payer must be protected (in West Berkshire nearly 70% of the non-schools budget comes from Council Tax payers). The CAA also recognises that the needs of local citizens must be heard and that the response may come from a number of public sector partners working together.
- 3.5. It follows that the challenges cannot be met by spending more money or working in isolation. The two key drivers for the workforce strategies of all local authorities will be working in partnership and achieving high quality, value for money services. Value for money is a key theme for the Council and will be part of the CAA assessment.

- 3.6. The priorities set together with our partners are set out in the West Berkshire Partnership Strategy (*A Breath of Fresh Air*) which seeks to address national and local performance indicators through its sub-partnerships.

Local challenges and priorities

- 3.7. West Berkshire Council has local challenges which also drive the Workforce Strategy.
- 3.7.1. The last CPA inspection report commended good progress on diversity and equalities. This focus has been expanded in 2009 with the drafting of an “Including Everyone” strategy which sets the ambitious objective of linking work on equalities and diversity with social inclusion and community cohesion.
- 3.7.2. WBC has set itself a goal of reducing its carbon footprint and leading the work needed on climate change in the district. The Council will reduce its own property footprint and reduce the need for staff to commute to the office by the widespread introduction of mobile and flexible working through the ‘Timelord’ programme.
- 3.7.3. WBC is facing up to challenge of a growing elderly population and the need for personalised services by transforming its service for older persons under the ‘Putting People First’ programme.
- 3.7.4. WBC has gained external funding for large capital projects and is rebuilding two secondary schools. There are a number of smaller capital projects funded by the Council which reflect the priorities of transport; schools; disabled people; crime; safety; activities for youth; and vibrant towns and villages.
- 3.7.5. The Council set itself a target of 8.9 days sickness absence in 08/09. This is benchmarked against a national average for all local authorities of 9.3 days. However the out-turn figures for 08/09 show that the average level of sickness in WBC (excluding schools) was 9.95 days for 08/09. Therefore the need to reduce the level of sickness absence at the Council is a further local challenge.
- 3.8. West Berkshire Council is part of a sub regional area which includes the county of Berkshire with its six unitary authorities. WBC is part of the newly formed Berkshire Economic Strategy Board which sees its context as “economy, environment and society” and its strategic objectives as: enterprise and skills; transport infrastructure; global competitiveness; and sustainable prosperity.
- 3.9. WBC falls under the GOSE (Government Office for the South East) and SEEDA (South East England Development Agency) areas and is influenced by their priorities which include a focus on essential skills and community cohesion.

4. The five national themes for workforce strategy

- 4.1.1. The National Workforce Strategy for local government, and the South East Employers’ Workforce Strategy, both focus on the following five themes:

- **Organisational Development;**
- **Leadership and Management Development;**

- **Skills Development;**
- **Recruitment and Retention;**
- **Pay and Rewards.**

4.1.2. The five themes can be regarded as the “top down” priorities for a Workforce Strategy. The “top down” priorities may be augmented by elected members to reflect emerging local issues of importance.

4.1.3. The WBC Workforce Strategy takes the national themes and uses these to address issues that are relevant to the West Berkshire Council workforce.

5. Priorities (*extracts from the National Workforce Strategy in italics*)

5.1. Organisational development

Effectively building workforce support for new structures and new ways of working to deliver citizen-focused and efficient services, in partnership.

5.1.1. There are two strands to the organisational development theme in the Workforce Strategy; implementing the Timelord Programme and efficient use of staff resources.

Timelord Programme

5.1.2. The first organisational development strand is implementing the Timelord programme to increase mobile and flexible working (M&FW) in the Council. The Timelord Programme will change organisational culture and practices. The programme will require excellent organisational development and change management skills to positively engage staff in M&FW and create new ways of working in teams.

5.1.3. The aims of the Timelord Programme are to increase the use of M&FW across the Council resulting in a “triple win” for the Council, its customers and its staff.

