

Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	23 May 2023
Report By:	Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	Report No:	HR/04/23/SM
Contact Officer:	Steven McNab	Contact No:	01475 712015
Subject:	Supporting Employee Recruitment and Retention		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 ⊠For Decision □For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to update the Policy and Resources Committee on recent initiatives to support employee recruitment and retention and seek agreement to progress a number of related projects and proposals.
- 1.3 There are currently significant recruitment and retention concerns in several areas which are placing additional pressure on local government workforce resources at a national and local level. It is important that actions are considered to mitigate against these issues to avoid pressures on workforce capacity and ensure the effective delivery of Council services in the future.
- 1.4 The Committee are asked to note the actions and initiatives currently being progressed and approve the additional work and projects outlined in Section 4 of this report and note that an update report will be presented the Committee later in the year.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Policy & Resources Committee:
 - note the work being progressed to support employee recruitment and retention across the Council.
 - note the view of the Corporate Management Team that the pilot hybrid working strategy has been successful and should be formally incorporated into the Councils wider Flexible Working Policy which is being revised and will be brought to the September Policy and Resources Committee for approval.
 - Notes the creation of a working group to explore the reduction in the working week from 37 to 35 hours as outlined in section 4.2 4.4 of this report and that any proposals and implications will be the subject of a report later in 2023.
 - Approves the allocation of £100,000 via a one-off increase to 2023/24 non-HSCP turnover target to support the recruitment and retention of final year university students.

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 Workforce planning and the recruitment and retention of skilled and experienced employees has become a concern and is placing additional pressure on Council workforce resources. If actions are not taken to mitigate against these issues, this may lead to additional pressure being placed on workforce capacity and therefore place a risk on the effective delivery of Council services.
- 3.2 One of the key themes of the Council's People and Organisational Development Strategy 2020/23 is making Inverclyde Council an "Employer of Choice" and this report updates the Committee on some of the key actions and initiatives which have been implemented and progressed to support the recruitment and retention of employees over the past couple of years.
- 3.3 All councils in Scotland are reporting similar recruitment and retention issues and all are considering how they can better support the retention of existing employees and attract new employees.
- 3.4 Members will have noted the positive results of the employee survey which were reported to the Committee in January. However, there were some areas for improvement highlighted which are being considered as part of the councils future People and Organisational Development Strategy.
- 3.5 Reports to the Corporate Management Team over the past year have highlighted the recruitment and retention difficulties across the Council amongst professional posts including Planning & Regeneration, Building Standards, Accountants, HR, and Social Workers. Other key areas where recruitment and retention difficulties have been experienced include Social Care and Homecare, Youth Workers in CLD, ICT Technicians and some Clerical/Admin positions. Many of these posts have been re-advertised at least once over the past year.
- 3.6 The latest employee cost monitoring information considered by the CMT shows that in 2022/23 the non-teaching turnover target is projected to be exceeded by over £2.0million. Whilst budget decisions by the IJB and Council increased the turnover target by £700,000 it can be seen there remains the potential for over £1.0million of excess turnover in 2023/24.
- 3.7 To address these recruitment and retention difficulties a number of actions and initiatives have been progressed which have been outlined below:
 - Recruitment Campaigns and branding work has been undertaken in HSCP Home Support. This has included hosting local recruitment events, involving trade unions, maximising social media, website and fast track recruitment days,
 - Workforce Refresh programme and the Council's Graduate Programme have been successful in attracting new employees into the Council from the local community,
 - Participation in wider recruitment events to promote jobs and careers with Inverclyde Council,
 - Through the Hybrid Working Pilot, reviewing and offering alternative working patterns to employees which continue to support individual and business needs,
 - Expansion of the Councils Modern Apprenticeship Programme and delivering employability skills training and pipelines into employment, such as work experience,

- Branded and improved recruitment packs for management positions which present the Council in an attractive manner,
- The redesign and re-evaluation of jobs making the remit and salary more attractive,
- Consideration and implementation of trainee grades for several professional posts,
- Promoting the completion of exit questionnaires so as to gather important data on reasons employees might be leaving (currently reported to committee on an annual basis),
- Improvements to employee terms and conditions including recent changes to atypical allowances paid to part time staff working additional hours. Further to approval from the Policy and resources Committee in January 2023, this change has been backdated to September 2022 under delegated authority at a cost of up to £25k. This has been contained within existing budgets.
- Continue to promote flexible retirement options for older employees which can assist staff retention and succession planning.

