

## **SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Overview & Scrutiny Committee **DATE:** 10<sup>th</sup> April 2008

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**WARD(S):** All

### **PART I** **FOR CONSIDERATION & COMMENT**

#### **RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF SENIOR STAFF**

##### **1. Purpose of Report**

A report on this matter was provided to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 6th September 2007 and to Employment and Appeals Committee on 2nd October 2007. An update report was requested by Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

##### **2. Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

The Committee is requested to note the content of this report.

##### **3. Key Priorities – Taking Pride in Slough and Making a Difference to Community and our Environment**

In addition to Priorities 1 to 5 that link to specific services, all Chief and Senior officers contribute to the overall key priority and the corporate management of the Council.

##### **4. Other Implications**

###### **(a) Financial**

As it is not possible to predict with any certainty when staff will resign from the Council, the cost of undertaking the recruitment processes to replace an officer is not factored into directorate budgets and therefore creates an additional budgetary pressure when they arise.

###### **(b) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications**

The Council's recruitment processes comply with the Regulations issued by the government, the Council's Standing Orders and the requirements of the Constitution. These procedures comply with the requirements of the Human Rights Act.

##### **5. Supporting Information**

5.1 Overview and Scrutiny had requested a report on the recruitment and retention of senior staff following a number of Chief Officers leaving the Council's employ in the first half of the 2007/08 year. This report was noted by the Committee on 6

September 2007 and a request was made for a further report to be submitted in six months time to cover the following issues:-

- Comparison of senior staff turnover as compared to similar local authorities;
- Detail as to whether retention across all categories of staff is an issue in Slough as compared to similar authorities;
- Strategies for tackling retention issues in Slough;

## 5.2 Comparison of senior staff turnover as compared to similar local authorities

The previous report identified voluntary senior management turnover, in the period July 2005 to June 2006 at 14.6% (6 out of 41 staff) rising to 19.5% (an additional 2 officers taking early retirement) when non-voluntary turnover was included and July 2006 to June 2007 at 8.9% (4 out of 45 staff) rising to 15.5% (adding 3 officers taking voluntary redundancy, compulsory redundancy and compromise agreement respectively).

5.3 The turnover figures for the latter half of 2007 can now be calculated as shown below:

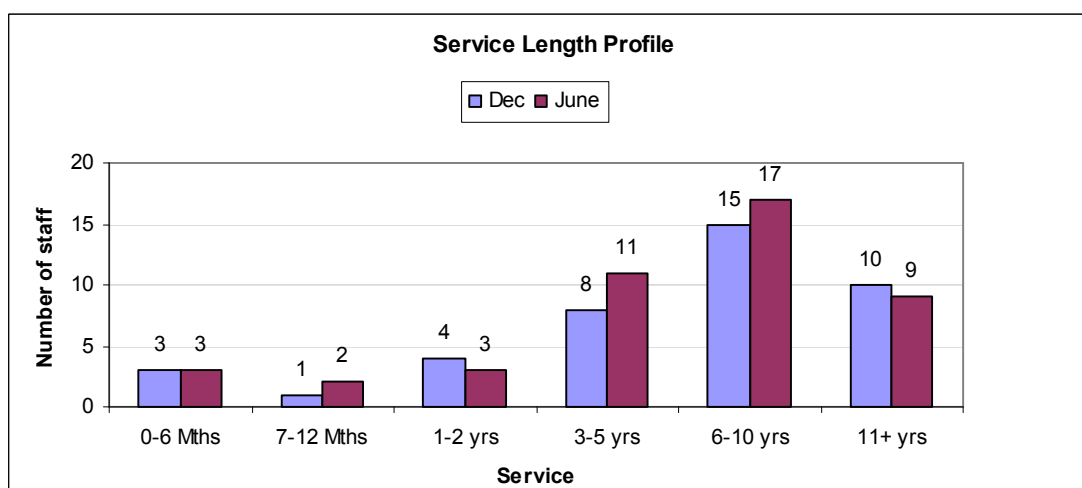
Period	Voluntary	Total Staff	% Turnover	Total Turnover	Total % Turnover
1st July 2007 to 31st Dec 2007	5	41	12.2%	6	14.6%
1st July 2006 to 30th June 2007	4	45	8.9%	7	15.5%
1st July 2005 to 30 June 2006	6	41	14.6%	8	19.5%

