

North West Employers'

WORKFORCE PLANNING MODEL PROCESS AND TEMPLATE

INTRODUCTION

The Local Government Pay and Workforce Strategy says that for local authorities to be effective it needs to ensure that it has the right people with the right skills in the right place at the right time. As a first step to achieving that aim it is essential that each local authority considers what sort of workforce it has now together with what sort of workforce it will need to deliver effective services to the community in the future. To help in that task the development of a workforce plan will enable a comparison of current competencies, skills and other workforce features with future needs, thus providing a simple means to identify significant gaps. However whilst it is impossible to predict the future with any certainty this process enables the organisation to make staffing decisions now that take account of the longer-term context. Additionally if authorities adopt the same consistent approach to workforce planning it increases the potential to identify common gaps that cannot be resolved locally but may be capable of resolution at a sub-regional, regional level or national level.

A more comprehensive definition of workforce planning is:

“A process in which an organisation attempts to estimate the demand for labour and evaluate the size, nature and sources of supply which will be required to meet that demand” (Reilly 1996)

The production of a workforce plan and accompanying workforce development plan will significantly help authorities in dealing with capacity issues arising from CPA, implementing the efficiency review and achieving more effective procurement. Whilst drawing up and implementing a workforce plan enables local authorities to “tick the right boxes”, the overriding reason is to assist in the delivery or procurement of customer focussed, continuously improving and effective services to the community.

BACKGROUND TO THE MODEL PROCESS AND TEMPLATE

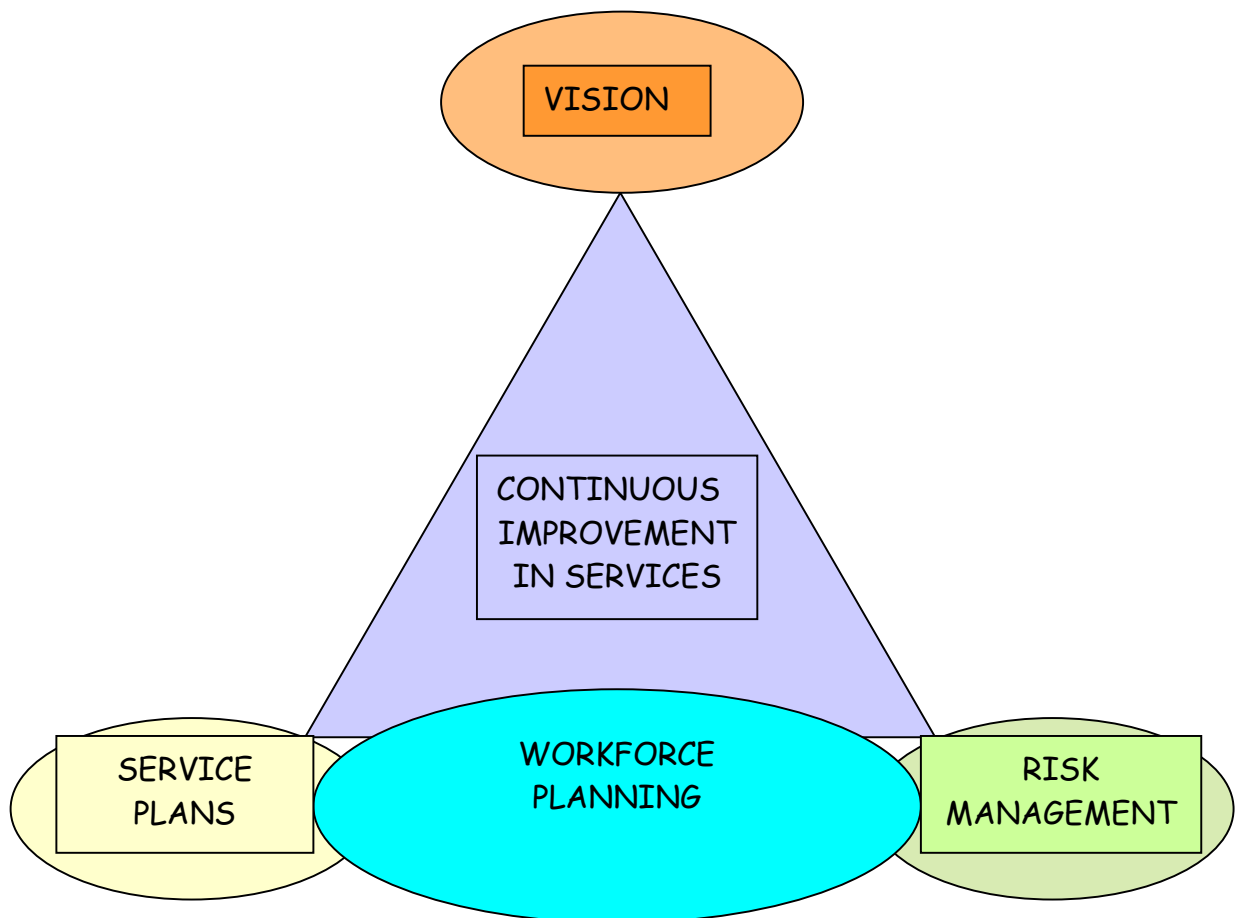
In recent months it has emerged that the task of drawing up a workforce plan can be onerous especially when there are scarce resources available and when the task is seen as an add-on to other planning processes. For that reason a group

