

ANGUS COUNCIL

RESOURCES & CENTRAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

1 SEPTEMBER 2005

MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

REPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

ABSTRACT

This report advises members of a management development programme which supports and complements the council's Responding to Change agenda.

1. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee note the terms of this report.

2. INTRODUCTION

In an environment of change and continuous improvement the effective performance of an organisation's managers is essential if the organisation is to achieve its aims and objectives.

It is equally essential that the organisation support its managers and a key element of that support is effective training and development.

Over the last two years the approach to developing managers within the council has been reviewed and revised and this report advises members of the changes that have been made, how these have been implemented and of progress to date.

The suggestion to review our approach to developing our managers was first considered by the Chief Officers Management Team at meetings in January and May 2003 in their discussion of reports from the Personnel Services Manager.

The issue was raised because although the council had always provided training for managers it was considered that there needed to be a more structured and focused approach to their development to ensure that our managers:

- Developed and demonstrated the key competencies required of them as managers.
- Knew the council's basic management policies and procedures and had the skills to apply them effectively.
- Understood the wider context in which they operated – and the implication of that context for them.

Support for such a change in approach had also been evidenced from other sources including Investors in People assessment reports and the outcomes of the Employee Attitude Survey of 2002.

It has to be said however that while it was recognised that there was a need to improve the performance of our managers there was no feeling that general performance was poor. Indeed it was acknowledged that over the years the council had been judged by a variety of independent measures to be a very effective service provider and that this was in no small part attributable to the efforts and abilities of our managers. However it was evident that there were areas where we could and should do better.

It was proposed to the Chief Officers Management Team that to help meet the above objectives management development should concentrate on three elements:

- A management competency framework incorporated within a revised Performance Appraisal and Development Scheme.
- A series of Essential Skills and Knowledge (ESK) courses.
- A series of sessions dealing with Organisational and Contextual Knowledge (OCKs).

This was agreed by the Management Team and the Personnel Services Manager was remitted to develop and implement a management development programme on this basis, a commitment which was subsequently incorporated within the council's HR Strategy Action Plan.

The inclusion of management development as a key element of the council's 'Responding to Change' agenda in the latter part of 2003 provided further impetus to this initiative and funding for the programme was provided under the corporate initiatives budget with £85,000 allocated to fund development and delivery over the period 2004-2006.

The rest of this report describes more fully each of the three elements of the management development programme and advises on what has been achieved to date.

Before doing so however it is important to stress two points. Firstly, the programme addresses generic management skills and knowledge ie those that all managers need whatever their discipline. It does not deal with specific professional, technical or occupational skills – these continue to be addressed within individual services. Secondly, the council employs well over 600 managers and it was not practically possible to include all of them in the whole programme at the same time. Consequently some elements have been restricted to the most senior 170 or so managers. This has not however meant that other managers have had their development needs neglected – the processes for identifying and meeting these needs has continued.

3. THE MANAGEMENT COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

The first element of the programme, and indeed that which underpins the whole new approach to management development, is the management competency framework.

Essentially the framework is a set of descriptions of how the council wants its managers to carry out the key elements of their job as managers.

The framework applies to all managers regardless of the numbers they manage, or the level they work at. It does not distinguish between different levels of seniority or responsibility, because it is based on the belief that the principles of good management are the same regardless of level.

While the main aim of the framework is to help managers do their jobs better it should also benefit all employees by giving a clear statement of standards which will promote consistency of good practice, and lead to improvements in the way people are managed.

The attached booklet explains the management competency framework and how to use it within the appraisal process.

The diagram at the back of the book shows the nine competencies which make up the framework. The Leadership competency overarches it because a manager's most important role is to lead their team. Managing Self underpins it because for the manager to be effective, they must be able to manage themselves.

Under each competency heading, there is an introductory statement defining the competency. This is followed by a number of bullet points which detail behavioural indicators. These are examples of how a manager who meets the requirements of a competency will act.

The booklet also includes for each competency some additional notes which include a set of negative behavioural indicators ie examples of the sort of action, or inaction, which might be demonstrated by a manager who is not fully meeting the requirements of the competency.

The framework itself is not training. It is a means to help identify training and development needs through the appraisal process. Needs identified through the framework can be met in a variety of ways so the booklet also includes for each competency a resource guide suggesting some ways to meet these once they are identified.

The framework was the subject of an extensive consultation process.

A draft framework was initially prepared by a small working group of senior managers and subsequently approved by the Chief Officers Management Team.

