

Resource Strategy

Workforce Plan



**COBAR SHIRE
COUNCIL**
outback nsw July 2022

2022 -2026

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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Cobar Shire is situated in the centre of New South Wales at the crossroads of the Barrier Highway, the Kidman Way and the Wool Track, and has excellent road, rail and air links to most of Australia's capital cities. With an area of 45,600 square kilometres, the Shire is approximately two-thirds the size of Tasmania. It is home to approximately 4,800 people.

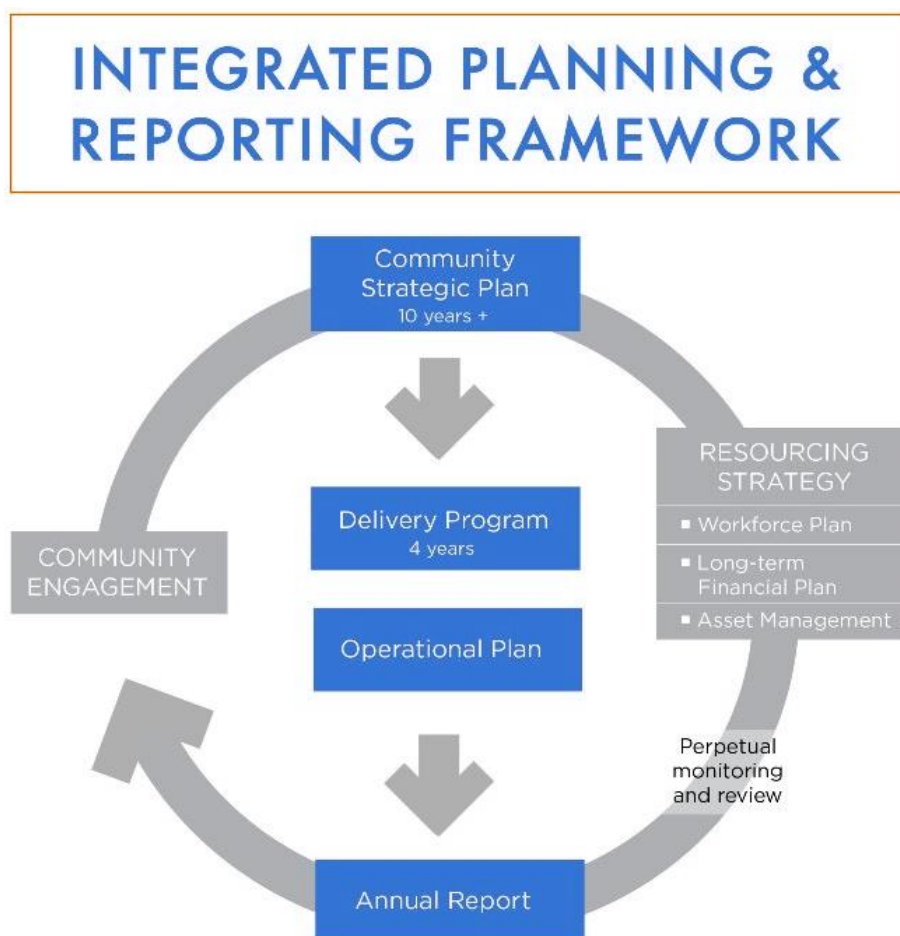
The Shire's prosperity is built around the thriving mining – copper, lead, silver, zinc, gold – and pastoral industries, which are strongly supported by a wide range of attractions and activities, that make it a popular tourist stopover and a wonderful place in which to live, work and play.

The Workforce Plan is prepared with the understanding that it is not complicated in its delivery. It aims to undertake a simple analysis of Council's current staffing structure and identify the resourcing direction for the next four years. The Workforce Plan aims to ensure Council has the right people in the right jobs at the right time.

Council's Workforce Plan is part of the Resourcing Strategy that underpins the Four-Year Delivery Plan. This Plan along with the Asset Management Plans and Long-Term Financial Plan outlines Council's capacity to manage assets and deliver services into the future.

Cobar Shire Council has four Directorates:

- Department of Finance and Community Services
- Department of Engineering Services
- Department of Planning and Environmental Services



To continue to meet its responsibilities in the delivery of essential services to the community, it is imperative that Council has in place a process that ensures there are sufficient resources and people with the right skills and the right attitude to meet the changing needs of the community and is able to respond in an effective and efficient way to these needs.