4.0 PROPOSALS TO FURTHER SUPPORT EMPLOYEE RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

4.1 Hybrid working

The pilot Hybrid Working Strategy has been in operation since spring 2022 and the outcome of the recent review indicates this initiative has been received positively. The review involved an analysis of feedback from the employee survey, workforce information activity reports, management and trade union engagement sessions and benchmarking with other local authorities. Retaining hybrid working as a flexible working option will present the Council in a more attractive manner when recruiting but also with the retention of existing employees. The Corporate Management Team are of the view that the pilot has been successful and should now be formally incorporated into the Councils Flexible Working Policy. It is intended that a revised Flexible Working Policy will be brought to the Policy & Resources Committee in September.

4.2 Reduction in Standard Working Week

As part of the 2021/22 national pay agreement for local government employees it was agreed that working parties would investigate and prepare reports surrounding the implications of a no detriment reduction in working hours. The pay claim for 2023/24 has been submitted and the ask is for "early completion of the review, established as part of the 2021 settlement, on how councils achieve a no detriment reduction in the working week to enable members to achieve a better work-life balance".

4.3 The Corporate Management Team have undertaken an initial high-level scoping exercise on a potential reduction of the working week from 37 hours to 35 hours per week. After reviewing returns from Service Managers, the CMT are of the view it would be beneficial to explore this initiative further. With the exception of those employees covered by teaching conditions, where the standard working week is 35 hours, all remaining employees are covered by local government employee conditions and have a standard working week of 37 hours. Neighbouring local authorities operate a mix of 37 hours and 35 hours. A 'no detriment' reduction in the working

week would bring many benefits to the existing workforce and would also present the Council in a more attractive manner when recruiting for all local government posts.

4.4 At this point in time the Corporate Management Team are asking Committee to note this on-going work and that it is intended to bring a detailed report back to Committee later in 2023 clarifying any operational and financial implications.

4.5 Trainee Grades

Given the recruitment difficulties for professional posts it is proposed that further consideration is given to posts suitable for traineeships. This allows the Council to 'grow our own' which has already seen some success in posts within HR, Legal and Finance. This approach involves filling professionally graded posts with a trainee which may result in initial service delivery implications but has longer term benefits in terms of retention. The Council's HR team will continue to monitor any national local government trainee schemes which may be of benefit to the Council.

4.6 Payment of University Fees for Students

The Council's Learning and Development Policy allows existing employees time off and funding to attend appropriate college and university courses on the basis that they require to remain in the service of the Council for a period of 2 years or they will require to repay the funding they received. The IJB recently agreed a scheme whereby potential social worker employees can be supported financially through their final year at university on the basis that they join and remain with the Council for a period of three years. It is proposed that this scheme is widened to support the recruitment and retention of other professions across the Council and that an allocation from existing earmarked reserves totalling £100,000 is made available. The £100k would be used as a pilot to ascertain if by paying fees the Council could attract graduates to 'difficult to fill' posts with a 3 year pay back, similar to the HSCP scheme for social workers. As indicated in paragraph 3.5 this pilot could support relevant qualifications and assist to recruit into professions such as Planning and Regeneration, Building Standards, Accountants, HR Advisers and Environmental Health.

