



The Seventh Pay & Workforce Strategy

DELIVERING THROUGH PEOPLE

2013-2016

December 2013

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The five national priority themes identified in the original 2003 DCLG Workforce Strategy still remain relevant to the construction of an effective local workforce strategy. These are

- (a) **Organisational development** – addressing the workforce dimensions of organisational transformation to deliver citizen – focused and value for money services, in partnership with other organisations and the community.
- (b) **Leadership development** – building visionary, effective and ambitious leadership to make the best use of political and managerial roles, in a partnership context.
- (c) **Skill development** – with partners, developing employees’ skills and knowledge in an innovative, high performance, multi-agency context.
- (d) **Recruitment and retention** – taking action to recruit and retain the right workforce, address key future occupational skill shortages; promote jobs and careers; identify, develop and motivate talent and address diversity issues.
- (e) **Pay and rewards** – implementing effective approaches to reward the workforce while controlling employment costs to reflect budget efficiency requirements, as well as new ways of working and innovative working patterns.

1.2 Since the Council’s last Workforce Strategy was produced in November 2012, there have been a number of important developments which have impacted or will impact on the way in which local government provides services to the community. They include:

- The transfer of Public Health to local authorities.
- Healthy Lives, Healthy People- a Public Health Workforce Strategy April 2013.
- Welfare Reform Act 2012.
- Results from the 2011 Census
- Localism Act 2011.
- Proposal to move Adult Safeguarding Boards onto a statutory footing.
- “Working Together to Safeguard Children” March 2013.
- Health and Social Care Act 2012.
- Continuing financial constraints.
- 2014 Public Realm Contract.
- Town Centre regeneration

1.3 The Council, in responding to the national agenda, has constructed this Strategy, Delivering Through People, a seventh revision to the local Pay and Workforce Strategy.

2 PURPOSE

- 2.1 The overall aim of this Strategy is to identify the key Human Resource challenges facing the Council over the next three years and suggest actions which can be taken in response to these challenges.

The Pay and Workforce Strategy has incorporated the key themes arising from the departmental workforce plans.

3 THE NATIONAL JOURNEY – SO FAR

- 3.1 The most recent Local Government Workforce Strategy by the Local Government Employers was published in April 2012 and there have been some changes since then.

Whilst the prevailing economic situation has been especially difficult since 2008, the underlying challenges facing the local government workforce have never really changed. There is continuing pressure to deliver more and better services with less resource through greater efficiency, service transformation and partnership development.

The level of change affecting the local government workforce is unprecedented since the 1970's and 1980's, which impacts not only on how the workforce sees itself and how it is seen by others but also on the psychological contract between employer and employee. The impact of continuing pay constraints /changes to terms and conditions, coupled with pension changes all have the potential to compound the challenges.

Job losses in local government, brought about by spending reductions will continue for some time. Government figures indicate that up to 15% of public sector jobs will be lost by 2015. The scale and speed of losses has the potential to:

- Create a “fear factor” in the workforce which can be debilitating when trying to introduce change and improve performance.
- Increase the work pressure on those employees who remain.
- Undermine morale and commitment.

The impact of the economic downturn has also brought extra demand for some services particularly in relation to supporting young people not in employment, education or training (NEETS), but without any significant reduction in demand for others.

- 3.2 The recession has reduced all authorities' income, and pushed up costs leading to the need to make significant savings and service cuts, including reducing posts. The pressure to do “more for less”, more efficiently and to increase productivity is greater than ever.

- 3.3 Demographic pressures continue to have an impact. The 2011 Census indicated that the population of Bracknell Forest has grown by 3.3% from 109,617 to 113,200 between 2001-2011, with a 7% increase in the numbers of children under 5 and an 18% increase in the number of those over 65; this has a resultant impact on schools and adult social care support. Also increasing diversity in the numbers of residents from black and minority ethnic groups will affect both the workforce composition and service demands.

One impact of government's policies is that a significant proportion of employees in their fifties are likely to have to work to an older age before they can claim their pension; it could therefore be that a sizeable proportion of the workforce will consist of employees aged over 60, who are working longer than they wanted or expected to.

Equally the removal of the default retirement age means that workers over the age of 65 are now more common than in previous decades.

