



## **SUCCESSION PLANNING POLICY 2023**

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draft September 2023



## **SUCCESSION PLANNING POLICY 2023**

### **1. Policy statement**

- 1.1 Derbyshire Dales District Council supports succession planning in order to manage the risk of losing valuable skills and knowledge required in key posts. In addition, succession planning enables the development of existing staff to their full potential to be able to apply for key posts. It is particularly valuable to develop staff (to 'grow our own') for future posts where there is known difficulty to recruit.
- 1.2 Personal development for future roles is considered through in the annual Performance & Development Review (PDR) process. Following PDRs Corporate Leadership Team allocate the Corporate and Vocational development budgets. Corporate Leadership Team will then consider Corporate Succession planning for senior posts, 'business critical' posts/ specialist posts and future posts where either new skills will be required and/or potential vacancies resulting from future retirements or staff turnover may give recruitment challenges.

### **2. Scope**

- 2.1 This policy applies to all permanent employees.

### **3. Process**

- 3.1 Corporate Succession Planning can be undertaken for individual business critical posts with specific skills or for posts of certain type e.g., senior management posts with generic skills. Given the analysis required, and ability of Corporate Leadership Team to manage succession planning (time and budget), the number of individuals identified on the Corporate Plan will be relatively small.
- 3.2 The Succession Plan is built on evidence of the current skills and aspirations of staff gathered through the Performance and Development Review (PDR) process. In addition, CLT need evidence from the Corporate Planning process, their annual Learning & Development Needs Analysis and workforce data (e.g., turnover- actual and probable, availability of skills required within the Council and externally and potential retirements or turnover) and ability to recruit together with an understanding of transferrable skills where current posts may no longer be required.

- 3.3 Once evidence is gathered, Corporate Leadership Team can identify key posts at risk and potential of staff to develop to retain skills and knowledge within the District Council and to develop skills and experience necessary through a tailored development plan which can be added to the individual's personal development plan.
- 3.4 The Succession plan will not be about identifying an appointee before a vacancy arises. Succession Planning will enable individuals to develop so that they can be the 'best possible candidate that they can be' when an opportunity arises. Candidates can then apply and be considered through the normal competitive and fair recruitment and selection process in the Recruitment, Interview and Selection Procedure.
- 3.5 By complying with the recruitment and selection procedures using competitive appointments, the District Council will ensure a fair and equitable process to appoint the right person to a vacancy, balancing the opportunity to bring in new ideas/wider experience from external recruits and nurturing the expertise and potential of existing employees.
- 3.6 Managers will encourage, support, and assist staff to have equal access to and benefit from succession planning opportunities that:
- Contribute to meeting corporate priorities as detailed in the Corporate Plan.
  - Develop skills and knowledge to meet potential/anticipated future needs.
  - Meet specific statutory requirements now and as they develop.
  - Open up new, innovative opportunities to meeting existing or anticipated needs.
  - Help to retain staff by supporting the career and personal development aspirations of staff with the District Council and elsewhere.
  - Enable sharing of valuable knowledge and skills prior to retirement.
- 3.7 Succession planning development actions will include the full range of development identified in the Learning & Development Policy including shadowing, coaching, mentoring, project work, lateral moves to different roles, secondment (including to partner organisations) and regional government development opportunities.
- 3.8 Corporate Leadership Team will review their Succession Plan annually to ensure it remains fair and relevant to future needs and organisation development and check that there is a business case to devoting resources to development.

#### **4. Equality and Diversity**

- 4.1 Succession planning must be managed fairly and free from discrimination. There will be no discrimination directly or indirectly on any of the 9 protected Characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 i.e., an employee's age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

- 4.2 When developing the succession plan, Corporate Leadership Team will manage the tensions that can arise between meeting the specific development needs of the organisation and aspirations of individual members of staff and communicate reasons for inclusion.
- 4.3 To ensure fairness and equity succession plans are:
- Evidenced by data from the PDR process, workforce data, strategic planning for future operational needs, potential retirements.
  - Appointments to roles will be made in accordance with the recruitment and selection process and the managing change policy.

## **5. Corporate Leadership Team responsibilities**

- 5.1 To plan ahead to identify the need and opportunities for succession planning, considering the future needs of the organisation, posts at risk should the skills/knowledge of the existing post holder be lost, the ease or difficulty to recruit and availability of skills internally and externally.
- 5.2 To seek advice from and involve Human Resources in succession planning activities, for monitoring purposes and key performance indicators and ensuring the fit with HR policies.
- 5.3 To establish a fair and equitable and evidence-based Succession Plan
- 5.4 To be open minded and creative about the methods of learning and development within succession planning

## **6. Employee responsibilities**

- 6.1 To actively commit to and participate in succession planning and jointly take responsibility with their manager for their personal development in connection with succession planning.
- 6.2 To be open-minded about the different learning opportunities that contribute to succession planning.
- 6.3 To raise any concerns about the fairness of a succession plan with their line manager in the first instance and then through the Grievance Procedure if applicable.

## **7. Human Resources' responsibilities**

- 7.1 To give advice and guidance on the implementation of this policy.
- 7.2 To support Corporate Leadership Team to develop and review the corporate succession plan.

- 7.3 To monitor cases and provide management information in order to enable succession planning and to monitor equality of opportunity in succession plans and ensures a fit with existing policies and procedures particularly Recruitment, Interview & Selection and Change Management.
- 7.4 To review this policy periodically to reflect developments in best practice.