That draft framework was then, from October 2004 to January 2005, the subject of consultation with all managers within the council.

This was done on a phased basis.

Firstly, in October and November 2004 there was a series of half day workshops, facilitated by an external consultant and a member of Personnel Services' Employee Development team, and to which all second to fifth tier managers were invited.

A second series of half day consultative workshops was then held, facilitated by the Employee Development team, for all other managers.

The draft framework was also posted on the intranet together with a summary of the outcomes from the first phase of consultation and anyone unable to attend a workshop was invited to give their comments by e-mail or in writing.

General feedback from managers towards the concept and content of the framework was favourable. However a number of suggestions for amendments were made and these were incorporated into the final version of the framework which was subsequently approved by the Chief Officers Management Team.

The competency framework has been incorporated within the Performance Appraisal and Development Scheme resulting in a version specifically designed for managers, a copy of which is attached for members' interest.

Members are asked to note that the Appraisal and Development Scheme itself was at the same time the subject of a separate review, in line with a commitment given in the council's HR Strategy action plan, and the revised version of the scheme also incorporates changes arising out of that exercise.

The managers' scheme will apply to anyone who manages people and everyone who will be covered by it, whether appraiser or appraisee, will be given training in its application. A course specifically designed for this purpose is now being provided by the Employee Development team and is timetabled for individual departments prior to the beginning of their next full appraisal cycle. Given that departments adopt different timetables for their appraisals the introduction of the management competency framework across the council will therefore be on a phased basis over the next year.

4. ESSENTIAL SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

The main aim of this part of the programme, which is delivered through a series of formal courses, is to:

- Ensure that our managers can apply the council's basic management policies and procedures eg recruitment and selection, managing absence;
- Develop some general skill areas eg using plain English; and,
- Cover council priorities in the context of the Responding to Change agenda eg managing customer service.

The current list of courses comprises:

<i>Recruitment & Selection*</i>	<i>Managing Customer Service*</i>
<i>Handling Disciplinary Matters and Managing the Poor Performer</i>	<i>Stress Management and the Risk Assessment Process</i>
<i>Managing Absence</i>	<i>Carrying Out Effective Appraisals</i>
<i>Managing Diversity*</i>	<i>Using Plain English*</i>
<i>Managing Safely*</i>	<i>Managing for Results</i>
<i>Financial Management</i>	<i>Managing Change</i>

Some of the courses already existed while others have had to be specifically designed. Indeed the Managing Customer Service is still in development in conjunction with the Customer Care Working Group.

The list will be continually reviewed and updated to reflect new policies and statutory duties, and new or changed priorities.

The courses are aimed at all managers from first to fifth tier, some 170 in total. However not every manager is required to go on every course. Many already have the skills and knowledge required. The aim is to fill identified gaps and to inform this each Chief Officer, in the latter part of 2003, was asked to complete, in conjunction with their managers, a grid detailing what training was required by them based on current training records and training needs identified through the appraisal process.

Delivery of the necessary training has been ongoing since and it is aimed to complete this part of the management development programme by March 2006.

Although the training is targeted to fill identified needs, some courses have been identified as mandatory for all. These courses which deal with areas of statutory responsibility or key council policies and priorities are asterisked in the list above.

5. ORGANISATIONAL AND CONTEXTUAL KNOWLEDGE

This part of the management development programme, which is delivered through Organisational and Contextual Knowledge (OCK) sessions, is not about 'teaching' managers specific skills. It is designed to give managers an insight into issues beyond their immediate service delivery responsibilities – to let them, indeed to encourage them, to step back and take a look at the 'bigger picture'.

It therefore addresses the corporate context within which managers carry out their jobs looking at the environment, both external and internal, in which the council and they operate; the sources and aims of what is sometimes referred to as the 'corporate agenda'; how this agenda integrates with service delivery; and, how they as managers can contribute to achieving the aims of that agenda.

But equally important the OCK sessions also offer managers an opportunity to give their views about how the council is delivering on the agenda and how it could improve.

The sessions are not a series of lectures/talks. They are participative – not just with an opportunity for participation but an expectation that managers will get involved and give their opinions about how they see things.

The sessions are also designed on the premise that the more fully managers appreciate what the council is trying to achieve, both corporately and in direct service delivery – and how they as managers contribute to that – the better able and motivated these managers will be to make a contribution and to increase their receptiveness to change.