5.1.4. The Timelord programme will affect all Council staff (excluding schools). Phase One has applied to staff moving into the new office at Turnham’s Green in March 2009. Phase Two, in autumn 2009, will apply to staff currently based in the Avonbank and Northcroft buildings.

5.1.5. The emphasis will be on creating high trust and high performing teams where output and outcomes are the focus of employee performance management. There will be a continuing need to engage and support staff in this major change programme. This will involve communication with staff and managers and training on how to make better use of technology and how to drive business process gains from the move to “smarter working”.

5.1.6. The potential benefits of a successful move to greater M&FW are huge. The Council will see reduced property costs and a reduced carbon footprint. The customers will see a more responsive and accessible workforce. The staff will appreciate an employer who trusts them and enables them to work flexibly.

This will lead to greater “employee engagement” with a reduction in turnover, reduced absence and greater job satisfaction.

Efficient use of staffing resources

- 5.1.7. The second organisational development strand arising from the work undertaken by Heads of Service is about making the most of the staffing resources available. Wasteful processes need to be removed. Job roles may need to be redesigned. Technology must be used effectively. Existing management structures may need to be challenged to achieve potential efficiency savings, which will include a review of the senior management tiers of the organisation. Spending on overtime, agency staff, casual staff and consultants needs to be justifiable. HR will provide expertise on organisational design principles; up to date management information; and commission training opportunities on making best use of technology and business processes where needed.
- 5.1.8. Heads of Service indicated that there was a mismatch between the staffing available and workload demands. The emphasis in the Workforce Strategy is on efficiency and effectiveness. The strategic work of the Transformation and Efficiency Board was already led to some decisions on achieving efficiency and disinvestments. The Medium Term Financial Strategy sets out the need to make £9m in savings over the next four years.
- 5.1.9. The introduction of the Budget Monitoring Panel (which includes the Leader and Chief Executive) to scrutinise all new posts, and the expenditure on overtime and agency staff, is an example of how staffing costs have moved to the top of the organisational agenda. This will be a major area of work for HR over the next two years. HR has produced a new Organisational Change Policy and Procedure to deal with reductions in staffing levels.
- 5.1.10. Efficient use of staffing resources can be supported by reducing staff sickness absence. Heads of Service have been working towards achieving service level targets for sickness absence that will achieve the overall target for the Council of 8.9 days (compared to 9.3 days average for all local authorities). However the out-turn figure for 08/09 gave a Council actual sickness level of 9.95 days. The focus for 2009/10 is likely to be on directorate targets (rather than service level targets) to track a reversal in the trend on sickness absence.
- 5.1.11. There is a range of HR tools available to managers to tackle sickness absence. These include a comprehensive Managing Sickness Absence policy and procedure on the HR intranet; an employee relations advice line for advice on ill health cases; workshops for managers on how to use the Managing Sickness procedure; quarterly information for all Heads of Service on progress against sickness targets; quarterly information for managers showing number and duration of sickness absence for each employee; access to a professional Occupational Health service for advice; counselling for employees suffering from stress and depression; and support from HR Contacts.
- 5.1.12. The Workforce Strategy does not propose to extend the range of HR tools available as they cover all that is recommended in best practice guidance from the government. However HR will work with Heads of Service with high levels of comparative absence to ensure that an action plan for managing

sickness absence is included in their workforce planning action plan. This may focus on long term or short term absence depending on the needs of the service. A Task Group of elected members will review the approach to reducing sickness absence and may add to the range of tools described above to reduce the level of sickness absence.

5.2. Leadership development

Building visionary and ambitious leadership which makes the best use of both the political and managerial role, operating in a partnership context.