## **8. Relevant employment policies and procedures and legislation**

- Learning and Development Policy
- Performance & Development Review (PDR) Process
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Recruitment, Interview and Selection procedure
- Change Management Policy
- Data Protection Regulations
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010



## **SUCCESSION PLANNING GUIDANCE NOTES & PROCESS**

### **8. Guidance Notes**

These notes do not form part of the Succession Planning Policy. The purpose of these notes is to give practical guidance on the implementation of the Policy. The notes can be updated in line with best practice and experience from implementing the policy through approval at Corporate Leadership Team.

Through the PDR process, all employees are encouraged to have a Personal Development Plan to develop their skills and knowledge in their current post. In addition, skills and knowledge required in the individual's future/aspirational posts can be identified and specific development included in the personal development plan.

Succession planning however, is done at a corporate and strategic level to identify posts at risk if key skills and knowledge required by the District Council are lost. Using the information from PDRs (and other sources) succession planning is used to identify development opportunities in order to retain and develop the skills and knowledge to be able to fill business critical posts and future posts. It is not about identifying the only person for appointment but about ensuring that internal candidates are 'the best possible candidate they can be' for recruitment in competition when an opportunity arises.

There is a clear business case for the investment of time and for development activity in order to recognise a small number of high achievers with potential and plan development activity to retain business critical skills and knowledge and develop future skills required as the organisation develops, or colleagues retire. The business case includes reducing the time and cost of having vacancies/recruitment costs, posts with known skills shortages in the market/ difficulty to recruit cost of losing skilled people, opportunities to develop high performers to be even more productive in their current posts through their development and the 'release of discretionary effort' through individuals being recognised, valued, and being given development support.

### **a) Evidence gathering**

To inform the development of the Corporate Succession Plan, CLT will utilise their knowledge of/ gather the following evidence (as much as needed to ensure needs are correctly and fairly identified i.e., 'light touch' wherever possible)

- Corporate Plan to identify future service delivery & priorities.
- Identify business critical posts (e.g., specialist posts for specialist skills) and future role type for development (e.g., senior management posts with generic management skills) 'at risk' if key skills/ knowledge are lost through resignation or retirement.
- Annual Corporate Learning & Development Plan for identified skills gaps and learning needs.
- Service information re distribution of grades, turnover, average lengths of service, recruitment information re difficult to recruit posts/ normal lead times/ skill shortages internally and externally, current role types v future need.
- Identify new ways of working/ new posts likely to be required in the future.
- Identify skills gap- technical, leadership, general.
- Consider redeployment opportunities/ transferrable skills.
- Evidence from PDRs on high achievers- against work programme/ KPIs (ability) and against values (potential) and eagerness to develop.
- Evidence from PDRs where employees are keen to develop and have the potential to do so.
- CLT to consider the ability of managers to undertake PDRs in order to ensure PDR evidence is accurate and fair and managers are identifying those with development ability/aspirations.
- Constraints- time, budget, ability internally to develop for future skills/ roles.

### **b) CLT and HR to meet (as PDRs and Corporate Learning & Development planning is complete) to**

- Consider evidence gathered match individuals against future requirements.
- Check that high performers in current role also have the potential to develop further.
- Keep the plan small and manageable (cost, monitoring, development opportunities likely to become available)
- Prioritise needs given corporate opportunities could be limited.
- Allocate resources to development identified (budget, time, coach/mentor support)
- Consider management/ transferable skills of those whose skills no longer meet requirements.
- Consider if an individual should be recognised and retained whilst being developed for future posts elsewhere if opportunities here are

limited.

- Consider with HR the equality and fairness issues as the plan develops plus the fit with wider HR policies and procedures.
- Communicate with those identified and development opportunities for those who are not.

**c) Once individuals identified, CLT to determine development solutions from the range available in the Learning & Development Policy**

- Shadowing
- Project team opportunities
- Secondment (to another team/ department)
- Secondment to another Council/ non-government employer
- Establishing a career grade post
- Job swaps
- Coaching
- Mentoring including acting as a mentor to others.
- Academic qualification (day release/ night school/ open learning)
- East Midlands Personal Development Programme
- District Council's Network Development Programme
- East Midlands Councils Local Authority Challenge

**d) Add development solutions to Personal Development plans to be managed and monitored by the relevant line manager.**

- Directors to ensure, with line managers, that individuals on the Corporate Succession Plan have identified development added to their personal development plans.
- Directors to identify a suitable mentor to support the developpee (internal or external mentor) and ensure development occurs.

**e) CLT annual review and evaluate the Succession plan.**

- Is the current plan still relevant/ have needs changed?
- Has individual development been completed (opportunity for another person to be developed) or is more time required?
- Has development plan show potential is not that originally identified (opportunity for another person to be developed)
- The succession plan should be reviewed annually but it can be a fluid process that responds to and influences/ developments internally and externally to the organisation during the year. Ongoing monitoring of appropriateness and fairness with adjustments where necessary, will ensure the organisation is prepared for changes to culture, policy and service needs.
- Evaluation can also be measured in terms of retention of staff and their knowledge and skills and/or the continuity of service delivery/. For example, where there is a seamless transition when staff and/or

roles and responsibilities within District Council change, vacancies or retirements occur. Effective use of succession planning will contribute to organisation development that ensures a constantly evolving organisation that is fit for purpose now and in the future.

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