of district councils, facilitated by North West Employers, got together to identify a simpler method of creating a workforce plan. They felt that:

- A simple template or framework that was easy to use would make the process manageable.
- The process should not be the sole preserve of the Human Resource function, but should be corporately driven.
- The approach needed to be simple, practical and tangible that managers would buy into.
- The format should enable consistent and comparable information to be produced that could be used both regionally and sub-regionally.

It was seen as particularly important, especially amongst those line managers who took part that the workforce plan is integrated and merged with the corporate, service planning and risk management processes so it isn't viewed as a separate exercise.

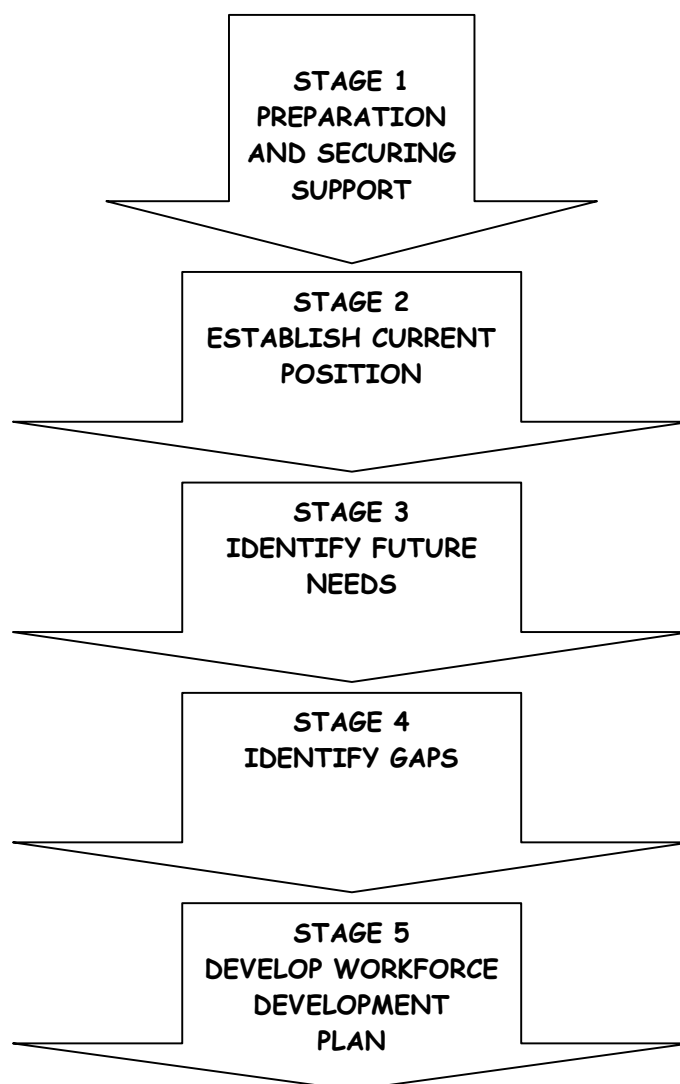
The following model illustrates how they link together:

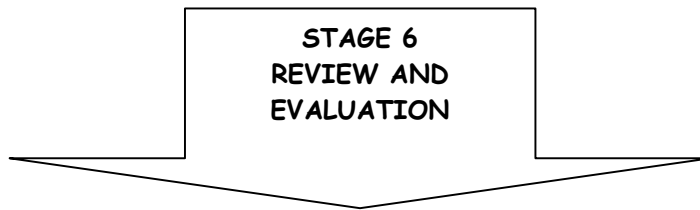


THE PROCESS

This paper brings together the thoughts of those people who attended the workshop and provides a suggested process and draft template for developing a workforce plan. Whilst the model was designed with districts in mind it may also be of use in larger authorities.