- 3.4 The public sector faces continuing uncertainties because of the financial constraints placed on it. On the one hand, staff may be prepared to stay longer with the organisation rather than risk moving job and home but on the other hand it means natural healthy turnover is stagnant. As the financial pressures on the public sector are widely publicised in the media, fewer people may see a "local government" career as a safe or desirable option.
- 3.5 It is part of the work of the Council HR teams to anticipate and react to change and to forecast the future skills and numbers required of local government. For example, the move to flexible ways of working will require different approaches to management and changed skills within the workforce in order to implement these changes successfully.

4 THE REGIONAL JOURNEY – SO FAR

- 4.1 The South East Employers priorities for 2013-2016 are:

- Developing mediation and conflict resolution programmes as a cost effective way to develop managerial skills and reduce the cost of entering into formal procedures.
- Expanding the take up of the Elected Member Development Skills Portal.
- Developing and embedding the e-pay check service to provide Councils with access to current pay data for benchmarking.
- Establishing the Collaboration and Shared Service Peer Challenge to enable managers to benchmark and share good practice.

5 THE LOCAL JOURNEY- SO FAR

5.1 The Council's six overarching priorities for 2011/15 are:

- Priority one: a town centre fit for the 21st Century
- Priority two: protecting and enhancing our environment
- Priority three: promoting health and achievement
- Priority four: create a borough where people are safe and feel safe
- Priority five: sustain economic prosperity
- Priority six: value for money

5.2 Some of the local issues which the Council has to consider as part of its Pay and Workforce Strategy are:

- The Government's planned budgetary constraints which have shown that the Council's financial situation remains challenging.
- The continuing challenges in some key areas of the recruitment and retention of staff.
- Changes to working arrangements and practices which will be required through flexible working.
- The town centre regeneration which will impact on recruitment and retention.
- Changes in legislation and the expectations of various inspectorates and government departments.
- The need for managers to improve their existing skills and develop new ones eg commissioning services, partnership working.
- The impact of downsizing on the skills required within the workforce and the changes to working practices required.
- The outcomes of the Good to Great initiative

5.3 The Council needs to continue to take action to increase the level of "grow our own" opportunities, for example:

- A continued commitment to supporting Continual Professional Development (CPD).
- the agreement between the six Berkshire Authorities for more effective delivery of learning and development opportunities for the Adult and Children's social care workforces with particular emphasis on safeguarding.
- Joint agreements across Berkshire for training to support Approved Mental Health Practitioners.
- Bracknell Forest leading a Berkshire partnership funded by the Department of Education to facilitate training for 12 graduates to enable them to become social workers as part of the Step Up to Social Work programme.
- In collaboration with West Berkshire Training Consortium and QA Apprenticeships, developing and increasing the numbers of apprenticeships offered within the Council.
- Developing and nurturing talent and improving performance management as part of the Good to Great workstreams.

6 SKILLS, QUALIFICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

- 6.1 The Learning & Development team is able to take a wide corporate view on all training activities. There is a significant amount of development activity taking place and over 200 events are corporately run annually. In addition, specialist training for staff working within adult and children's social care, formal management and other qualification programmes are offered. Increasingly employees are interested in training which leads to nationally recognised qualifications.
- 6.2 The requirement for social workers to re-register every two years with the Health Care Professional Council (HCPC) means that continuous professional development events are run to ensure that this group of employees are able to comply with the HCPC requirements.

Significant changes in terms of post qualification training requirements for all social workers, especially those in their first year post qualification have impacted on what is offered to employees.

7 BENCHMARKING

- 7.1 The 2011/2012 Local Government Pay and Workforce Strategy survey contained detailed information on a range of issues including turnover, off the job training, sickness absence, etc. However gathering information for the survey for 2012/2013 has only just begun and comparative data will not be available until April 2014.

The HR function will continue to participate in other benchmarking groups (eg CIPFA) to identify how well it compares to other local authorities.