- 5.2.1. At national and regional level there is an expectation that local authority Workforce Strategies will address the need for visionary and ambitious political and managerial leaders. However this was not identified as a priority by Heads of Service in the “bottom up” strategic workforce planning exercise in November 2008. The Workforce Strategy therefore has a relatively modest scope when it comes to leadership development in 2009/10. However from 2010 onwards the demands of the CAA framework will demand greater strategic skills from senior managers and elected members. To build capacity senior managers and elected members will need to know what partners are doing and could do, and to see and articulate how synergies can be identified to work together in an effective way. The Effective People Group (EPG) has identified the Common Purpose leadership programme as particularly relevant as it focuses on networking with partner organisations and achieving results for citizens beyond the formal authority structures in the public, private and voluntary sector. Four senior managers have attended the Common Purpose leadership programme which lasts for five months and involves visits to organisations across Berkshire to discuss how they can improve their services. One senior manager per year will attend the Common Purpose programme leading to a critical mass of senior leaders able to grasp the challenges of the partnership agenda in future years.
- 5.2.2. HR is organising a one day “Learning about Leadership” course for all Heads of Service in July 2009 with an experienced external facilitator. Subject to the evaluation of this day, it is envisaged that the Council will hold an annual “Learning about Leadership” event for all Heads of Service. Some Heads of Service are receiving feedback on their performance through facilitated meetings with a selection of their staff, which will help to develop leadership skills, and this is set to expand in 2010/11. There may be more demand for external coaching support from some Heads of Service as a result of this feedback.
- 5.2.3. Funding for expert external consultancy for a programme to develop future political and managerial leaders, to include greater understanding of the issues surrounding succession planning, will be the subject of discussion and a possible budget bid request for 2010/2011. This bid, if supported, would focus on working with the Leadership Centre of Local Government to support leadership development for members and senior officers to “create the future through building effective and efficient partnerships, improving the lives of local people” (quote from LGA).
- 5.2.4. Leadership development below Head of Service level is well established with the successful Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) training

programme for middle managers; and the new management induction programme introduced by HR. Managers will have an increasing obligation to help produce a skilled and productive workforce by embedding a learning culture and taking steps to encourage employee engagement. The 2009 Employee Attitude Survey (“Have Your Say”) will provide valuable comparative information to allow managers to put in place action plans to make this happen.

5.2.5. HR continues to find ways to deepen the understanding of managers in using the National Occupational Standards for Management and Leadership (West Berkshire Council’s management competency framework). This will be assessed as part of the Investors in People re-accreditation process in March 2010.

5.2.6. The 2009 and 2011 biennial Employee Attitude Surveys (EAS) will provide a measure of leadership development. In the Council Plan there is a target of a 5% increase in the score for employee engagement (a composite measure taken from three questions: job satisfaction; proud of working for WBC; and would recommend WBC as a place to work). The EAS will produce an action plan which will demonstrate leadership skills across the Council.

5.2.7. HR Contacts will work with Heads of Service in services which have a higher than average turnover and seek ways to improve retention of staff so that the Council’s overall turnover figure is at or below the average for all local authorities.

5.3. Skills development

With partners, developing employees’ skills and knowledge, in an innovative, high performance, multi-agency context

5.3.1. West Berkshire Council has signed the Government’s ‘Skills Pledge’ to support all staff in developing basic literacy and numeracy skills to achieve a “level two” qualification where appropriate. The Council has decided to support this government initiative because it recognises that a proportion of its own staff may have difficulties with literacy, numeracy and IT skills. One important way to build capacity is to increase the skills and productive capacity of our own workforce. A more skilled workforce will still require excellent leadership to help it to stay motivated and engaged whilst delivering high quality, value for money services.

5.3.2. HR is currently commissioning a survey of skill levels amongst the workforce (with the help of a government grant). This work will involve working with partner organisations. West Berkshire Council, by signing the Skills Pledge, can gain support in developing the skills of staff, as well as setting a positive example to other local employers. This is linked to the Local Strategic Partnership’s action to develop the skills of the whole community. It also supports the Berkshire Economic Strategy Board priorities which note that *“the lack of skills (particularly the basic skills) is a major contributing factor to the cause of poverty and deprivation within local communities”* (BESB Strategy, December 2008)

5.3.3. The Timelord Programme has an associated training programme which will increase the skill levels of all staff in the use of IT and telecommunications. The