4.7 Review Recruitment Processes

It is important that the Council continues to look for a competitive advantage in a tight recruitment market. It is proposed that the following further actions are progressed to improve the Councils recruitment processes across the council:

- ensure the promotion of the benefits of working for the Council in recruitment adverts (e.g., secure employment, good training, flexible working / hybrid working arrangements, good pension and holidays etc.),
- Utilise social media better (facebook, twitter linkedin) with some eye catching material (other councils have highlighted some success with this approach),
- Continue to appear at job fairs where this can be resourced,
- Use of videos to promote living and working in Inverclyde,
- post out to community groups on facebook to generate local interest (currently doing this to a degree as part of workforce refresh programme),

4.8 Succession Planning

The current Succession Planning Programme was agreed by the Corporate Management Team in June 2017 and rolled out to all relevant employees in October 2017. There are several

activities and initiatives in place across the Council which support the current succession planning programme e.g., performance appraisal, leadership events and guidance developed to support Heads of Service and their management teams: identify and develop the potential future leaders and individuals who are required to fill business critical positions within the Council; and develop their own succession plans.

A review of current arrangements has been undertaken, and refreshed guidance has been developed and is attached as Appendix 1. The guidance promotes the importance of succession planning and highlights a number of supporting initiatives including: the introduction of mentoring/coaching; use of secondments and work-shadowing, and customised training. It is proposed that the refreshed programme will be rolled out, with the support of the OD Team, to Council Service Management who are responsible for the effectiveness of their service workforce plans and succession planning.

4.9 Employee Benefits

It is proposed that the Council continues to explore further employee benefits and salary sacrifice schemes for employees. Recent discussion with trade union colleagues have highlighted several areas which are currently being explored including staff discount and shared AVC schemes.

4.10 Council Plan Values and Employee Charter

Following the approval of the Council Plan it is proposed to promote the vision and values across the workforce and develop an employee charter which sets out what staff can expect as employees of Inverclyde Council.

4.11 Review of Performance Appraisal

The Councils Performance appraisal process will be reviewed with a renewed focus on improving employee retention and succession planning. A revised process will consider current best practice which suggests that meaningful conversations held on a regular basis have a greater impact on employee engagement, performance and satisfaction, which in turn, increases productivity, efficiency and employee retention.

4.12 National Pay Position

Following recent national pay claims from trade unions it should be noted that discussions on a no-detriment reduction in the working week (referred to in paragraph 4.2) and the payment of other professional fees, as committed to in the 2021/22 pay settlement continue at a national level. Another feature of recent national pay agreements is the bottom loading of pay awards which has an impact on the Councils pay structure and the differentials between grades. The SJC trade unions pay claim for 2023/24 is similar and seeking a significant uplift to the Scottish Local Government Living Wage. It is therefore proposed that a review of the Councils Pay and Grading structure is progressed in 2024/25.

5.0 PROPOSALS

5.1 It is proposed that the Policy & Resources Committee note the content of this report and approves the allocation of £100,000 from existing earmarked reserves to support the recruitment and retention of final year university students.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO	N/A
Financial	X		
Legal/Risk		Х	
Human Resources	X		
Strategic (LOIP/Corporate Plan)	X		
Equalities & Fairer Scotland Duty		Х	
Children & Young People's Rights & Wellbeing		Х	
Environmental & Sustainability		Х	
Data Protection		Х	

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
Various	Employee Turnover		100		One-Off increase to 23/24 non-HSCP turnover target

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

6.3 Legal/Risk

None.

6.4 Human Resources

Appropriate amendments will be made to current HR procedures and policies based on the proposals within this report.

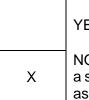
6.5 Strategic

The report helps deliver Council Plan Priority – to develop motivated, trained and qualified employees that deliver services that meet current and anticipated service needs.

6.6 Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty

(a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:



YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required.

NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required.

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

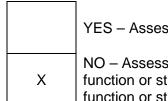
If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision: -

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
х	NO – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty.

6.7 Children and Young People

Has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment been carried out?



YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.

NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve a new policy, function or strategy or recommends a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy which will have an impact on children's rights.

6.8 Environmental/Sustainability

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

	YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
х	NO – This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme, strategy or document which is like to have significant environmental effects, if implemented.

6.9 Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?



YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 The trade unions are supportive of the proposals outlined in the report.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 None.