Performance Indicators	England local government employment 2012 (2011 figures in brackets)	Unitary authorities in England 2012 (2011 figures in brackets)	Bracknell 2012 (2011 figures in brackets)
All turnover including redundancies and other leavers	13.1%	13.2%	14.3% (19.1%)
Days off the job training per employee	(1.6)	(1.1)	3.3 (3.4) *
Gross training expenditure per employee	(£212)	(£175)	£337 (£375) *
Members gross training expenditure	(£175)	(£225)	£286 (£430)
Sickness absence rates (days per employee)	(7.7)	(9.6)	5.56 (5.64)

The Council's voluntary turnover rate for 2012/13 was 12.5% which has remained around this level for the last 2 years. The voluntary turnover rate for people with less than one year's service has decreased from 31.4% in

2011/2012 to 23% in 2012/2013, this figure includes staff on fixed term contracts who often leave before their contracts expire if a permanent opportunity arises elsewhere.

* - The significant increase in employees taking up e-learning opportunities has led to the reduction in time spent away from the office and an overall reduction in expenditure.

8 RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION ISSUES

8.1 Bracknell Forest remains an area of relatively low unemployment and high housing costs, and with a mixture of a skilled/semi-skilled population. Recruitment into posts of a generic nature eg administration continues to present no significant problems.

However, problems still remain with filling professional vacancies for some areas particularly social workers, especially those with experience in children's social care, approved mental health practitioners and social care management positions. There is an outflow of experienced professionals into locum work where market forces are setting significantly higher remuneration rates than those paid in permanent employment. The Bracknell Forest situation reflects similar local difficulties and also nationally recognised issues across the U.K.

8.2 The key priority areas for the next year are:

- To further focus on the Council's employer brand, especially in the light of the well-publicised public sector austerity measures. In particular:
 - The further adoption of flexible working practices as a recruitment and retention tool, with particular reference to improving the attractiveness of jobs to those who live beyond the usual travel-to-work catchment area and those returning to work after care responsibilities.
 - The continued development of approaches to enhance management competence.
- The greater use of mortgage subsidy and relocation allowances
- The use of "golden hellos" to respond to market forces with regard to social worker recruitment
- The development of a specialist microsite which make full use of automatic vacancy update feeds, video technology and search engine optimisation.
- Further strengthening the links between learning and development and the recruitment strategy to embed "grow-our-own" as an attractive option to recruiting fully experienced staff.

9 THE FIVE WORKFORCE PRIORITIES – PROGRESS TO DATE

As identified in paragraph 1, the five national priorities have been used as the basis for identifying the key issues for the Council, what has been achieved to date and what still needs to be done.

9.1 **Organisational Development**

Key issues:

- Anticipating and tackling critical current and future workforce challenges.
- Engaging with staff positively in service transformation and other major changes.
- Developing new ways of working, including maximising the use of new technology and flexible working arrangements.
- Increasing workforce productivity (particularly through continuing to reduce staff absence which is already significantly below the local government average).
- Moving from Good to Great

What we have achieved

- The successful transfer and integration of the Public Health function into the Council including acting as the lead authority for Berkshire.
- Development of a single Equality Scheme 2012-2016 with workforce objectives
- Promotion of greater flexibility in terms of working arrangements and increased range of flexible benefits.
- Respond to “Every Child Matters” March 2013 with increased focus on cross cutting and partnership working across Berkshire.
- Clarity of linkage between the Council’s business objectives/service plans and individual employee work objectives through the appraisal process.

What we still need to do:

- Continue to benchmark services where appropriate.
- Support managers and staff to develop flexible working arrangements to respond to the “Time for a Change” programme.
- Review the requirements on CRB checking/rechecking in light of new government regulations and best safeguarding practices.
- Develop appropriate mechanisms to nurture and develop talent within the Council as part of the Good to Great initiative, which will enable greater succession planning
- Implement the key actions arising from the “Good to Great” programme.
- Review the standard appraisal process.
- Ensure ongoing compliance with the requirements of the governments PSN network for employee security checks to allow access to central government IT systems.

9.2 **Developing Leadership**

Key issues:

- Creating leaders for the future.
- Developing partnerships to improve leadership and skills.
- Enabling Members to continue to play an active part in Portfolio Review Groups, Overview and Scrutiny activities.
- Developing the leadership capabilities of officers

What we have achieved:

- Managerial and supervisory competency frameworks integrated into all management programmes.
- Accreditation by the Institute of Leadership and Development to deliver a Level 3 and a Level 5 Coaching/Mentoring Certificate Programme.
- Reaccreditation to the Charter Plus for Member Development.
- Completed 360 degree appraisal pilot programme for a cross sectional group of Elected Members and extended this to all Executive Members.