COUNCIL'S VISION

Our vision is for Cobar Shire to be an attractive, healthy, and caring environment in which to live, work and play, achieved in partnership with the community through initiative, foresight, and leadership.

COUNCIL'S MISSION

Our mission is to provide sound and sensible government and ensure that works and services are delivered effectively and equitably to the community of Cobar Shire. Council will also develop and constantly review its policy on the maintenance of its road network.

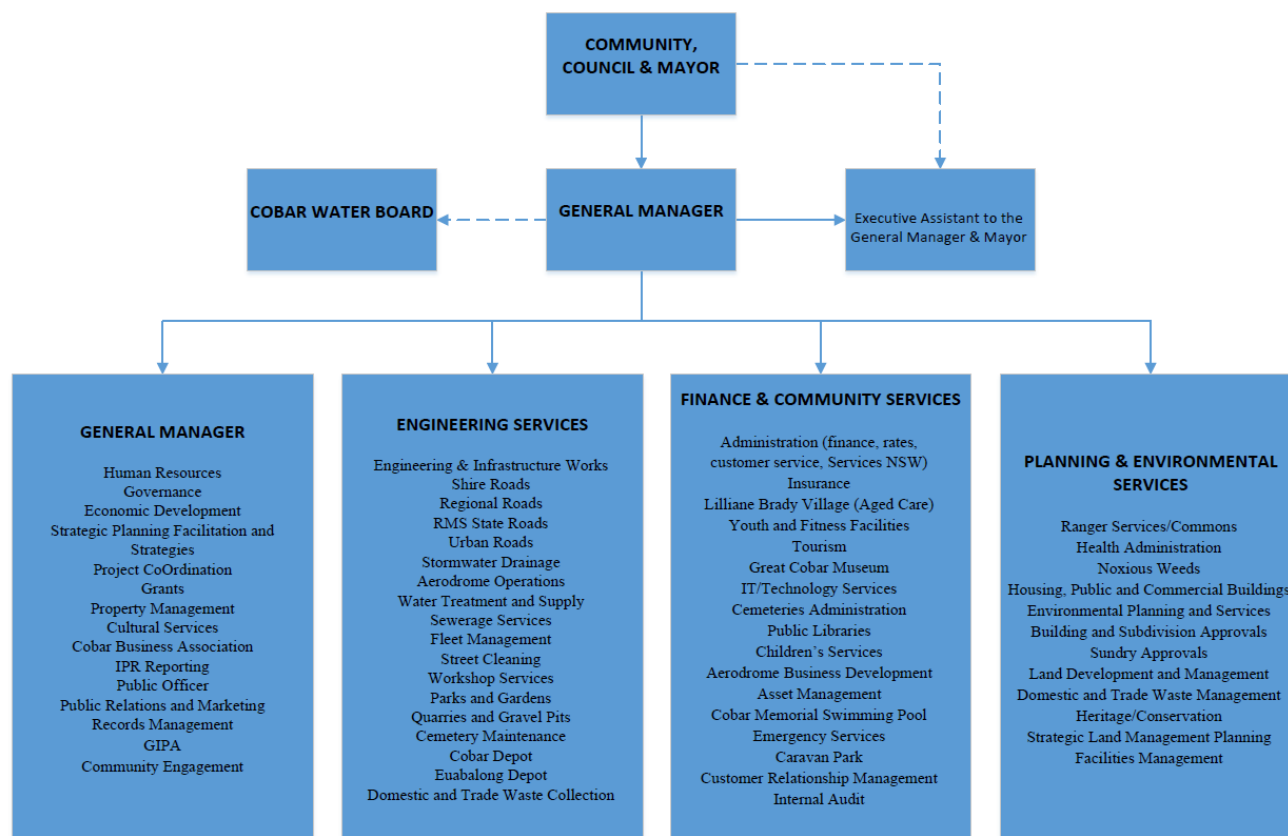
COUNCIL'S CORE VALUES

Councillors and staff of Cobar Shire Council are committed to delivering value to our community by aligning to our core values of Accountability, Communication, Effective Leadership, Integrity and Teamwork. The abbreviated mantra "ACE IT" represents who we are as an organisation, these core values are the guiding principles for how we carry out our duties and interact with our community.