APPENDIX 1



Inverclyde Council Succession Planning Guidance

1 INTRODUCTION

- **1.1** The Council's improvement strategy 'Delivering Differently in Inverclyde' establishes a strong commitment to support employees developing the right skills, knowledge, and behaviours for current and future career aspirations. Similarly, the Council needs to plan for short and longer term workforce requirements through developing an internal talent pipeline of qualified, skilled, and motivated people who are potential successors to key roles.
- **1.2** The Council's People & Organisational Development Strategy and Service Workforce Plans are the mechanism to define current and future workforce requirements, which support the delivery and transformation of services, and align people development and change management initiatives to the required workforce profile.
- **1.3** Effective succession planning is an integral part of this and enables the Council to plan its future requirements through identifying and developing the flow of talent to fulfil critical positions and responsibilities. Equally this supports business continuity measures ensuring selection and development strategies are in place to maintain a level of stability within key positions.

2 SUCCESSION PLANNING & WORKFORCE PLANNING

2.1 Succession planning, undertaken along with wider workforce planning, is part of a broad approach to talent management and is defined as:

'A process to identify and develop potential future leaders or senior managers, as well as individuals to fill other positions critical to an organisation, either in the short- or the long-term.'

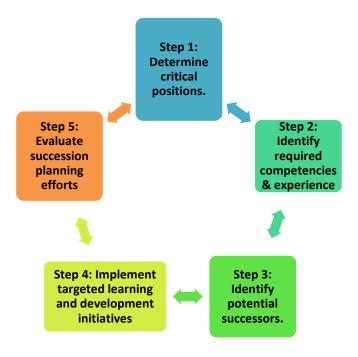
- 2.2 Succession Planning will help the Council reduce the impact of losing key roles and ensure it has the right people, in the right place, at the right time. It will also assist the Council promote the importance and benefits of 'career planning' and help employees assess their knowledge, skills, and experience gaps for roles they want to pursue.
- 2.3 Whilst succession planning is mainly focused on critical leadership and senior positions, it can also involve a review of a range of key roles and professions at other levels, undertaking day-to-day operations, and critical to maintain service delivery. Where relevant, this approach can extend to other business critical professions or occupational groups at other levels.

3 SUCCESSION PLANNING BENEFITS

- **3.1** The current financial climate places challenges on the Council to ensure it can engage, motivate, retain, and fully use the skills within the existing workforce. However as the economy improves, employees have greater opportunity to pursue alternative employment prospects out-with the Council. This is complicated further with a recognised external skills shortage in some professions which makes it increasingly competitive to attract suitably skilled successors. Given these challenges it is essential the Council has a plan in place to identify, develop, and retain its core talent and capabilities to meet critical business issues in both the short and long term.
- **3.2** Succession Planning needs to be led by senior management, aligned to the Councils Corporate Plan, and ensure the development of sufficient talent to achieve strategic objectives and maintain business continuity. It can deliver the following benefits:
 - Alignment between the strategic direction and workforce planning and development requirements;
 - Senior leaders being accountable for growing future leaders;
 - Recognition of business critical roles and contingency plans in place to ensure business continuity;
 - Workforce planning data and analysis informs the process;
 - Provision of targeted personal, professional, and leadership development initiatives which accelerates the development of high potential;
 - Cultivating leadership and 'soft skills' which are increasingly important as people progress to more senior levels;
 - Employees are committed to their own self-development and career plans;
 - The Council demonstrates a visible commitment to career planning, personal development, and professional progression.
- **3.3** Whilst the primary purpose of succession planning is identifying and developing internal talent, it may become apparent there are no suitable internal candidates or a preferred requirement to recruit from outside the Council. To reduce any risk to service delivery, operations, or wider strategic objectives, there is a need to ensure effective plans are readily prepared and in place for any future recruitment and selection process related to critical roles.