What we still need to do:

- Produce development material, including e-learning for Councillors and employees including the use of social media.
- Extend the 360 degree appraisal programme to cover all Elected Members
- Develop suitable mechanisms to ensure all social workers are able to comply with all recommendations of the Social Work Taskforce.
- Enhance and expand management development opportunities

9.3 **Developing Workforce Skills and Capacity**

Key issues:

- Maximising access to learning and development opportunities for employees.
- Developing an ever more flexible and skilled workforce.
- Improving skills for managers, including developing new skills e.g. commissioning, working in partnerships, managing flexible working effectively, performance management.
- Improving skills for all staff in enhancing customer care, basic skills/skills for working life.
- Enhancing partnership approaches to learning and development.
- Enabling the Council to meet the government's Data Protection and Information Security standards

What we have achieved:

- Delivery of a wide range of management development opportunities for service managers.
- Redesigned the corporate induction programme linked to e-learning.
- Launched e-learning through the recognised provider for the public sector; to date 99 packages are currently available

- Expanded access to safeguarding awareness training to the wider children's and adult's workforces and volunteers.
- Equality proofed 50% corporate learning and development modules
- Delivered a range of workshops and e-learning opportunities in line with the government's Information Security requirements
- Developed a new Learning Management system which will enable greater self service.

What we still need to do:

- Develop further equality and diversity related programmes eg faith and belief, cultural awareness, etc.
- Continue expansion in the use of e-learning opportunities within the Council
- Identify the best ways to enable all staff, especially those working part time or non standard office hours to access learning and development opportunities.
- Support the requirements for staff as a result of the introduction of the government's revised Public Services Network standards
- Develop appropriate mechanisms to nurture and develop talent within the Council as part of the Good to Great initiative
- Development of a Performance Management toolkit to enable managers to support staff effectively
- Implement the new Learning Management system across the Council which will enable managers and staff to self manage their own learning and to input personal development plans/needs into the system so that events can be organised as effectively and efficiently as possible..

9.4 **Resourcing, Recruitment, Retention and Diversity**

Key issues:

- Remodelling the workforce in response to future trends.
- Maximising the use of technology to improve services.
- Developing cost effective means of attracting suitable job applicants and retaining skilled workers.
- Developing suitable strategies to encourage a diverse range of suitable applicants to apply for jobs within the Council and to support their development.
- Supporting social workers to practice effectively.

What we have achieved:

- Continued to develop recruitment initiatives to expand the ways in which the public can find out about job vacancies, etc.
- Carried out Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) to ensure equality implications are taken into account in all policy initiatives.
- Support the contract requirements with Comensura for temporary agency workers to ensure that the Council obtains value for money.
- Renewing the JgP contract to provide a modern and contemporary job application process.

What we still need to do:

- Continue to manage the movement of employees resulting from budget reductions and reorganisation of services including the retraining of employees as necessary.
- More detailed workforce planning to better predict need particularly in relation to local partners
- Encourage as diverse a range of job applicants to increase workforce diversity
- Complete the equality proofing of all corporate workshops and events
- Commission a new HR/Payroll system to provide fast and accurate workforce information to managers

9.5 **Pay and Reward**

Key issues:

- Competitive, fair and flexible pay structures.
- Equal pay.
- Clear linkage between service objectives and improvements.
- Modernising pay systems.
- Transparent pay structures for senior staff.
- Achieving better work/life balance especially for people with caring responsibilities and older workers.
- Expansion of flexible working options.

What we have achieved

- Achieved almost total workforce integration onto the Bracknell Grading structure.
- Expanded the flexible benefits scheme.
- Reviewed severance policy, to facilitate workforce restructuring.
- Completed Stage 1 of the job evaluation review programme (measurement of jobs) and commenced discussions with employee representatives.
- Produced an annual Pay Policy statement in accordance with required statute.
- Completed Stage 2 of the job evaluation review programme (draft pay structures).

What we still need to do:

- Risk assess the implications of the new pay and grading structure
- Implement the new pay and grading structure.
- Continue to explore additional flexible benefits for staff and make it easier to access benefits on-line.
- Assess the impact of those whose pay maybe reduced and to mitigate any increased turnover from those seeking to maintain their previous pay grade.
- Consider issues around the introduction of the “Living Wage”.

