Growing Our Own - GOO
Recruitment and Retention Strategy
November 2009

Argyll and Bute Council
# Growing Our Own Strategy – Contents

1.0 Where are we now?........................................................................................................................................ 3
   1.1 Introduction and Background ..................................................................................................................... 3
   1.2 Realising Potential..................................................................................................................................... 3

2.0 Where do we want to be? Objectives and Recommendations ................................................................. 4
   2.1 Short Term .................................................................................................................................................. 4
   2.2 Medium Term ........................................................................................................................................... 4
   2.3 Long Term ............................................................................................................................................... 5
   2.4 Recommendations .................................................................................................................................. 5

3.0 How do we get there? Strategy and Action Plan ...................................................................................... 7
   3.1 GOO Strands - Audiences ......................................................................................................................... 7
   3.2 DRAFT Action Plan (Template) – Timescale – Budget ............................................................................. 9

4.0 Are we getting there? Monitoring Activity ............................................................................................... 10

5.0 How did we do? Evaluating the Outcomes .............................................................................................. 10
1.0 Where are we now?

1.1 Introduction and Background
Growing Our Own (GOO) was launched four years ago as a pilot initiative and has been extremely successful. It was put in place to help the Council achieve its priorities through attracting quality people into the organisation and improving performance through developing the skills of employees. The GOO pilot was launched and set up by Community Services and Development Services and has been developed and delivered by the GOO Working Group – led by the Development Services HR and Performance Officer. GOO aims to promote the Council as one of the first choice employers within Argyll and Bute and was introduced by the Council in 2005 with the launch of the first two Management Trainee posts. Its purpose is to encourage skilled people and professionals currently living in Argyll and Bute to stay in the area and to encourage those from outside the area to move into Argyll and Bute. The Council has led on GOO yet worked together with NHS Highland and Careers Scotland on the pilot. In partnership, these organisations have worked in collaboration with Argyll College and schools in order to promote skilled and professional career opportunities to young people and students.

GOO has been very successful in Argyll and Bute in that six temporary Management Trainees have been recruited under the pilot - three of whom have gone on to secure permanent posts with the others likely to do so in the future. In addition, a series of road-shows and events have taken place which have enabled the Council (and the NHS) to showcase the opportunities available to young people in Argyll and Bute’s public sector.

The pilot has indicated that a corporate approach to GOO would enable the initiative to achieve its full potential by ensuring that it is fully embedded throughout the Council so that the value and benefits of GOO can be maximised. This approach would also fit in with key items within the Council’s Improvement Plan as GOO has a specific action within the Council’s Improvement Plan (under IP17) and this sits under the workforce planning theme and beside the recruitment strategy item.

As the pilot is likely to be adopted by the Council’s Strategic HR section to be implemented in full, GOO is in a transition period. However, its future repositioning means that there is greater scope to further develop and integrate it more explicitly within the Council’s HR Strategy. This may allow existing staff greater opportunity to access the benefits of GOO as well as those we have attracted into the Council under the GOO banner. This would also allow the opportunity to consider GOO as a brand for retention purposes as well as recruitment activities. Development of the scheme is crucial if we are to broaden its scope and we therefore need to maximise the benefits from past successes in order to improve Learning and Development across the Council.

This report aims to focus on the positive elements of the pilot and look at how we can ensure that they are rolled out across the Council. It is recommended that the outcomes of the pilot are taken into consideration when developing the HR Strategy as a core part of recruitment and retention. If GOO is adopted by Strategic HR, a corporate commitment to the implementation of the strategy will help to ensure that its benefits are realised Council-wide.

1.2 Realising Potential
GOO has the potential to incorporate the development of the Council’s Recruitment and Retention Strategy and play a crucial role in the Council’s HR Strategy. For example
succession planning could become a key feature of GOO and this approach could support employees to develop and follow a structured career path through the organisation. This would harness an employee’s natural skills and talent and enhance them with training and development opportunities to fulfil the Council’s organisational needs as an employer and service provider. In essence the scheme could help direct employee skills in the right direction – aligning them with roles which help fulfil the Council’s strategic objectives, priorities and organisational goals and also with those areas where the Council is experiencing staffing pressures (such as social work, environmental health, planning, catering etc). This would also enable staff to see how their roles, now and in the future, contribute to ‘the bigger picture’ and the PDR process should be the key vehicle to communicate and plan this. If GOO adopts this approach it should help engender job satisfaction and a sense of loyalty within existing employees (as well as attracting potential employees – through a strong and positive reputation).