5.4 The Committee was previously advised that there is little comparative evidence in respect of senior management turnover to benchmark against as it tends not to be recorded separately by authorities. We contacted the 5 Berkshire authorities as well as Luton, Medway and Portsmouth Unitaries in an attempt to benchmark against them. Unfortunately of the small number that responded none were able to provide any breakdown of turnover by senior managers with the reasons being that this group was not considered to be of special interest or that the small numbers involved were deemed to distort the figures as any changes up or down in the total number of posts available in the senior management cohort or in starters and leavers has, because of the small numbers involved, a major effect on the calculation outcomes.

5.5 With the implementation of new management arrangements at senior level vacant posts have provided further opportunities to review the current management structures and create some capacity for change. Organisational structures at second and third tier levels are in development at present and it is recognised that this can create uncertainty in the short term.

5.6 Of the resignations since July 2007, 2 voluntary resignations and 1 non-voluntary leaver were known and included in the previous report. All those resigning left to take up employment with other local authorities. However the Council continues to have many long serving senior staff with the majority having been in post for 3 or more years with a peak with between 6 and 10 years service. This gives stability and

continuity to the organisation as well as having some new appointees bringing skills and experience from other employment that SBC can benefit from.



#### 5.7 Retention across all categories of staff in Slough as compared to similar authorities

The Council's voluntary turnover for 'Town Hall' excluding schools is projected as 10.8% for 2007/08.

Financial Year	% Turnover
1st April 07 to 31st March 08	10.8%*
1st April 06 to 31st March 07	10.5%

- 5.8 Our benchmarking with other authorities referred to above has given turnover figures in the order of 11%. As this information is not part of the national BVPI suite there is no guarantee that those authorities approached are calculating this in same way therefore such information must be seen as indicative only.
- 5.9 Authority returns for 2005/06 showed labour turnover in English Unitaries running at 16.18%, this being the highest figure recorded with Shire Counties at 13.42% and London Boroughs at 14.36%.
- 5.10 Research by the Municipal Year Book showed for the 12 months to July 2007 a 10.06% turnover in staff in local government compared with 13.7% for the public sector as a whole. This was compiled by comparing the name of an individual occupying each officer role on their database as compared to the previous year's data. Unitary councils saw the greatest officer turnover with 11.23% change. The most likely area for change was housing maintenance with 21.11% followed by traffic management at 19.84% and transport managers at 19.22%. Chief Executives represented just 6.12% of annual turnover. This research does rely on the integrity of the database information and therefore must be viewed with some caution.
- 5.11 However local government does compare favourably with other sectors as a Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development report 'Recruitment, retention and turnover' revealed a 13.4% turnover in manufacturing and production while the rest of the private sector had a 22.6% staff turnover.

- 5.12 The Local Government Pay and Workforce Strategy survey 2006<sup>1</sup> noted that efforts to tackle recruitment and retention issues appear to be bearing fruit as difficulties which had been steadily increasing since 1995 have reduced slightly for the second year running. Authorities are addressing key occupational shortage areas by promoting jobs in local schools and colleges, taking on trainees, by setting up skill pathways and by redesigning jobs and structures to make better use of scarce skills. In 2006, 87.4% of authorities reported a recruitment or retention difficulty with one or more professional/managerial occupations, a fall from 93.4% in 2004 and 90.7% in 2005. 49.2% of authorities reported a recruitment or retention difficulty with one or more non-professional/non-managerial occupations, a fall from 61.5% in 2005 and 58.4% in 2004.
- 5.13 In 2006 the top 10 recruitment difficulties were in Social Worker Children and Families, Social Worker Community Care, Environmental Health, Planning Development Control, Building Control, Social Worker Community Care (Approved) Social Worker Residential, Planning Other, Trading Standards, Teachers, Occupational Therapist, Educational Psychologist, School Crossing Patrol. Other areas with retention difficulties were Home Care Staff and Care Assistant.
- 5.14 The occupations most likely to receive market supplements were Social Worker Children and Families (49.4% of authorities), Building Control (39.7% and Environmental Health (36.5%).