10 DEPARTMENTAL KEY WORKFORCE PLANNING PRIORITIES

- 10.1 The Council incorporated workforce planning into service planning in 2009, and annual departmental workforce plans are now being produced. The Service Plan Priority 6 (Value for money) and Medium Term Objective 10 reflect the workforce planning requirement and embed them into the whole service planning process.
- 10.2 Each department's key priorities will be reflected in their action plans and they will continue to monitor progress at a local level. The key priorities for each of the Council's departments identified through the workforce planning process are as follows:

Environment, Culture and Communities

- Government pressure for local government to outsource services, including creating mutuals and shared services partnerships.
- Further proposed changes to planning regulations, including the impact of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- Introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy.
- Potential regionalisation of some regulatory functions.
- Impact of Town Centre Regeneration work in terms of increased workloads for some teams and changes to service delivery for others
- Organisational and cultural changes due to the implementation of the 2014 Public Realm Contract.
- Continue to develop management competence through mentoring, network events and other support.
- Effective implementation of safeguarding requirements across the department, in particular the Leisure and Culture Safeguarding Policy
- Support managers and staff to roll out mobile and flexible working.
- Support managers and staff through organisational change resulting from reduced funding for local government
- Support the department to maximise the use of reducing resources through effective management and identifying opportunities to deliver services in different ways

Children, Young People and Learning

- Assess the impact of the safer workforce training programme.
- Introduce an integrated introduction programme to the Children's and Young People's workforce.
- Develop the Children and Young People's workforce strategy as a result of the priorities identified through the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) and early intervention strategies.
- Establish strategies to improve the recruitment and retention of people into areas with skills shortages such as headteachers and experienced children's social workers.
- Establish a School Direct service which is a new Department for Education initiative enabling a schools led pathway to people wishing to gain qualified teacher status.
- Support Head teachers and school leaders through effective performance management

- Further strengthen integrated working practices and information sharing with relevant external organisations eg Health, Police, Probation, Voluntary organisations.

Chief Executives Office/Corporate Services

- Revising the Council's appraisal and personal development planning system
- Supporting the HR aspects relating to office moves and the roll out of flexible working across the organisation.
- Review the Member Development Strategy and deliver a comprehensive Member Development programme.
- Enabling managers to take greater responsibility for the learning and development requirements of their teams via direct access to the new Learning Management system.
- Seek to develop self-service options for managers through the specification of the new HR/Payroll system.

Adult Social Care Health and Housing

- Modernise the Adult Social Care workforce to meet new skills sets eg end of life care at Bridgewell and the requirements of the Personalisation agenda.
- Continue to enhance the skills of the wider adult workforce to ensure that the levels of competence meet those set out in the East Berkshire Workforce and Development Strategy for Safeguarding (2012).
- Ensure that the learning and development needs of public health are met in line with annual requirements.
- Enhance the skills of the workforce to meet the anticipated needs arising as a result of the implementation of the Welfare Reform Act 2012.
- Ensure that the workforce is equipped to implement any new requirements arising from the Care Bill currently going through the parliamentary process.
- Integrate with Health Services. The shape of the workforce will require careful consideration along with services and other associated issues.
- Introduce a new approach to Housing services through the "Vanguard" system and reconfigure the workforce to support a more customer-centric approach.

11 ISSUES WHICH WILL IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S WORKFORCE

(i) Staff Communications

This remains key to having an effective workforce as major change issues are fundamentally affected by effective communications eg workforce remodelling and restructuring.

(ii) Job Evaluation

The Council has revised its scheme and carried out a re-measurement of its jobs. The implementation of a revised pay structure is subject to continuing discussions with the trades unions. In addition, the issue of the Living Wage is part of those discussions.

(iii) Flexible Working/Time for a Change Accommodation Project

Current policies reflect the new flexible working arrangements and accommodate employment rights which also means that training and development activities are offered in a variety of different ways to accommodate these arrangements.

(iv) Audits and Inspections

The amalgamated Adult Learning Inspectorate, OFSTED and the Care Quality Commission, will continue as will audits of financial arrangements. The focus of inspections is moving towards one of identifying the impact of changes on the outcomes from those people in receipt of services. Less regular, planned inspections may be undertaken but with less notice being given.