Timelord Programme will also address the people management issues of managing a “virtual” team through specially designed course run by an external trainer

- 5.3.4. In addition to essential skills development, Heads of Service have identified skills development as a critical success factor. HR will assist services to plan their learning and development with a new template for L&D plans and support from the HR Contacts.
- 5.3.5. The skills of managers in dealing with people management issues is being increased through the use of short workshops run by HR. These workshops cover subjects like discipline; grievance; capability; and sickness absence.
- 5.3.6. HR will seek more detailed information from services on their learning and development plans to map the investment in skill development across the Council and evaluate its effectiveness.
- 5.3.7. There are proposals to roll out of 360° feedback for managers across the Council (this currently only happens in social care areas). If this proposal is implemented it will highlight areas for skill development for managers (linked to the National Occupational Standards for Leadership and Management).
- 5.3.8. Skills development will be made more accessible through the expansion of “on-line” learning through the Council’s subscription to “Learning Pool” (a national organisation linked to the IDeA). The take up of all training will be monitored against a range of equalities criteria (age, race, disability, part time hours, and sex) to ensure equality of access and identify any barriers to accessibility.
- 5.3.9. The Council has its own Performance Management Methodology (based on PRINCE2) which is supported by a dedicated training course. An increasing number of employees are now trained and this improves the Council’s management of major capital and other projects.
- 5.3.10. As part of its commitment to positive action to improve equality of opportunity the Council will target a specific training scheme on “women in management”. This will seek to change the gender profile of the Head of Service level of the Council which does not currently reflect the gender composition of the whole Council (excluding schools).
- 5.3.11. The Council’s approach to skills development will be tested by seeking re-accreditation for the national Investors in People (IiP) standard in March 2010. If successful the accreditation will last until 2013.

5.4. Recruitment and Retention

With partners, taking action to address key future occupational skill shortages; promote jobs and careers; identify, develop and motivate talent and address diversity issues.

- 5.4.1. The economic downturn has had an impact on recruitment. There are now ample applications for posts which recently attracted none or very few, especially in all occupations connected to the construction industry.

- 5.4.2. Adherence to equal opportunities in recruitment will be monitored, using the management information system Resourcelink.
- 5.4.3. HR will focus on achieving reductions in advertising expenditure across the Council in response to the downturn.
- 5.4.4. Individual services will receive bespoke help from HR where shortages continue to exist.
- 5.4.5. The HR service works with local employers in the district by holding an annual Recruitment and Skills Fair at the Corn Exchange in Newbury. This is one example of how jobs in WBC are being made available to a diverse potential workforce.
- 5.4.6. Retention of staff is likely to be less of an issue as the recession continues. However as the country comes out of recession our commitment to support diversity and good people management practice and policies will help WBC retain its staff. The Council's commitment to staff well-being will also help with retention. One example of this is the commitment to run at least three in-house smoking cessation schemes in 2009/10.

5.5. Pay and Rewards

Modernising pay systems to reflect new structures, new priorities and new ways of working and to reinforce high performance, including encouraging a total rewards approach

- 5.5.1. In the SE Region 34 (46%) of councils have left the national pay bargaining structure (known as the "Green Book") and operate local pay arrangements. West Berkshire Council operates a version of local pay that always shadows the national pay award, but allows for flexibility on other terms and conditions of employment.
- 5.5.2. Reward systems like overtime and honoraria payments are being monitored to ensure effectiveness and fairness.
- 5.5.3. The use of generic "job families" is being phased out to protect the Council from equal pay challenges and to provide a career structure for administrative employees.
- 5.5.4. The national exhortations to introduce performance related pay (PRP), which have been ignored by most local authorities, are likely to subside in light of the adverse effect of PRP ("the bonus culture") on the banking sector.

6. Actions

- 6.1. An action plan to support the Workforce Strategy is attached at Appendix A.

7. Longer term workforce planning

- 7.1. This section of the Workforce Strategy considers possible issues for longer term workforce planning. The following paragraphs set out some of the issues which may be included in future versions of the Workforce Strategy.