Putting together these sessions represented a challenge to Personnel Services' Employee Development team and to ensure that there would be maximum benefit to both the council and to managers, focus groups, comprising around 50 managers, were arranged.

The purpose of the focus groups was to get, from a sample of managers, as accurate a picture as possible of what they as managers knew – and thought – about these external pressures and the corporate agenda, what they would like to know more about and also about the best delivery method.

The focus groups were held in summer 2004 with an independent external consultant commissioned to run the groups and to then produce a summary of the discussions.

The groups produced a wealth of information and opinion which was extremely useful and which helped shaped the final design and content of the OCK sessions.

Each OCK course is run over 2½ consecutive days.

Day one is delivered by an independent external consultant and concentrates on the external environment – trends in public service and particularly issues within local government.

However time is also taken to look at some of the many demands upon individual services so that managers get a flavour of what their colleagues are dealing with.

By the end of day one managers should be able to make links between the external world and what is happening in the council, and what they as managers are doing – because that is the key point of these sessions – to make sense of what is going on externally and corporately and to link it to their job.

Days two and three look at the internal environment considering in some depth the nature of our corporate agenda – which is largely the council's response to the range of external demands but which also reflects our local priorities and objectives. They also look at some of the strategies, mechanisms and business processes we have in place. This covers topics like community, corporate and service planning; performance management; our HR Strategy; and, our approach to customer care.

These two days are delivered by a variety of internal speakers with considerable input from the Policy and Performance Unit.

The third day finishes with an open forum which allows managers to give their views about how the council is doing things and indeed how it could be made better.

Nine OCK sessions were planned for the period January to June 2005 for the targeted group of 130 third to fifth tier managers. All but five (who withdrew for various reasons) attended. These five will be subsumed within further OCK sessions which will now become an integral part of the employee development course calendar aimed at newly appointed third to fifth tier managers.

First and second tier managers were not included largely because it was felt that they were sufficiently aware of the external and internal pressures and the processes which would be covered. Instead separate sessions were held for these managers. These were less about describing the internal/external environment in which the council operates but more about considering our existing arrangements to respond to that environment.

The OCK sessions represented a departure in approach for the council in terms of development, content and delivery. Informal feedback from the initial sessions led to some 'tweaking' for future sessions and in general feedback has been favourable. As well as benefiting from the input from the speakers many managers have commented positively on being able to network with colleagues from other departments and in being encouraged to comment on how they felt the council was performing and how it might improve.

A comprehensive summary of feedback given by the managers is still being collated and once complete will be given to the Chief Executive. An initial report following the first four sessions has already been circulated to all first and second tier managers.

6. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The *Management Competency Framework* is in place and training will continue for departments as described on a phased basis. The framework will become operational within the council during the next year and will take at least two full appraisal cycles to become fully

embedded within the appraisal process. There are therefore no plans to formally review the framework and its operation at this stage although a watching brief will be maintained as some refinements may be necessary in the light of experience.

As indicated the list of subjects covered in the *Essential Skills and Knowledge (ESKs)* part of the management development programme will be continually reviewed and updated to reflect new policies, statutory duties and changed priorities.

The *Organisational and Contextual Knowledge (OCK)* sessions will continue in their existing format (subject to any changes arising out of consideration of feedback to date) for new managers as an integral part of the employee development course programme. A report arising out of feedback from the OCKs will be submitted to the Chief Executive in October.

To expand the development options available to managers, it is intended to introduce a suite of e-learning modules. These will complement the three elements of the management development programme and will be accessed through the corporate intranet. It is aimed to have these available early 2006.

Consideration now needs to be given to:

- i How best to deliver the ESKs to newly appointed first to fifth tier managers.
- ii The extent to which and by what means the ESKs should be extended to other managers.
- iii The extent to which and by what means the content of the OCK sessions is cascaded to those managers outwith the initial coverage.

The above will be addressed in a report covering a second phase to the management development programme and which will be submitted by the Personnel Services Manager to the Chief Executive by the end of this year.

The second phase will be less comprehensive and ambitious in nature and in addition to the above is also likely to concentrate on some core generic training needs for managers eg project management, which have been identified during the first phase and delivery of which will help further develop our managers as they deal with the ever changing environment in which they and the council work.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from the terms of this report.

8. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

There are no human rights implications associated with this report.

9. CONSULTATION

The Acting Director of Finance and Director of Law & Administration have been consulted on the terms of this report.

D S Sawers
Chief Executive

HR/PerServMan

NOTE No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.