If GOO was integrated with learning and development activity, it would automatically be seen as a brand for employees (an internal brand) rather than simply one to attract new employees (an external brand) or an ‘exclusive’ brand that brings benefits to a small number of employees. This type of link would mean that GOO would also be associated with the career aspirations of employees, service and departmental staffing and development needs, and succession planning thus bringing ‘mutual’ benefits from the brand across the whole Council. GOO could provide the perfect vehicle to bring an integrated and systematic Council-wide approach to the development of staff – under one banner, in line with the drive to introduce a mentoring scheme, as well as the drive to increase the number of PDRs carried out (among professional employees) to provide development opportunities for manual workers (by means of toolbox talks, apprenticeships and specialist training etc).

2.0 Where do we want to be? Objectives and Recommendations

As GOO is currently in a transition period with overall responsibility for its delivery likely to be transferred to Strategic HR, the GOO Working Group would recommend that any future GOO Strategy and Implementation Plan should seek to achieve the following objectives:

2.1 Short Term

2.1.1 Retaining talent
- To embed GOO in the PDR process, which links the Council objectives to service plans and individual work programmes and identifies the learning and development needs of the participant
- To brand learning and development opportunities provided by the Council for Council staff as GOO
- To raise awareness of the variety of professional employment routes within the Council under the GOO banner

2.1.2 Attracting talent
- To raise awareness of the Council as a major employer within Argyll and Bute
- To provide targeted work experience opportunities for students
- To raise awareness of the variety of employment routes within the Council

2.2 Medium Term

2.2.1 Retaining talent
- To provide targeted information on career development opportunities
- To provide targeted career development opportunities

2.2.2 Attracting talent
- To provide new opportunities to attract external candidates, focusing on apprenticeships and traineeships

2.3 Long Term
2.3.1 Retaining talent
- To retain and develop talent within the Council in line with the Council’s succession planning framework

2.3.2 Attracting talent
- To attract new talent into the organisation in line with the Council’s succession planning framework and areas with staffing pressures

2.4 Recommendations
The following are recommendations to be considered by Strategic HR when they take ownership of GOO. They are based on the views and experience of the GOO Working Group.

**Branding**
- That Strategic HR continues to advertise GOO posts under the GOO banner on a regular basis and within the appropriate Council/GOO branding rather than through the Council’s standard HR banner advertising.
- That a GOO Excellence and Education Awards category is created to celebrate staff going that extra mile.

**Structure**
- That Strategic HR ensures that GOO-related work is covered appropriately at meetings between Strategic HR representatives and Business Partners within each department to ensure that departmental HR sections are kept in the frame for the scheme. This will ensure that suitable GOO vacancies are established through a formal channel and development of set criteria thus ensuring a consistent approach across the organisation.
- That Strategic HR also develops links with departmental HR and job specific/departamental training staff in establishing posts suitable for advertising under the GOO banner. (e.g. that work experience and apprenticeship/trainee posts are automatically brought under the GOO banner to raise the profile of GOO by developing a tangible end product).
- That there is a review of the partnership arrangements for GOO given the part internal focus of the recommendations outlined. Perhaps more robust partnerships with Careers Scotland/Schools/Colleges/Universities/Job Centre may be more suitable than the current partnership with NHS or links with other CPP Partners could be considered.

**Resources**
- That the Corporate Training Budget is used to support GOO; and that activities are prioritised accordingly.
That Strategic HR adopts the GOO initiative and appoints a Lead Officer for GOO with appropriate time allocated to developing and implementing the scheme and a decision made as to where the Lead Officer would sit within Strategic HR (given the cross over between recruitment, retention, learning and development).

That Strategic HR carries out an audit of GOO-related activity already being carried out internally and looks at best practice through schemes in other organisations as the examples within this document are by no means exhaustive.

**Recruitment and Retention**

- That serious consideration is given to the full branding of the Council’s Recruitment and Retention Strategy encompassing all of the above points as GOO.