The process for establishing a workforce plan is as follows:





STAGE 1 – PREPARATION AND SECURING SUPPORT

- Develop the “why” message based on benefits to the organisation, the risks of not doing anything and the links with other strategies and plans.
- Get the Management Team signed up to the process
- With Management Team establish a clear understanding of the vision and what the authority wants to achieve. Additionally they also need to consider who should be involved. It may be appropriate to consider a steering group approach involving (subject to local circumstances) Senior Management Team Member, HR, Heads of Service representative(s), Line manager(s), Trade Unions, staff representatives.
- Establish how the process will be implemented and integrated with the service planning process
- Agree the message to be communicated to managers and employees
- Decide timescale for workforce plan – 1, 3, 5, 10 years.
- Draw up outline project plan that should indicate likely level of commitment required, timescales etc.
- Assess what internal and external information is available to enable current and future analysis of workforce and service requirements. (See checklist in Stage 2 below).
- Assess what you know already about people management issues in each service area e.g. recruitment/retention difficulties, attendance, skill requirements/shortages, levels of performance, etc.

STAGE 2 – ESTABLISH CURRENT POSITION

For each service area the following data is essential to enable you to complete this phase:

- Service plan
- Risk management plan

- Numbers of full-time staff employed}
- Number of part-time staff employed}
- Numbers of agency staff
- Staffing levels
- Grades
- Types of contracts of employment (Temporary/permanent/casual)
- Attendance
- Age profile – 16 to 18 years
 - 18 to 24 years
 - 25 to 39 years
 - 40 to 49 years
 - 50 to 59 years
 - 60 and over
- Vacancies
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Turnover
- Overtime
- The number of staff who hold a relevant professional or vocational qualification.
- The number of staff in professional/ vocational training.
- The highest academic qualification held:
 - Below NVQ level 2
 - NVQ level 2
 - NVQ level 3
 - NVQ level 4 and above
 - Trade apprenticeship
 - Other qualifications
 (For definitions under each category see Appendix 1.)
- Significant training needs
- Destination of leavers
- Information you already know about people who may be leaving or starting or areas that may be at risk with the potential for redeployment /redundancy.

Other essential sources of information that will help in terms of identifying future service and skill requirements are:

- Community Plan
- Corporate Plan
- Improvement Plan
- Financial plan
- Local social demography
- Predicted legislative changes
- Performance information (BVPIs etc) indicating current level of performance in comparison with others, particularly high performing councils.

Those authorities that have developed a competency framework or have access to a skills audit tool will be able to use that information to improve their analysis of the current workforce.

STAGE 3 – IDENTIFY FUTURE NEEDS

To ensure that the authority has the right people in the right place with the right skills at the right time to deliver continuously improving services it is necessary to try and predict the level of service and the way that it will be delivered in the future. However whilst it is impossible to predict the future with any certainty undertaking this process enables the organisation to make staffing decisions now that take account of the longer-term context.

To help make that assessment the following information will be important:

- A clear understanding of the corporate vision and objectives
- The likely impact of central government initiatives e.g. efficiency review, procurement, ten year vision for local government, e-government, etc.
- The key objectives for each service area.
- Planned major changes/reorganisations
- The predicted workforce profile in five/ten years
- What initiatives are already in place to fill future skill gaps e.g. succession planning, specific training initiatives, graduate training schemes, etc.
- What plans are in place to improve the level of performance
- Future funding
- Recruitment and retention hotspots
- Demographic changes that could impact on services

STAGE 4 – IDENTIFY THE GAPS

Having established what the future may look like together with the skills and competencies that may be expected it is necessary to compare that information with the information gathered from Stage two. Once the gaps have been identified it will then be necessary to prioritise based on their impact:

Large gap	Priority 3	Priority 1
Small gap	Priority 4	Priority 2
	Low impact	High impact

Priority 1	High impact and large gap
Priority 2	High impact and small gap
Priority 3	Low impact and large gap
Priority 4	Low impact and small gap

STAGE 5 – DEVELOP YOUR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Once the gaps have been identified and prioritised it will be possible to draw up a workforce development plan that will set down how the authority intends to deal with the gaps and the different needs identified and prioritised. Of course not all of the gaps may be capable of local solution but if all authorities adopt the same approach, especially in terms of initial data collection, it would be possible to additionally identify sub-regional and regional gaps enabling local authorities to work together with regional and sub-regional agencies to help find appropriate solutions.

