

# BUSINESS PLAN 2011-12

Welcome to the Business Plan of the South West Councils [S W C].

The purpose of this Business Plan is to set out the future direction of the newly refocused joint support structure –*South West Councils*. This plan details the work priorities, proposed activities and funding for the period 2011-12 and 12-13

Our three key **overarching objectives** in supporting Members and delivering our work are:

1. Supporting Member authorities as Employers, encouraging improved performance and capacity across the region through the provision of high quality HR advice and support, and the sharing of accessible information and knowledge on a range of relevant issues;
2. Assisting member authorities and associate members to enhance capacity and service delivery through developmental activities for improved performance and efficiency;
4. Support authorities in having a voice, built on consensus, of issues on national policy and funding, working with the national Local Government Group, when this is deemed appropriate by Members

**South West Councils:** supports local authorities, police and fire authorities and other organisations with all aspects of their employer role. In addition SWC constitute the Employers side of regional consultative and negotiating body with the South West Trade Unions, the South West Provincial Council and works at a regional level with the national Local Government Employers. SWC also offer a wide range of learning and developmental activities to support all our Members and partners in developing a highly skilled and motivated workforce. For some marketing purposes this work will be badged as South West Employers.

Members of SWC also lead the work of the South West Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (SW RIEP) providing a framework for Local Authorities to act together and support each other to improve public services and deliver value for money. The central funding for the work of the RIEP is due to end in the financial year 2011-12. Members will be considering how to provide ongoing support as required in addition to the core training and HR support provided. In addition during 2011-12 Members will remain the democratic body providing oversight and support for the work of the South West Migration Partnership funded by the Home Office.

## PERFORMANCE AGAINST OBJECTIVES 2010 - 11

Key achievements over the past year have been:

- ❖ Supporting and overseeing constitutional change to ensure a new streamlined structure which is a responsive, Member-led, organisation.
- ❖ Local Authorities advised on comprehensive employment and human resource issues including employment conditions and rights
- ❖ Successfully supported authorities through a number of employment tribunal cases;
- ❖ Continued provision of hot line for HR advice taken up by authorities and associate members with over 4000 phone calls
- ❖ Members advised on sensitive and confidential employment issues;
- ❖ Supported Members during the appraisal of Chief Executives
- ❖ Supported several Authorities during a re-structuring of their senior managerial posts and appointment of shared Chief Executives;
- ❖ Surveys completed on 37 issues and information shared with member authorities including e.g. Redundancy payments (originally done Feb 2010, updated Sept 2010 and Jan 2011); Policies/procedures to support the introduction of additional paternity leave in 2011; Changes to recruitment practices in response to Equality Act 2010; Default retirement age after October 2011 and Changes to salary increments.
- ❖ Improved level of support for local authorities in delivering improvements in services and further efficiency savings through., for example the procurement portal and follow up to Total Place
- ❖ Support for national productivity workstream on shared services
- ❖ 1 authority successfully assessed for Member Charter Plus status and 2 authorities have successfully been assessed for Member Charter status; 2 more being assessed March 2011;
- ❖ Level 4 Member qualification – 9 Councillors enrolled, 7 successfully achieved the qualification;
- ❖ Excellent feedback and record number of participants on this year's Pension Managers' Conference;
- ❖ Designed and delivered a range of bespoke in-house training events, of which 3 were significant programmes:
  - 36 days of enforcement training for DEFRA – delivered to over 300 DEFRA Animal Health staff nationally
  - 40 days of performance management for DSFRS – delivered to over 600 staff
  - 18 days of modular management training for Dorset CC
- ❖ Feedback from external inspection by Edexcel was excellent – we maintained grade A status. Again, teaching and learning were identified as good and our Learner Handbook and supportive documentation was cited as being an example of good practice.
- ❖ Delivered a programme of Procurement learning events to over 700 participants
- ❖ Completed a wide-ranging review of the South West Migration Partnership and made government aware of local issues relating to asylum support, the immigration cap and alternatives to the detention of children.

## Key Work Priorities

<b>SOUTH WEST COUNCILS</b> <b>Funded from Local Authority Subscriptions and Income Generation</b>	
<b>Work Activity and output</b>	<b>Success Indicator</b>
<p>To be the preferred point of contact on public sector employment issues in the South West.</p> <p>Providing high quality, independent advice on terms and conditions including teachers</p> <p>Provision of direct support to Members on sensitive senior staff issues, Chief Executive appraisals, pay reviews etc</p> <p>Additional consultancy support for challenging issues on a not-for-profit basis including Disciplinary investigations; Job Evaluation and Employment Tribunals etc</p> <p>Qualified psychometric testing provision and discounted rates for authorities to access testing licences</p> <p>Support on Member Allowances Panels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of enquiries and continued use of expertise</li> <li>• Cost-savings to Local Authorities</li> <li>• Broaden Associate Member base</li> <li>• Generate sufficient income to meet costs of delivery, in line with the budget</li> </ul>
<p>Bringing authorities together to influence policy development such as pay and pensions and undertake lobbying as appropriate on issues of concern</p> <p>Liaison with the National Local Government Employers and Improvement &amp; Development to share and link into national policies and developments in relation to human resources issues including pay and workforce development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LGE and LGID continue to engage</li> <li>• Positive feedback from local authority Members/officers</li> </ul>
<p>To be recognised as a professional learning and development provider and preferred point of contact focusing on meeting public sector needs.</p> <p>Providing both core training services and responsive topical conferences at a not-for-profit rate for member authorities</p> <p>Provision of advice and support on Member Development Charter and independent assessment process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of participants on events from all member organisations</li> <li>• Number of participants on events from non-member organisations</li> <li>• A satisfaction rating of at least 85% “Excellent” or “Grade A” rating from external inspections by Awarding Organisations</li> </ul>