5.15 Strategies for tackling retention issues in Slough

The range of approaches and practices utilised in our employment of staff is set out in Appendix A in our draft Recruitment, Retention and Replacement Strategy. Many parts are already in place whilst others such as making Slough an Employer of Choice are more aspirational and further developmental work in relation to this strategy and organisational and change management will be undertaken in conjunction with the Chief Executive.

**6. Comments of Other Committees**

Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be advised of any comments made by the Employment and Appeals Committee.

**7. Conclusion**

As with most authorities SBC has pockets of recruitment and retention difficulties that are addressed through a variety of approaches. Our turnover rates are comparable with other authorities and some turnover is desirable to refresh the organisation. Having secured appointments to complete the Corporate Management Team this should afford some stability as the Council embraces the challenges in delivering quality services to residents.

**8. Background Papers**

Overview and Scrutiny, 6 September 2007  
Employment and Appeals Committee, 2 October 2007

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<sup>1</sup> Survey conducted by Local Government Analysis and Research (LGAR) on behalf of the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA), Local Government Employers (LGE) and SkillsPlus.

Statistical information held within the HR database

**9. Appendices**

Appendix A – Recruitment, Retention and Replacement Strategy

### **Recruitment, Retention and Replacement Strategy**

SBC believes the manner in which it interacts and works with its staff is crucial in order to provide the quality of service to the community it serves. It is vital to the Council's overall performance that there is a high level of respect and recognition between employer and employee.

In order to ensure that the Council's most valuable assets, its employees, are able to contribute successfully towards the strategic direction of the Council, and to achieve their full potential, the Council needs an effective framework for the recruitment, retention, deployment, development and replacement of its entire staff.

This strategy is intended to provide that over-arching framework to enable the Council to meet this commitment and provide effective and efficient services to the community in the Borough. All employees will play their part to ensure the achievement of best value for the people of the Borough. Elected Members will also play an essential role in ensuring the right climate is created to ensure human resource management and development interventions are supportive and enabling.

There are many things that will influence the way we approach people management over the coming years and the expectations from the public, coupled with the ever increasing advances in technology, will significantly change local government and the way services are provided. Our response to these will reflect the business direction and needs of the organisation and the physical and financial resources available. Existing and future employment legislation and case law will regulate our action and as such will continue to influence the overall structure, delivery and management of services.

No employer can offer a job for life but we are committed to providing training and development so that staff have transferable skills to meet business requirements aiding the retention of staff wherever possible. We recognise that training and development is an investment and is, therefore, committed to the career development of all of our employees and the maximisation of their talents and interests thereby ensuring the effective use of its most important resource within the context of identified business needs. The Council will encourage and assist employees to realise their full potential and develop skills directly appropriate and relevant to their post, and to meet the changing needs of the Council by gaining appropriate experience, qualifications and attending suitable training opportunities.

#### **Recruitment**

To recruit and retain a capable and talented workforce who are committed to delivering excellent services to the community so that we become the outstanding employer within the Borough by:

Equipping managers with the tools to make the right appointment decisions by providing:

*A fair and consistent recruitment and selection framework  
Recruitment and selection training and professional HR advice  
Equal opportunities and diversity policies and training  
Feedback on use of assessment tools*