	Accountability	Communication	Effective Leadership	Integrity	Team Work
We Value	We are responsible for our actions, our behaviour and the satisfactory completion of allocated tasks	We communicate openly and respectfully, sharing timely and appropriate information with others	We lead by positive example, embodying all of Council's agreed Values	We are consistently honest, transparent, ethical and fair, regardless of the situation	We work collaboratively to achieve shared goals for Council and the community
My Behaviours	I actively participate in the organisation	I consider how I say it, why I say it, when I say it and where I say it	I act with courage, challenge the status quo and seek out ways to improve our organisation	I do and say the right thing, even when no one is watching	I share my knowledge, skills and experience with others
	I take full ownership of my role, including my mistakes, and learn from my actions	I listen actively and ask questions to gain a shared understanding	I support and encourage others to learn, develop and grow	I take personal responsibility for my own actions and behaviour	I support others to achieve goals and celebrate success
	I inspire excellence by performing my role with pride	I show empathy and consider things from others' point of view	I am approachable and treat others consistently and respectfully	I uphold strong moral principles and do what I say I am going to do	I consciously choose to work positively with others
	I acknowledge my actions and behaviour can impact and influence outcomes	I provide and receive timely, constructive feedback	I inspire and expect everyone to always do their best	I am professional, treating others just as I expect to be treated	I commit to working together to find solutions

CURRENT WORKFORCE PROFILE

Council delivers services to the community through three Directorates and the General Manager's division. Each Council Directorate consists of units responsible for delivering services in line with key directions from the Community Strategic Plan.



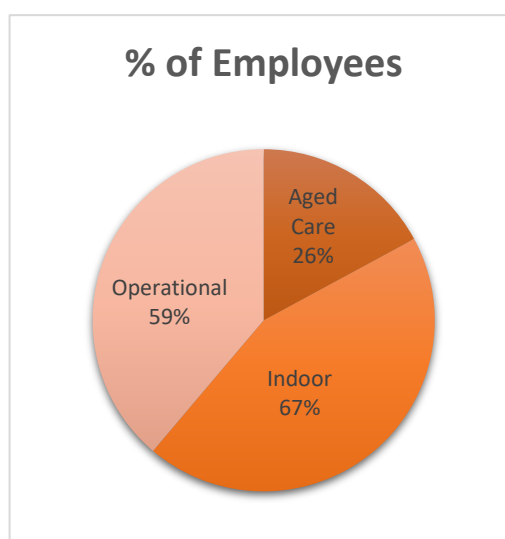
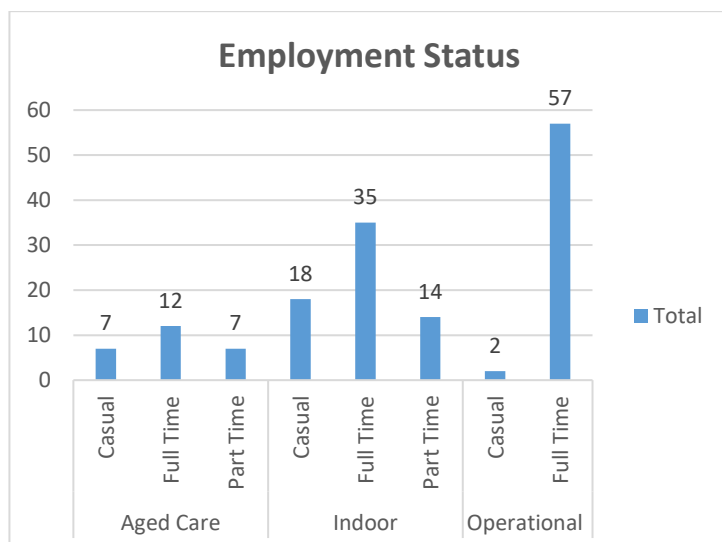
Cobar Shire Council is one of the three largest employers within the Cobar region, with the other two major employers being mining companies. Council comprises of 150 staff, including 125 permanent (full time and part time) and 27 casuals (which can fluctuate seasonally). We are currently operating with in excess of 30 vacancies across the organisation.

Council's executive management group (known as Manex) provides the overarching strategic focus for Council's operations and ensures that council is lead with strong and effective governance. The group comprises of the General Manager and the three Directors, with Human Resources in an advisory capacity.