4 IMPLEMENTING SUCCESSION PLANNING

- **4.1** Succession planning requires a flexible approach to ensure it can adapt to changing strategies and structures. It is also important that it does not become overly prescriptive, and difficult to adapt as services and roles change. The Council's succession planning process should align with Service Workforce Plans and the Performance Appraisal annual cycle.
- **4.2** Developing future talent is a priority for all managers and requires strong commitment and accountability for growing and developing future leaders, managers, and professional roles. Succession planning will be undertaken through:
 - Leadership Training;
 - Directorate Management Teams assessing critical senior manager and occupational groups;
 - All managers supporting and developing future talent through Performance Appraisal discussions
- **4.3** Main activities for DMT, with assistance of OD where required, undertaking succession planning:



An explanation of each step is outlined below.

STEP 1: DETERMINE CRITICAL POSITIONS

This step involves connecting succession planning to strategic and workforce planning decisions and identifying the most business critical positions.

Two important criteria should be considered:

- i. **Criticality**: positions or employee groups that, if vacant, would have a significant impact on the Council's ability to:
 - achieve its strategy or organisational success;
 - deliver operational business (e.g safety, financial operations, efficiency, reputation);
 - directly support the customer or public;
 - provide highly specialised knowledge, skills, or technical expertise that would be difficult or expensive to recruit.
- ii. **Retention risk**: positions where the departure of employees is expected or likely and:
 - there are no potential successors in the short term;
 - it may be desirable to bring in new talent from outsider the organisation;
 - there is a need to plan for anticipated vacancies or future positions.

STEP 2: IDENTIFY REQUIRED COMPETENCIES AND EXPERIENCE

Once critical positions have been identified the next step is to develop the means by which to assess potential successors. All roles have prerequisite knowledge, skills, behaviours, and experience necessary for success. Understanding these criteria will act as a baseline to measure potential successors and help individuals create personal development plans aligned to the role requirements. This step will involve:

- analysing core and technical competencies, knowledge, skills, and experience essential for specific roles;
- reviewing and reassessing job profiles (including with the current appointee);
- assessing key leadership skills and behaviours ;
- identifying requirements for specific professions, compliance and statutory criteria, and professional body membership; and

STEP 3: IDENTIFY POTENTIAL SUCCESSORS

Identify and assess employees who demonstrate potential talent or suitability and focus their learning and development plans to help them prepare for future roles. It is important to measure this suitability across ; a short-term unplanned critical-vacancy and a more planned succession in the medium or long term.

This needs to be a transparent and equitable process, based on fairness and merit, and identify those individuals who demonstrate they have developed the specified competencies and experience or a close match to the requirements of the role. Useful starting points for recognising potential successors include:

- Self-identification or expressed interest through career planning discussions;
- Performance Appraisal annual review discussions;
- Employees with a track record of assuming greater responsibilities;
- Coaching and mentoring partnerships;
- Recruitment and selection exercises.

This stage should support looking beyond the service, or team where there is a succession issue. Succession candidates, particularly in leadership roles or senior positions, could potentially come from any part of the organisation providing they represent the competencies, preferred behaviours, and experience. Once identified, line managers should support individuals through developing a personalised learning and development plan targeted to develop the requisite skills and experience

STEP 4: IMPLEMENT TARGETED LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Once potential candidates have been identified they require access to focused learning and development opportunities which address the gap between current and expected skills. This can be achieved through exposing the individual to the right development and work-based opportunities which develop the skills, knowledge, and experience critical to success in the targeted position. This may include:

- Leadership development programmes
- Coaching and mentoring;
- Peer learning
- Lateral job moves
- Planned role assignments;

- Shadowing;
- Professional qualifications.

Agreed learning and development activities should be incorporated within the individual's PDP. Support and guidance to facilitate any bespoke requirements can be co-ordinated through the Organisational Development Team.

STEP 5: EVALUATE SUCCESSION PLANNING EFFORTS

Evaluating succession planning efforts will help assess effectiveness of the process, appropriately monitor success, and identify where to modify the approach to address changing organisational needs. This step will involve **annually** reviewing Services succession plans to ensure:

- All key roles and occupational groups are identified and have succession plans in place;
- Measurement of the impact of succession plans on business continuity;
- Potential candidates are developing and performing well;
- Development of a diverse talent pool reflective of the Council workforce;
- Assessment of areas for improvement in the succession planning process.