The workforce development plan is therefore an action plan detailing what action the authority will take to meet future needs. Such actions should not be restricted to learning and development solutions but also to the following:

- Review of qualification and entry requirements for jobs that are difficult to recruit to.
- Extend sources of recruitment.
- Enhanced role/promotion opportunities for internal staff across departmental boundaries
- Commence dialogue with education providers about future needs
- Removal of recruitment inhibitors by providing greater flexibility e.g. more flexible working arrangements, cafeteria style benefits package, competitive pay levels
- Job redesign and remodelling
- Opportunities for joint delivery with other authorities.
- Process redesign and improvement
- Improved productivity

The workforce development plan should also include performance indicators to measure progress and clearly indicate resource implications. It should also take account of other initiatives that may impact upon the plan.

STAGE 6 – REVIEW AND EVALUATION

For the workforce plan and accompanying workforce development plan to be effective it should be subject to regular review and evaluation. For effectiveness the review process should be integrated into the annual service planning process and should be updated when major initiatives/changes are planned. The authors of any reports proposing significant changes should therefore be required to

show the people management and consequent resource implications of their proposals as well as the impact upon the workforce development plan.

MAKING THE PROCESS WORK

For the process to work there needs to be:

- A persuasive and convincing argument why a workforce plan and accompanying workforce development plan is necessary.
- Commitment from the Senior Management Team and leading members.
- An approach that is merged into existing corporate and service/business planning processes rather than something which just appears to make more work.
- A willingness by managers to help, especially in identifying future service needs.
- A champion or champions with influence to drive the initiative forward.
- A flexible approach that acknowledges that all the pieces may not be present for the “perfect” plan and that it may be necessary to improvise making best use of what is available.
- A willingness to look at a variety of different and innovative solutions to resolve supply, competency and skill gaps

HELP AND SUPPORT

To discuss any help and support you may need to apply the model process, please contact Liz McQue, Director of Capacity and Learning at North West Employers on 0161 214 7102 or e-mail lizm@nweo.org.uk

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DRAWING UP THE WORKFORCE PLAN – A SUGGESTED TEMPLATE

INTRODUCTION

The introduction should cover:

- The purpose of the plan
- How the plan fits in with other initiatives/strategies/plans
- Areas the plan will cover and lifespan of the document
- Endorsement by Leader and Chief Executive
- Contact point for further information

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

This section should cover:

- The organisations key priorities and community needs now and in the future
- Current workforce profile and evaluation
- Current and future skill gaps
- Current and future recruitment/retention difficulties
- Planned changes to services and service delivery
- Expected changes to customer base
- Linkages to corporate strategy, improvement plans and service delivery plans.

THE ACTION (WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT) PLAN

This section should include:

- Actions to be taken to meet the people management issues identified above.
- Milestones or performance indicators to measure progress
- Links with other initiatives that impact on the plan
- The resource implications of the actions proposed

INFORMATION FOR MANAGERS ON THEIR ROLE

Involvement of managers is essential for the ongoing development of the workforce plan and this section should indicate what managers need to do to support the process and ensure the plan remains viable.

INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYEES

This section should explain the process and the impact upon employees.

EQUIVALENT QUALIFICATIONS

These groupings are intended to provide guidance to group equivalent qualifications; it is not an exhaustive list.

NVQ level 4 and above:

- Higher degree
- NVQ level 5
- First degree
- Other degree
- NVQ level 4
- Diploma in higher education
- HNC/HND, BTEC higher etc
- Teaching – further education
- Teaching – secondary
- Teaching – primary
- Teaching – level not stated
- Nursing etc
- RSA higher diploma
- Other higher education below degree level

NVQ level 3:

- NVQ level 3
- GNVQ advanced
- A level or equivalent
- RSA advanced diploma or certificate
- OND/ONC, BTECH/SCOTVEC national
- City & Guilds advanced craft
- SCE higher or equivalent
- AS level or equivalent

Trade apprenticeship:

NVQ level 2:

- NVQ level 2 or equivalent
- GNVQ intermediate
- RSA diploma
- City & Guilds craft
- BTEC/SCOTVEC first or general diploma
- O level, GCSE grade A-C or equivalent

Below NVQ level 2:

- NVQ level 1 or equivalent
- GNVQ/GSVQ foundation level
- CSE below grade 1, GCSE below grade C
- BTEC first or general certificate
- SCOTVEC modules or equivalent
- RSA other
- City & Guilds other
- YT/YTP certificate

Extract from the Local Government Employers Organisation People Skills Scoreboard Survey 2004