Council has two depots, one in Cobar and in Euabalong, about 230km south-east of Cobar. The six (6) employees at the Euabalong depot are mainly involved in delivery of urban services and roads maintenance programs. The remoteness of the Euabalong depot contributes to logistical difficulties associated with communication, resource-sharing and supervision.

Council also manages the operation of The Lilliane Brady Village (LBV), a 44-bed aged care facility employing approximately 26 staff, which has significantly reduced over the past four years. High-volume turn-over of staff and attracting suitably qualified and experienced nursing staff are the biggest challenges facing the operation of this service, which has led to the outsourcing of cleaning services and the continual use of agency nursing staff, at a premium cost to the facility.

EMPLOYMENT DEMOGRAPHICS



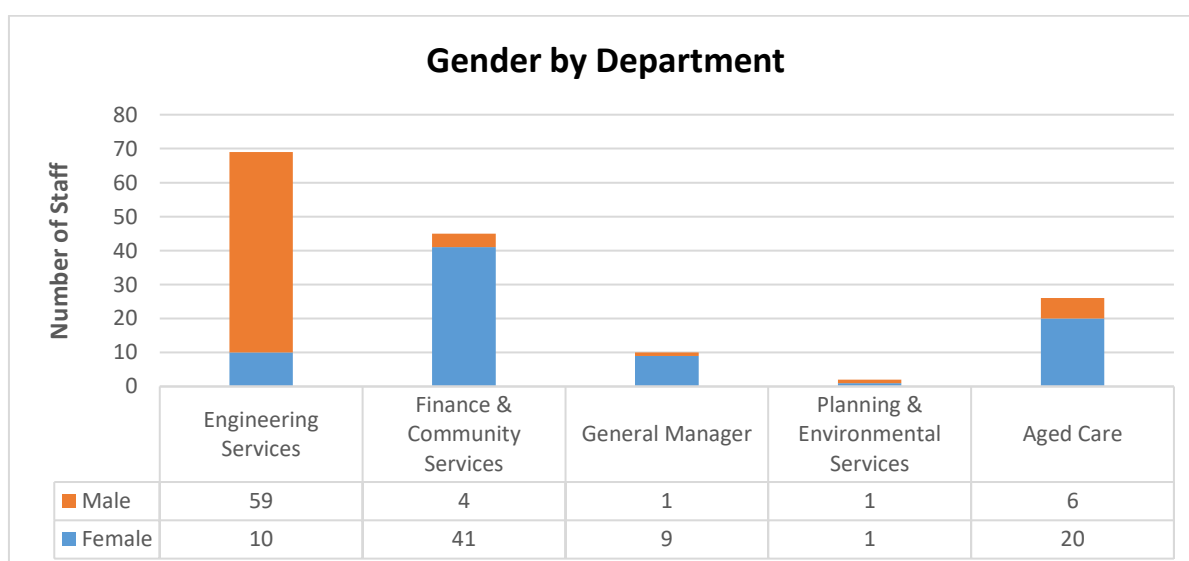
DIVERSITY

Cobar Shire Council is committed to achieving equal employment opportunity (EEO) for all employees as a means of increasing its effectiveness and recognising the true potential of our staff. Council recognises the many organisational and community benefits which drive from promotion and implementation of effective EEO management and practices and seeks to proudly reflect the diversity of the local community within its workforce.

Consultation with local organisations, carers and individuals who identify with a disability has seen the development of Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP). This plan aims to improve the accessibility of community services and ensure Council continues to generate opportunities for individuals with a disability to access employment.

GENDER

Compared with other rural councils across the state, Cobar Shire Council's gender balance is reasonably equitable when looked at across the organisation. Council's workforce is made up of 54% male employees and 46% female – with some workgroups more heavily weighted towards a specific gender, namely operational staff are predominantly male and administration staff are predominantly female.



AGE

Our current age demographics are spread across the various age groups, with almost 50% of employees over 50 and 25% having the potential to retire in the next 5 years. A significant number of those staff are engaged in aged care or operational roles, which are more physically demanding therefore increasing the risk of injury.

Our low percentage of employees under 25 is in part a reflection of local government not having an attractive profile with the younger segment of the labour market.