- That Strategic HR develops and implements this strategy in line with the Improvement Plan; the emerging HR Implementation Plan (due October 09); and the Council’s corporate objectives and that it produces an action plan using a template similar to that outlined in this document – in line with the Council’s Planning and Performance Management Framework.

- That Strategic HR further develops work experience programmes under the GOO banner and that work experience opportunities are targeted at relevant streams via schools, colleges and universities in line with relevant actions within the Public Sector Action Plan.

- That the outcomes and recommendations from the Management Traineeship review are considered and integrated into this strategy, considering the exit strategy in line with the emerging Succession Planning Framework.

- That Strategic HR and departmental HR teams support the introduction of a schools co-ordinator role to work with schools in providing targeted information via guidance tutors and careers advisors about the opportunities available in the Council.

**Learning and Development**

- That Strategic HR’s Learning and Development team works with job specific/departmental training staff towards integrating GOO with suitable development programmes for current staff (e.g. through mentoring and coaching schemes as highlighted within the senior management development programme and also to be built into the core competencies for senior managers).

- That Strategic HR develops a set of GOO guiding principles which help the Council achieve its goals through improving performance; building an organic workforce that is continually developing; committing to quality and structured development programmes and providing high quality career opportunities/paths for internal and external candidates.

- That secondment opportunities and a ‘job swap’ scheme are considered as part of GOO and that certain roles are highlighted as being suitable for job swap, (e.g. Where staff are able to carry out short placements in other departments/areas in order to increase
their understanding of the Council and to develop further skills through gaining new experiences.)

- That a formal mentoring scheme is developed in line with content within the Senior Manager’s Development Programme and that each new recruit or current recruit who is in a GOO post should be allocated a mentor (ensuring that ongoing support is offered by relevant managers).

- That the emerging work shadowing procedure (currently being drafted by Strategic HR) as well as student sponsorship, secondments, and work experience all flies under the GOO banner and identifies clear guidelines as to how students/secondees take advantage of work shadowing as part of their development.

3.0 How do we get there? Strategy and Action Plan

In order to take the recruitment and retention strategy forward GOO needs to be an integral part of our overall HR and communications strategies, as well as the Improvement Plan. With this in mind, the basis for the Growing Our Own action plan is the HR Strategy and Implementation Plan and the actions within this document should inform and be aligned to relevant HR objectives and priorities. The overall approach to the development of GOO should form two strands with a focus on the internal elements of GOO (retention of staff) and the external elements (recruitment of staff).

3.1 GOO Strands - Audiences

3.1.1 Retaining talent – internal brand

It would be particularly useful if employees responsible for GOO work with Strategic HR’s learning and development team to brand corporate training opportunities under the GOO banner. It is important to ensure that staff have the right mix of skills in order to deliver a high quality service to the public. Developing the competence of employees helps to create positive morale which in turn creates a motivated and effective workforce. Development is important to ensure that employees are given the support and training they need to overcome weaknesses and to improve their current or future performance. It also ensures that employees with talent are nurtured in order to maintain or improve their current performance. In addition, employees are given the opportunity to acquire skills and knowledge to prepare them for greater responsibilities. Empowering employees and teams with the right skills means that the workforce can take ownership of their work and develop a sense of loyalty to their manager, team and organisation. Development is also important for organisational reputation as it contributes to achieving quality standard marks such as ‘Investors in People’ (which Strategic HR already have) as well as helping to contribute to the Public Service Improvement Framework, which the Council has recently signed up to.

GOO could be further developed by setting out a process to ensure that established employees have access to high quality/relevant training programmes as well as new staff (for example building on the provision of courses which were/already are available such as the Institute of Leadership and Management programme, the HNC in Business Administration and ECDL etc). This could help decrease staff turnover levels (e.g. Building Standards, Catering and Cleaning, Administration posts in certain locations) and improve morale. If work shadowing opportunities were available for employees to learn about other areas of the Council, then a greater understanding of what the Council does and what it is trying to achieve would be built. Using ‘GOO’ as a vehicle to reinforce a consistent approach to learning and development across the
Council would mean that equality of access to training may also be addressed through the information provided by the ongoing reporting and measurement of equality and diversity in training provision.

3.1.2 Attracting talent – external brand
The current promotional activities carried out by the GOO working group members go a long way to promoting the Council as a major employer in Argyll and Bute. However, promotion is largely generic rather than targeted around specific areas or professions. It is also currently focused on an external audience.