(v) Partnership working

The need to work in partnership will continue in the future and is likely to increase over the coming years; this will require the development of consensus building and commissioning skills.

(vi) Enhancing managerial skills and competencies

Supporting managers to develop new skills needs to be embedded into management thinking through training and HR advice. A new Performance Management toolkit is currently being developed to support this key requirement.

(vii) Developing and Nurturing Talent

As part of the Good to Great initiative and in response to the findings of the Peer Review in March 2013, the Council is working to better harness the creativity, talent and energy for change of its workforce.

(viii) Increasing and improving the e-learning offer

To maximise the Learning and Development opportunities for the workforce by providing more cost effective programmes.

12 A REVIEW OF THE 2012 PAY AND WORKFORCE STRATEGY

12.1 Achievements and actions still outstanding

Of the 27 actions shown in the Action Plans of the 2012 Sixth Pay & Workforce Strategy. 9 have been fully completed, 4 part completed, and 14 not completed principally because they have a long time frame. The completed actions are:

- Safeguarding training and DSB checking now identified, commissioned and/or delivered
- Support the achievement of the "Achieving" level in the Equality framework

- 6th Pay and Workforce strategy produced and approved
- Managers skills have been enhanced through delivery of a range of workshops relating to performance management
- Delivery of a revised programme of workshops for managers with responsibility for buildings
- Induction of new Members undertaken
- Support material for the Time for a Change initiative including the production of e-learning and guidance material produced
- Provision of one ILM level 3 and one ILM level 5 certificate programme
- Workshops developed and delivered resulting from the outcomes of the Development Centre events

The 4 actions which have been partially completed are:

- Development of managerial and employee skills to enable greater use of flexible working opportunities
- Development of specific and specialist skills for Adult Social care staff e.g. End of Life, Personalisation and Autism.
- Progress with the implementation of the new pay and grading structure
- Expansion of the use of the new social care common induction standards

Of the 14 actions not yet completed, 12 have longer timescales up to and beyond 2015 and will be on-going. These are:

- Compliance with the new standards for staff working in social care
- Raising the standard of competence within the Private, Independent and Voluntary sector in care
- Updating and developing appropriate equality and diversity training
- Working towards a diverse workforce which reflects the community
- Identifying opportunities for external funding
- Supporting the development of school leavers, graduates and older persons particularly in areas of skills shortage
- Examining the total rewards package to ensure it is modern and appropriate
- Further develop the Council's flexible benefits approach
- Remodelling the Adult and children's workforce
- Enhance the image of the Council as an employer
- Assist departments in fitting staffing to available budgets
- Develop the means of constructing and marketing the overall employment package.

There are a further 2 which have not been progressed for a variety of reasons, these include:

- Expand the skills audit of all employees and encourage greater use of personal development plans

An audit of the data held on the HR database is being carried out during late 2013. The current appraisal and personal development planning documentation and approach is being completely revised to make it more user friendly and accessible. When the new Learning Management system is in place (April 2014) greater use of self service including the updating of personal skills, knowledge and qualifications records will be possible.

- Fourth accreditation to the Charter for Member Development

This is scheduled for 2014 and will in future be included in the Member Development Strategy and not form part of the Pay & Workforce Strategy.

13 **CONCLUSIONS**

13.1 All the issues discussed in this Strategy will have a fundamental impact on the way in which the Council approaches achieving greater economies and improving efficiency, workforce planning, recruitment and retention, reward mechanisms and skills development of its staff. All these factors will need to be taken into account in the coming years and the Strategy adjusted accordingly.

13.2 The following documents inform and underpin the actions proposed in the Strategy:

- Medium Term Financial Strategy – General Fund Revenue Budget Book 2013/14
- Equality Scheme 2012-2016
- Creating Opportunities – a joint strategic plan for children and young people 2011-2014
- Staff Survey Action Plans 2011
- Good to Great Action Plan and Peer Review 2013.

14 **APPENDICES – ACTION PLANS**

14.1 The attached appendices are based on the 5 key national priorities outlined in paragraph 1 of the Strategy. Departmental priorities are not covered within this document and will be dealt with through departmental action.