Age Range	Aged Care			Indoor			Operational		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
15 - 19				4	1	5			
20 - 24	1	1	2	7		7		2	2
25 - 29	1		1	2	3	5		1	1
30 - 34	6	2	8	11		11	2		2
35 - 39	3	1	4	6		6		2	2
40 - 44		1	1	5	1	6	2	5	7
45 - 49	1		1	3	1	4		5	5
50 - 54				6		6		4	4
55 - 59	3	1	4	7	1	8		14	14
60 - 64	5		5	4	1	5		9	9
65 +				2	2	4		13	13
TOTALS	20	6	26	57	10	67	4	55	59

LENGTH OF SERVICE

Two thirds of our workforce have been employed for under 10 years, which is indicative of current labour markets where employer longevity is no longer a key priority for people. The figures are also consistent with contemporary trends of employees changing both employees and careers on a more regular basis.

Years of Service	0 - 1	1 - 5	5 - 10	10 - 15	15 - 20	> 20
Aged Care	10	13	1	1		1
Indoor	19	20	10	11	5	2
Operational	5	21	14	5	6	8
TOTALS	34	54	25	17	11	11

TURNOVER

Council's annual turnover over the past four years has averaged 23%, with our aged care facility accounting for half of this figure year on year.

This results in the annual turnover for professional, technical, administration, community services, and operational roles averaging 12.5%, with the majority coming from community services.

With the exception of aged care, the level of employee turnover strikes a good balance between employee retention and ensuring that there are opportunities to refresh the workforce through internal promotion and new commencements.

UNPLANNED LEAVE (SICK/CARER'S)

Unplanned leave taken is at an appropriate level, averaging just over 2 weeks per person per year.

We have had several employees on long term sick leave as a result of serious illness or personal injury.

EXCESS ANNUAL AND LONG SERVICE LEAVE

Increasing leave balances in 2022 are indicative of COVID-19 slowing the reduction to leave balances as employees were unable to freely travel through 2020 and 2021 and therefore less likely to take their recreational leave.

20% of employees have an annual leave balance in excess of 8 weeks (up from 18% in 2021)

17% of employees have a long service leave balance in excess of 13 weeks (up from 14% in 2021).

However, 60% of employees have an annual leave balance of less than 4 weeks (down 5% from 2021).

Inability to backfill (internally or externally) for periods of leave is another contributing factor to employees in senior and specialised roles being more hesitant to take leave knowing they will return to an excess amount of work to catch up on.

WORKFORCE CHALLENGES

Cobar Shire Council has many challenges that are universal in nature, whilst others are unique to our organisation. Over the next four years Council will be seeking to maintain current services and service levels whilst operating in a period where budgets and resources are limited. However, an increase in community expectation is placing pressure on Council's workforce to become more strategic with its resources in order to do more with less.

The following strategies have been identified to respond to some of the key challenges facing our organisation:

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Changing nature of work

Technology

Resourcing Efficiencies

Key Objectives:

- Provide and promote a framework that supports continuous improvement, change management and business improvement models
- Promote innovation by capturing and implementing ideas from employees
- Provide improved IT capabilities through additional resourcing and up-skilling existing staff
- Provide IT solutions through the implementation of software systems to replace current manual and less efficient processes

A SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE

Succession Planning

Flexible working conditions

Ageing Workforce

Attraction and retention

Key Objectives:

- Attract and retain high performing staff who are committed members of our community
- Where employees cannot be secured
- Grow our own people; identify star performers and develop them as our future leaders
- Align the current and future workforce with corporate goals and objectives
- Create succession strategies for core and/or identified key roles that cannot be easily outsourced
- Create a workplace which encourages workforce diversity and inclusion
- Stem the loss of corporate knowledge through succession planning and flexible working arrangements such as phased retirement plans, job share arrangements and hybrid working
- "Grow our own" where possible through trainee and graduate programs and internal promotion
- Introduce mentoring programs to develop both existing and emerging leaders

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Succession Planning
Specialised skills and technical knowledge
Skills gap
Strength in Leadership

Key Objectives:

- Develop leadership capabilities to meet organisational requirements
- Promote career planning and talent management
- Integrate coaching and mentoring to promote effective leadership
- Develop a functional annual training plan, with functional leaders to identify skills gaps and actively contribute to the plan