The proposal to continue flying the GOO banner at careers fairs and school/college/university events as part of a diarised and targeted programme should be welcomed and instigated, whilst the introduction of a schools co-ordinator representative in each geographical area would see a more targeted approach to attracting young people to work for the Council in line with succession planning. The co-ordinator would work with careers advisors (developing links with the careers service) and guidance tutors in schools to look at promoting future employment opportunities to young people as part of the overall curriculum in terms of specific qualifications necessary for young people to get into a particular profession offered by the Council. In addition to this, Strategic HR and GOO co-ordinators should work with departments to find appropriate placements for work placement students with a specific skill or interest in a specific profession.

The outcome of the recent Management Trainee Review has shown that this has been an extremely successful initiative, attracting and retaining high quality candidates who have brought a great deal of talent to the Council. The review has also highlighted a number of areas where further development work could be undertaken to build on this success, most critically the exit strategy for Management Trainees and the ability to undertake more “management” as part of their role.

Each new recruit or current recruit who is in a GOO post should be allocated a mentor. This would ensure that development opportunities are present for those who are recruited into a GOO post, whilst also providing a development opportunity for ex or current management trainees to gain direct line management experience.
3.2 DRAFT Action Plan (Template) – Timescale – Budget

The short term action plan is being developed in line with Planning and Performance Management Framework, this Strategy and the HR Strategy. Appropriate budget, resource and priority levels will be agreed for actions within the action plan in order to ensure the success of this strategy. The medium and long term action plans will be developed in due course.

Short Term Action Plan (2009-2010)

To be added – Dec 09/Jan10
4.0 Are we getting there? Monitoring Activity

The Council’s performance management tool, Pyramid, measures performance at different levels (from organisational down to job specific) and it will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the GOO scheme on both recruitment and selection levels as well as on development and retention levels. This will be included within the HR Performance Reports. Pyramid already contains some data on recruitment and retention levels and current issues with the HR system limit the amount of analysis that can be done but when these are addressed there will be scope to introduce additional indicators such as the internal hire rate which would help measure the effectiveness of GOO. Where appropriate, sections of the action plan could be input into Pyramid so that a formal measurement process is applied. However, responsibility for this task would need to be identified in order to ensure that it was monitored properly.

Staff could be surveyed through questionnaires for general comments on how they find the relevant strands of GOO. PDR reviews can look in more detail at whether or not GOO is having its desired effect at an individual level and team meetings or focus groups can also be a forum for feedback (and could be facilitated by the GOO working group). Managers would be able to look at results and performance of staff linked with benefits brought by GOO.

General measures can be put in place but may not be directly linked to the GOO strategy – where GOO is perhaps just a contributory factor e.g. absence monitoring, staff turnover levels and increased job applications. The specific measurement tools for each action should be outlined within the action plan so that monitoring is an integral part of the strategy and its development.

A cost-benefit analysis on GOO activities should be carried out by those involved in implementing this strategy to ensure that value for money is being achieved and this should be done on a regular basis. Auditors can also carry out a valuable role in assessing this. The strategy should be flexible enough that where value for money is not being achieved or the desired outcomes not being met, or where business needs change, the plan can be amended and improved.

5.0 How did we do? Evaluating the Outcomes

The GOO Strategy should be continually measured through a variety of feedback methods as stated in section four. Certain elements of the GOO strategy should be measured different times in order to revise the strategy if issues arise during its lifespan. In addition, an evaluation should be undertaken against all GOO activities and in line with the Council’s emerging HR Strategy and relevant points within the Improvement Plan after three years to look at whether or not the GOO outcomes have been achieved and if so, whether these have helped the Council meet its HR objectives and key priorities.

It is important to ensure that the time and resources being invested in GOO are creating a happy, motivated, skilled and sustainable workforce, and that they can be measured through increased productivity, improved reputation/customer satisfaction, achievement of departmental and organisational goals and so forth. However, when GOO is monitored in line with the achievement of strategic objectives, measurement and evaluation must take place on an ongoing basis over a longer period of time. Investment in employee development must be seen as a medium to long term commitment to achieve organisational goals as a strong development ethos can often be a major requirement of a change in organisational culture (which takes time to achieve).