- 7.2. The need for the Council to listen to its citizens and work with its partners will call for an increasing number of staff to be out of the office meeting people and using technology on the move. The concept of “leading beyond authority” which is a core principle of the Common Purpose organisation will become increasingly important. The challenges for local areas increasingly involve partners sharing ideas and expertise to achieve positive outcomes for local people. The recession is a good example of an issue that needs partnership working to secure the knowledge and skills needed to “weather the storm”. For example the themes in *A Breath of Fresh Air* of providing support on skills for the rural communities in West Berkshire can be informed by the Council’s experience of mobile and flexible working through the Timelord Programme. For example small businesses could be started in the rural community using modern technology to work from home. Partnership working will become more “distributed” through the Council rather than resting solely with the LSP.
- 7.3. The workforce of the future will need to be creative and innovative to seek and secure opportunities to be more efficient. However this will be tempered with a need to avoid becoming so risk averse that new ideas are always stillborn. The vilification of public servants in the media when things go wrong will increase the tendency for employees to always cover their backs and avoid risk. However the increased use of partnership working will help to introduce new ideas into the Council, as has happened as a result of the successful work with Vodafone on the Timelord Programme.
- 7.4. The workforce of the future will be highly skilled and highly educated. The concept of leadership is likely to change and become more distributed throughout the organisation as multi disciplinary projects become more common. Employees will exercise leadership outside the traditional hierarchies to get things done in partnership with other organisations in the public, private and voluntary sector.
- 7.5. The role of elected members may change as the Government seek to revitalise interest in local democracy and push choice down to a local level. This may produce difficult ethical issues which cannot be covered by “standing orders” and we may see the emergence of an ethics committee (such as is seen in the NHS) to advise on thorny issues.
- 7.6. The non statutory parts of local government may be passed to the private or third sector to increase choice. At the same time a final push to separate schools from local authority influence may be made by central government. This would reduce the size of the local government workforce.
- 7.7. The trend for larger local government entities which has witnessed nine new unitary authorities being born on 1 April 2009 will continue, as will the call for more shared services and joint working. This will be resisted by some who see this trend as weakening local democratic accountability. However it is possible that the workforce of the future may be employed across boundaries with other local authorities or other partner organisations. This will require additional people management skills to keep such workers engaged and productive. The national trend is to encourage local authorities to positively examine whether sharing services can produce cashable savings and this pressure is likely to increase.
- 7.8. The challenges to society from a disenfranchised minority of the population who have never worked may lead to calls for local government to find work for those on

the margins of society. This would build on the work of the LSP which is already looking to partner organisations to provide work experience and apprenticeships for the young unemployed.

8. Implementation

- 8.1. The Workforce Strategy will be delivered through the HR Service Plan and work programme for 2009/10 and 2010/11. There will be contributions from Heads of Service as recorded in their service plans.
- 8.2. Progress against SMART targets will be monitored through the appraisal process for the Head of HR.
- 8.3. In addition, progress will be monitored by the Effective People Group
- 8.4. The results of the Employee Attitude Survey in 2009 and the Investors in People assessment in 2010 will provide important feedback on progress against the Workforce Strategy 2009-2011.
- 8.5. The Timelord programme will be evaluated using the Council's Project Performance Management framework.

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Appendix A – Workforce Strategy Action Plan 2009-11					
What do we need to change?	How will we achieve the change?	Who will lead	What support do we need?	Time-scale	What information do we need?
1. Mobile and Flexible Working					
Increase the level of mobile and flexible working (numbers of employees working flexibly).	Timelord Programme; changes to buildings, technology and employee working styles	Timelord Programme Board and Timelord Programme Co-ordinator	Commitment from elected members, trade unions and senior managers	Phase 2 will be completed By December 2009 Subject to Executive decision Phase 3 will be completed by March 2011	Potential staff work patterns; costs of technology and accommodation – to be gathered as part of programme workshops etc.
2. More efficient use of staff resources					
Move from asking for more staffing resources to finding ways to achieve more with existing levels of staffing and	Service plans to address this issue (as Heads of Service identified it as important), with help from HR Contacts.	Heads of Service	HR to increase expertise in organisational	Senior management review summer	Elected members and senior managers need information from