SAFE, HEALTHY AND PRODUCTIVE WORKFORCE

Implement new WHS strategies, systems, policies and procedures
Ageing Workforce
Injury prevention and risk management

Key Objectives:

- Senior management commitment to safety leadership
- Build and then maintain a “safety culture” at Council
- Promote WHS/Risk Management in all Council activities
- Continuously improve the work health and safety systems
- Actively promote health and wellbeing
- Commit to best practice injury management and return to work systems

FUTURE WORKFORCE PROFILE

Council is currently undergoing an organisational restructure across every department, therefore the future workforce profile has the potential to change significantly over the next four years, but may take into account the following:

- Improving Council’s IT capability and updating redundant and ineffective systems
- Ensuring the organisational structure meets the requirements of the Delivery Program and Annual Operational Plan including budget
- Increasing youth services, especially in the area of youth development
- Servicing Cobar’s growing population with the existing workforce, including the impact on FIFO/DIDO workforce
- Overcoming recruitment difficulties due to the ongoing national skills shortage and the remote location of our Council by looking at possible alternatives to traditional methods and models
- Legislative requirements/external factors impacting on the following operations:
 - Aged care facility
 - RMS Road Maintenance Council Contract
 - Building certification/food inspection requirements
 - Children’s Services
 - Services NSW (current agency arrangement)
 - Local Government Framework

Council’s key areas of focus for the future include succession planning, assessing and addressing skills gaps, ageing workforce, technological improvements, developing strength in our leaders and the identification of workforce priorities in the effort to attract and retain specific professional groups. These key focus areas will assist Council to maintain a qualified and capable workforce able to meet the needs of the Community Strategic Plan.

SUCCESSION PLANNING

Each division of Council was asked to identify core/critical positions within our current workforce structure that:

- Provide services which the division could not function without
- Provide services for which there is a high community need and equally high expectation
- Retain critical corporate knowledge
- Retain specialised skills and/or knowledge extremely difficult to source/replace
- Provide services essential in the provision of our Delivery Program and Operational Plan items

As a result, each division will be required to prepare succession plans for every identified core position to ensure business continuity if any employee(s) in these core positions were to leave the organisation or be absent for an extended period of time.

SKILLS GAPS

Council's current skills gaps are consistent with the skills shortages identified by the Australian Centre for Excellence for Local Government. These will be considered in Council's recruitment strategies and our learning and development programs. The areas of skill shortage are:

- Building Surveying
- Civil Engineering
- Urban and Regional Planners
- Early Childhood Education and Care
- Registered Nurses

These skills are generally hard to attract, some reasons for this include Council's rural location, industry-wide skills shortages, and our ability to compete financially with private enterprise organisations, specifically mining.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Cobar Shire Council is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for everyone. Our employees have a direct impact on the provision of services to our community. Without our employees, Council cannot fulfil the expectations of the community. Therefore, our aim for safety is to promote a culture of zero harm and reduce incidents and injuries to our employees.

Approximately one third of adult life is spent at work, so the workplace is a key avenue to influence the health of our staff and therefore the community as a whole.

Employers who focus on the health and wellbeing of their employees can bring multiple benefits not only to workers, but the organisation. Organisations benefit through a more positive workplace culture; healthy, happy and balanced workers; and reduced economic costs as well as improved productivity outcomes.

Our future focus for Health and Wellbeing is to develop strategies to encourage our employees to maintain and improve their health and fitness and work/life balance.

Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy will:

- Identify cost effective initiatives to promote a healthy lifestyle that benefit a wide employee base
- Provide a variety of initiatives to suit the needs of workers and look after their whole wellbeing
- Promote work/life balance

MONITORING AND EVALUATING THE WORKFORCE PLAN

The annual monitoring and review process will enable Council to assess what is working and what is not, making any necessary adjustments to plans and/or strategies and then address in a timely manner new workforce or organisational issues which might have arisen.

Council's Workforce Plan will be reviewed annually.

AMENDMENT LIST

VERSION	DATE ADOPTED	MINUTE NUMBER	DATE COMMENCED	NOTIFIED IN LOCAL PAPER
1	27.04.2017	84.4.2017	DRAFT	N/A
2	22.06.2017	141.6.2017	23.06.2017	N/A
3	29.07.2022	108.07.2022	29.07.2022	N/A