5.0 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Recruitment and Selection

It is important to refer to the requirement of the Council to advertise certain posts, internally or externally. Inclusion in a Succession Plan as a successor will not mean guaranteed promotion or interview when a vacancy arises. However, playing an active part in service development by taking on the tasks identified as part of the planning process and committing to personal development in doing so, should have a positive impact on applications and/or interviews for named successors; but there is still a requirement to compete for vacancies.

5.2 Performance Appraisals/Teachers Professional Update

There must be a direct link between high performing employees, highlighted during performance appraisal or professional update processes, and those included on Succession Plans, therefore Succession Planning should be discussed during performance appraisal meetings, specifically in relation to development opportunities and personal development plans. Generally speaking, when considering who is best to take on the tasks and responsibilities highlighted in your plan, it will be those employees who are graded 1 and 2 during appraisals. This is to ensure that those being identified as successors have minimal development needs in their current post, and may be more able and/or willing to play an active part in the plan quickly. This is not to say that those graded 3 are entirely excluded from inclusion in the plan; they may, for example, have it built into their own Personal Development Plan that they wish to work towards being included in the next Succession Plan.

In schools, for Teaching staff, who do not have a graded appraisal model, the development element of any professional update discussions should be referred to and successors selected on their agreed areas of depth of knowledge & skill in the key task areas.

5.3 Operational Impact

The plan is an operational management document. Inclusion on all or part of it is not contractual, is not relevant for consideration under the Job Evaluation scheme, and cannot be appealed against. Where there is dissatisfaction among a staff group with the decisions of the planning team, this should be addressed through personal development discussions.

EXAMPLE OF SUCCESSION PLANNING ACTION PLAN – ANNUAL REVIEW

Stage	Activities	Outcome	Responsible
Step 1 : Identify key positions or	 Assessment of critical leadership roles . Assessment from DMT (OR Planning Group) PDP annual review etc. 	 Development of leadership succession planning process. 	
occupational groups	 Review of gap analysis from service workforce plans to identify critical occupational groups. Identification of key positions or occupational groups linked to business continuity requirements. 	 Assessment of roles critical for maintaining service delivery/business continuity. 	
	 Integrate succession planning with workforce plans. 	Annual review of succession plans.	
Step 2: Identify competencies required	 Development of 'skills-and-experience' profile for senior leadership roles. Review job descriptions and relevant competency criteria for key positions. 	 Validation of competency and experience criteria for leadership positions. 	
ſ	 Validate with current appointees. Update with behaviours required . 	 Ensure all professional and Council behaviours integrated within job profiles. 	
Step 3 : Identify potential successors	 Review outcomes of PDP review. DMT assessment of potential talent pool. Gather wider 'career planning' information. Develop an inventory of roles, competencies, and 	 Identification of potential successors and agreement of leadership talent pool. 	
	potential talent pool.	• Defined succession plan identifying critical positions and potential successors.	

Stage	Activities	Outcome	Responsible
Step 4: Implement targeted learning & focused development strategies	 Development of personal development plans. Align and implement targeted/bespoke development initiatives including: leadership development initiatives. management development programmes. promote coaching and mentoring project. develop informal work based development opportunities. 	 Development of individual learning plans aligned to role requirements. Alignment of development programmes and opportunities to strategic direction and succession planning requirements 	
Step 5 : Evaluate succession planning efforts	 Evaluate success of personal development plans. Evaluate succession plan linked to annual review of workforce plans. Complete review of succession plan in relation to business continuity measures. Identify any changes to strategy or structure which impact succession plan. Integration of succession planning with current strategic and HR practice 	 Evaluation and continuous improvement of succession planning efforts Ensure succession planning process and outcomes are an integral part of workforce planning, recruitment, and development structures 	