Targeting and attracting suitable applicants by

*Promoting SBC as an Employer of Choice through our branding and recruitment documentation*  
*Ensuring our process for recruitment is as streamlined as possible – reducing delay and making it easy to apply*  
*Improving our Website to improve the use of on line information and ensure ease of application using on-line technology*  
*Using appropriate media sources to advertise*  
*Providing clear advertisements and up to date job descriptions and person specifications that adequately reflect the requirements of the post*  
*Taking positive action to support under-represented groups, eg participation in the Two Ticks scheme and encouraging statements in our advertisements*  
*Raising awareness of employment opportunities with our local population*  
*Forging links with local secondary schools and colleges to promote local government and SBC including provision of work placement opportunities*  
*Developing awareness of our whole benefits package including our reward strategies and work/life balance*  
*Utilising the Pertemps agency contract arrangements to ensure a rapid and flexible response to a change in workforce requirements*

## **Retention and Replacement**

Retaining experienced and skilled employees to reduce staff turnover by

*Developing our workforce planning to identify supply and demand to enable us to recruit to the workforce we need by anticipating our requirements and recruiting when those staff are available not just when we have a vacancy to fill*  
*Developing our workforce to operate more flexibly with transferable skills to respond to changing organisational need*  
*Growing our own staff and managers wherever possible through the use of structured trainee posts, career grades and the Modern Apprenticeship scheme*  
*Improving promotion opportunities and advertising vacancies internally where appropriate*  
*Providing training and development opportunities to enable the achievement of potential*  
*Providing equal opportunities and diversity training*  
*Ensuring the use of PDPs, appraisal, 1:1s, to let staff know how they are doing*  
*Identifying career development opportunities*  
*Providing opportunities to be involved in cross directorate and cross council projects*  
*Undertaking attitude survey, focus groups to establish what staff want and to deliver this wherever possible*  
*Providing a good working environment and access to facilities*  
*Recognising the need for a Work Life Balance to the benefit of both the employer and the employee*  
*Providing a safe and healthy working environment including the provision of Occupational Health, Counselling and management of stress*  
*Developing high quality management and clarity of leadership and decision making*  
*Developing a supportive management ethos that recognises and values everyone's contribution*  
*Developing a positive working attitude amongst staff*  
*Providing challenge, motivation and reward*  
*Developing and maintaining good communication and working relationships with recognised Trade Unions and staff*  
*Working with staff to improve productivity, increase effectiveness and provide value for money for the Council.*

*Ensuring effective use of staff time*

*Encouraging Members to provide a supportive atmosphere and environment for and in their behaviour in their engagement with staff*

*To undertake succession planning to recognise and develop potential including development of talent pools*

*Using secondment within SBC and to external organizations to develop skills and new perspectives*

Offering attractive pay and terms and conditions by

*Providing fair and competitive pay using job evaluation*

*Implementing the Single Status Agreement when agreement is reached*

*Applying the Market Supplements Criteria in a consistent manner*

*Promoting new ways of working – flexible/remote/home - recognising Work Life Balance*

*Offering a relocation scheme for specific posts*

*Offering a good level of job security*

*Developing and implementing family friendly policies*

Equipping all managers to be effective by

*Development of leadership capacity for officers and Members*

*Identifying training and developmental needs as required to meet management competencies*

*Developing managers with the appropriate skills through training and development and allied activities so that they can meet their responsibilities as managers.*

*Encouraging participation in initiatives such as the Slough Manager, Diploma in Strategic Leadership and other developmental programmes*

*Promoting corporate working*

*Developing a consistent management ethos and style to promote and maintain the Council's culture*

*Undertaking training in change management*

*Ensuring that they access up to date advice, training and support on Council policies and procedures to ensure consistency of management style*

*Ensuring that they can challenging, motivating, rewarding and communicating effectively with their teams*

Encouraging career development by

*Identifying promotion and development opportunities*

*Sponsoring post-entry (qualification) training*

*Expanding the use of coaching, mentoring and networking*

## **Realising the potential of our staff**

Enabling our staff to deliver consistent and effective services and achieve their own potential so that best value services are achieved in support of the Council's vision and Corporate, Directorate and Service Plans.