Appendix A – Workforce Strategy Action Plan 2009-11					
What do we need to change?	How will we achieve the change?	Who will lead	What support do we need?	Time-scale	What information do we need?
technology.	Business process re-engineering may be appropriate in some areas Staff suggestions The Systems Transformation Programme on Community Services.	Heads of Service HR Head of System Transformation	design to advise HoS on restructures.	2009. Further structural changes may be needed in 2010 and 2011.	HR on how money is spent on staffing (overtime, agency etc) and analysis of management structures to get best use of resources.
Reduce staff absence levels	Targets for directorates HR advice and support to managers on actions to reduce staff absence, including application of existing procedures	Heads of Service and Corporate Directors. HR	Elected Member Task Group	March 2010	Accurate and targeted management information for managers on staff absence
3. Skills Development					
Improve access to the corporate training programme for all employees	Expand provisions of on-line learning through West Berkshire Council's link with "Learning Pool". Monitor training take up against age, race, disability, part time hours, and sex	HR	Funding for Learning Pool contract	Formal launch of on-line training September 2010	Accurate employee information on Resourcelink

Appendix A – Workforce Strategy Action Plan 2009-11					
What do we need to change?	How will we achieve the change?	Who will lead	What support do we need?	Time-scale	What information do we need?
3. Leadership skills					
Improve the leadership skills of senior managers.	Organise a “Learning about Leadership” day for all Heads of Service.	HR	External facilitator on the day Costs to be funded from Corporate Training Budget	July 2009 And annual event thereafter	Input on content and design of event from CMT volunteers
Improve people management skills for all managers	Expand range of HR procedures workshops available to managers	HR		Ongoing	Feedback from managers on effectiveness
	Improve the Workforce Planning Toolkit for use in the 2010 service planning process	HR	Support from Heads of Service	Jan 2010	
Promote opportunities for women to aspire to senior management positions	Identify a group of aspiring female managers and develop a programme to support them achieving their goals	HR	Commitment from Heads of Service	March 2010	Information on career aspirations arising from annual appraisals
4. Public Sector Skills Challenge					

Appendix A – Workforce Strategy Action Plan 2009-11					
What do we need to change?	How will we achieve the change?	Who will lead	What support do we need?	Time-scale	What information do we need?
Improve the skill levels of employees who are not at “Level Two”.	Offer training and support for all staff not already at Level 2 (five good GCSEs or equivalent) to achieve qualification	HR	LSC grant to be spent on consultancy from external training providers	Survey complete by autumn 2009, training on-going.	Information from staff on current skill levels.
5. Effective recruitment					
Reduce the amount spent on recruitment advertising	Provide management information to persuade service managers not to waste money on ineffective advertising	HR	Commitment from Corporate Directors to support this work as over half the spend is from service budgets	Monitor quarterly and report at end of quarter 4 (March 2010)	Information on spend outside HR budget provided by advertising agency
Raise our profile as an employer of choice and ensure that we appeal to a diverse range of potential employees	Run an annual Recruitment and Skills Fair Improve web recruitment	HR HR	Income to be raised from selling stands to local employers	Annual Event April 2010	Evaluation from first Recruitment and Skills Fair in April 2009.

Appendix A – Workforce Strategy Action Plan 2009-11					
What do we need to change?	How will we achieve the change?	Who will lead	What support do we need?	Time-scale	What information do we need?
Introduce “safer recruitment” practices that meet new government demands.	Implement the demands of the statutory Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA)	HR		Jan 2010	
6. ‘Support staff’					
Integrate traditional administrative roles into service structures to provide clear career structures and improve recruitment	Removal of ‘job families’ project	HR	Commitment from Heads of Service	All services engaged in project by December 2009	Need information on case law affecting job families to judge urgency of project