<p>Enhance Councillor Induction programmes delivered by authorities through the provision of accredited provision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of authorities working towards achieving Charter or Charter Plus status (re)accreditation</li> </ul>
<p>To support authorities through sharing of information and provision of advice and policy support in liaison with local authority officers on issues of joint interest.</p> <p>Lobbying when deemed appropriate by Members on issues of concern across local authority boundaries</p> <p>Facilitating relationships with national LGA, central Government etc supporting SW voice on national LGA Executive and outcomes fed back and acted upon</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information shared between authorities</li> <li>• voice of authorities across all the membership or groups of members heard by national government and others</li> </ul>
<p><b>Home Office Enabling Grant (until 31 March 2012 and then subject to ongoing funding)</b></p>	
<p>Work with Local Authorities and stakeholders to inform and assist them in developing and implementing local and national migration policies.</p> <p>Sharing of information and best practice through meetings and networks</p> <p>Facilitate constructive debate on migration issues among partners</p> <p>Monitor migration impacts and trends, and raise awareness of issues, risks and opportunities within the South West to inform policy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development and agreement of detailed business plan for the partnership.</li> <li>• Acceptance of half-yearly reports from the Home Office.</li> <li>• Active attendance and contribution at Board and Forum meetings</li> <li>• Positive feedback from partners &amp; stakeholders</li> <li>• Improved integration of migrants into the local community</li> </ul>
<p><b>RIEP Grant (until programme closes down in Dec 2011 unless further support provided)</b></p>	
<p>Effectively Programme Manage the South West Improvement and Efficiency Programme (SWIEP) to closure. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining appropriate levels of Programme Monitoring proportionate to the remaining scale of investment and staffing resource; and</li> <li>• Supporting local authorities in the management and closure of their SWIEP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closure of the Programme by end Dec 2011 with all grant funding dispersed.</li> <li>• Progress in achieving efficiency savings of £300m.</li> <li>• Dorset County Council able to comply,</li> </ul>

funded projects.	31/12/11, with certification requirements of Communities and Local Government in relation to the SWIEP Grant.
<p>Ensure accountability for the governance of the remaining SWIEP Programme by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring that all SWIEP funding is allocated in accordance with Member decisions; and</li> <li>• Reporting regularly to the Strategic Chief Executives Management Board on progress on programme closure, finance and exceptions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reports produced and considered, at regular intervals, by the RIEP Chief Executives Management Board.</li> </ul>
<p>Work in partnership with local authorities and other stakeholders to ensure they have opportunities to continue to benefit, post December 2011, from the Programme's outputs, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events to promote and disseminate Programme outputs, as appropriate to the Programme work stream; and</li> <li>• Ensure that web-based information on the Programme, including project contact details, are available either directly through South West Councils/LGID or through links to partner websites.</li> </ul>	<p>By December 2011:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legacy events delivered; and</li> <li>• Availability of a web-based SWIEP archive that includes information about projects and legacy products</li> </ul>
Support Local Authorities and the Fire and Rescue Services with the delivery and implementation of the E-recruitment portal.	31 Local Authorities and 5 FRSs using the recruitment portal for public sector jobs and opportunities by 31.03.2011.
Continue to liaise and work in partnership with the Local Government Group on the Local Productivity Programme and new ways of working.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be advised as proposals emerge.</li> </ul>
<p><b>CORPORATE ACTIVITY</b>  <b>Subscription funded and programme funded in 2011-12</b></p>	
<p>Provision of technical, administrative and financial support to Members</p> <p>High quality, concise meeting papers delivered at least seven days in advance of meetings striving to achieve ten days in advance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive feedback from Members and senior officers</li> <li>• Positive feedback from Members, senior officers and others</li> </ul>
<p>Provision of technical, administrative support for Members and Officer Groups</p> <p>Efficient and effective networks which contribute to regional working and assists collaborative working whilst minimising call on officers' time e.g., bringing together</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of officer group work</li> <li>• Positive feedback from Local Authorities</li> </ul>

<p>groups such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Leaders/ Members and Member networks as required e.g. Children's Services portfolio holders; Scrutiny Members etc</li> <li>❖ Chief Executive Group</li> <li>❖ HR Directors group</li> <li>❖ Education Personnel Officers</li> <li>❖ L&amp;D Officers Network</li> <li>❖ Member Development Officers</li> </ul> <p>Provision of confidential web based/electronic discussion group</p>	
<p>Financial Systems are reviewed to establish if fit for purpose  Financial management delivers accurate financial forecasting and budgeting  Provision of high quality and accurate information meeting legal requirements and the highest standards of public accountability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget is delivered each year +/-5% of forecast</li> <li>• Budget delivered</li> <li>• External audit approving accounts</li> </ul>
<p>Staff are provided with support and development to meet changing demands and staff resources used efficiently. Staff levels and work loads reviewed and adapted flexibly to changing demands and agendas</p> <p>Continued compliance with legal responsibilities around health and safety, human rights, equalities, discrimination, freedom of information etc</p> <p>Organisation operating in an open, fair and transparent manner  Achievement of Investors in People Award for quality management purposes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achievement of individual, team and organisational performance objectives</li> <li>• Appraisals completed within agreed deadlines</li> <li>• Sickness levels remain below average</li> <li>• Retention of national accreditations</li> <li>• Healthy workforce</li> <li>• No legal infringements</li> <li>• liP reaccreditation  Awarding Organisations (ILM, Edexcel, Wamitab, CIEH, EDI)</li> </ul>
<p>Building management and running costs assessed e.g. options around accommodation explored taking account of possibility of increased use of Dennett House for events so cutting course delivery costs etc and option of sharing building or selling/leasing explored</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisational running costs minimised</li> </ul>