Developing a culture of employee empowerment which achieves best value by

*Treating each other with dignity and respect*

*Finding a Work Life Balance that suits both the employer and the employee*

*Empowering Heads of Service to be responsible for the day to day people management within their unit*

*Empowering all employees to be accountable for their actions and responsibilities*

*Achieving the best service possible from available resources*



Building consistent and effective communication systems by

*Further development and use of information technology*

*Using a variety of mediums, such as the Intranet, newsletter, e-mail to ensure corporate information is easily accessible*

*Ensuring the use of team meetings, newsletters, and personal performance reviews (PPRs) across the whole of the Council*

Developing the organisation by

*Reviewing services, delivery methods, ways of working and budget allocation to best meet the needs of our community*

*Investing in management, organisational and team development*

*Promoting a culture of empowerment and strategic thinking*

*Encouraging cross-service collaboration*

*Supporting sustainability principles*

## **Human Resources Objectives:**

To promote the Council as a good employer and develop policies to improve equality and diversity.

To provide a framework to support the development of staff to improve services to the community and achieve the Council's aims and objectives in line with the Corporate plan.

In conjunction with managers to create an environment where staff are valued and their contributions are recognised.

To develop good employee relations with staff and the recognised Trade Unions

To recognise change is necessary and develop strategies to assist with the implementation of change.

To work with managers to identify the staffing implications associated with corporate strategies and initiatives.

To promote a healthy and effective workforce through appropriate policies and working environment.

To exploit technology to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery.

To improve the availability of staffing information by

*Improving HR/payroll computerised record systems to provide timely and informative management information*

*Identifying and maintaining information about the supply of skills internally and the wider external labour market*

*Undertaking workforce planning to identify and address gaps within the Council's staffing structure*

*Identifying and developing appropriate E-learning opportunities*

To provide support across the organisation by

*Providing a seamless service*

*Developing and maintaining links with managers*

*Providing support and advice for all employees*

*Ensuring fair remuneration across the Council through the use of job evaluation*

*Delivering an effective employee relations service*

*Providing through Health and Safety as appropriate, a framework of health, safety and welfare policies and support*

*Supporting new ways of thinking and working*

## **Being part of Slough Borough Council - *What you can expect***

### *Employees*

- To be appointed fairly
- To have a welcoming induction
- To be trained and developed appropriately
- To be well managed
- To be supported by management
- To enjoy work life balance
- To be listened to
- To have a healthy and safe work environment
- To be treated with dignity and respect
- To be encouraged to explore career development opportunities by a variety of means including qualification training, secondment, acting-up to cover vacancies etc

### *Managers*

All of the above plus

- To have management development opportunities
- To be supported in your service development decisions
- To have a voice in your division's management

### *Heads of Service*

All of the above plus

- Authority to shape your service
- To be supported in your policy decisions
- To be accountable for your service
- The opportunity to manage and facilitate change

### *Corporate Management Team*

All of the above plus

- Authority to shape the Council
- To guide the future agenda and vision of the Council
- To manage the Member interface

## **Being part of Slough Borough Council - *What we expect of you***

### *Employees*

- To be capable of undertaking your job
- To perform to the best of your abilities
- To be customer focused
- To be a team player
- To be loyal to the Council
- To participate in improving services
- To raise any concerns early
- To treat people with dignity and respect
- To support service provision to meet the Council's Corporate Plan

### *Managers*

All of the above plus

- To be an ambassador for the Council's culture
- To enable, develop and motivate people in your team
- To contribute to strategic decisions
- To provide consistent and fair management
- To manage service provision to meet the Council's Corporate Plan

#### *Heads of Service*

All of the above plus

- To lead people effectively
- To consult and inform Members
- To uphold Investor in People standards
- To be innovative
- To direct service provision to meet the Council's Corporate Plan

#### *Corporate Management Team*

All of the above plus

- A leadership style which empowers
- To lead and courage organisational development
- To safeguard and develop the Council's culture

#### *Elected Members*

- To work for the benefit of the community within Slough
- To shape the Council's vision and core values
- To make the connection between citizens' aspirations and shaping services
- To support, respect and value the workforce