

**By:** Deputy Leader of the Council and  
Director of Personnel & Development

**To:** Personnel Committee      **Date:** 16 May 2008

**Subject:** Joint Workforce Planning

**Classification:** Unrestricted

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**SUMMARY:** This report informs Personnel Committee about joint workforce planning research that is currently being undertaken with our partners.

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

In December 2007 the Workforce Strategy Board agreed KCC's Strategic Workforce Plan 2007 – 2010. This Plan builds on planning contained in the previous Workforce Development Plan. Its purpose is to identify and develop strategies for building capacity and skills to ensure we have the workforce to continue to deliver excellent service now and in the future. Key to the success of the plan is our work with partners and employers in the public and private sectors engaged in the delivery of public services to the people of Kent.

The Strategic Workforce Plan contains an action plan that identifies specific strategies. One of the key priorities identified by the Board within the action plan is Joint Workforce Planning with partners and organisations in the public and private sectors engaged in the delivery of public services.

## **2. PURPOSE**

Kent County Council already undertakes workforce planning within the directorates. The aim of this activity is to take a strategic focus across KCC and organisations involved in the delivery of public services across the county.

A research organisation, Stepahead has been commissioned to research workforce planning issues for organisations that deliver public services in Kent. Stepahead specialises in social and economic research and has expertise that includes labour market intelligence.

## **3. KEY OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the research are as follows:

- (i) Establish a joint profile of the workforce within the public sector and partner organisations across the county of Kent.
- (ii) Identify key changes in the workforce forecast over the medium to long term.
- (iii) Identify external supply and demand factors in terms of capacity and skills to deliver services now and in the future.
- (iv) Identify demand led factors that may impact on the delivery of services in the future.

- (v) Produce reports, present to KCC Management Groups and Boards, and make recommendations for the future.

#### **4. METHODOLOGY**

The research involves the collection and analysis of information in five stages.

##### *Stage One – Inception and Scoping*

To gain a clear picture of the breadth of organisations engaged in the delivery of public services in Kent and how information will be collected and analysed.

##### *Stage Two – Desk Research*

To research the context within which public service agencies recruit and retain employees currently and in the future.

##### *Stage Three – Partner E-Survey*

This stage has two parts. A spreadsheet for partners to input top line data on their workforce to provide an overview of employee numbers in organisations that deliver public services in Kent. The second part is an online survey which probes issues in a qualitative manner that aims to provide more detailed information about each organisation's current and future workforce needs.

##### *Stage Four – Depth Interviews*

A minimum of 30 in depth interviews to be held with individuals from organisations across Kent. The purpose of this stage is to explore in greater detail the issues that emerge from the e-survey.

##### *Stage Five – Analysis and Reporting*

To include one overarching report and two sub-reports on Children and Young People, and Adult Social Care.

#### **5. PROGRESS TO DATE**

Stages one, two and three have been completed. Stage four is currently underway.

#### **6. EMERGING THEMES**

The most significant themes that have emerged from responses so far are as follows:

- (i) Ageing workforce and associated issues of recruitment and retention, especially in respect of younger workers and retaining older workers longer.
- (ii) Adapting to changes in working practices, including integration of services across organisations (e.g. health and care), commissioning of services externally, reform of public service performance arrangements, and changes to the structure of local service provision (e.g. health, Children and Young People's Trust), more multi-agency working.

- (iii) Expanding service provision (e.g. universities / colleges, health in Thames Gateway, social care with respect to ageing population).
- (iv) Improving the skills of the current workforce (specific areas include management and leadership, performance management).
- (v) Ensuring that the workforce is representative of the community it serves.

## **7. SUMMARY**

On embarking on this research the expectation was that it would identify areas of common interest where organisations can work together to share good practice, learn from each other, and develop strategies in a cohesive way, thereby delivering value for money. Positive interest has been received from organisations across employment sectors to engage in the research and to work in partnership with others. We will build on this foundation to strengthen our links with partners in order to deliver excellent services to the people of Kent.

On completion of the research the findings will be reported to the Workforce Strategy Board, Chief Officer Group and Personnel Committee as appropriate.

## **8. RECOMMENDATION**

Personnel Committee is asked to note the progress made towards integrated workforce planning with our partners in Kent.

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