



WORKFORCE PLAN

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This updated plan has been prepared by Shire of Northampton staff. The original Workforce Plan was compiled with the assistance of the Workforce Planning Toolkit prepared by the Department of Local Government.

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Appendix A – Organisational Structure

Purpose of the Plan

The most common definition of workforce planning (WFP) is "having the right people, in the right place, with the right capabilities at the right time". (Australian HR Institute)

Workforce Planning is "A continuous process of shaping the workforce to ensure that it is capable of delivering organisational objectives now and in the future." (Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) 2004). At a strategic level, the Workforce Plan will take into account the community aspirations, priorities and objectives identified in Council's Strategic Community Plan. The Workforce Plan then becomes an essential component of the Corporate Business Plan as it identifies workforce requirements and strategies for current and future operations over the next four years.

The Shire of Northampton

The following table shows a snapshot of the Shire of Northampton at 2020/21:

Distance from Perth (km)	476
Area (sq km)	12,499
Population (est)	3,319
Number of Electors	2,255
Number of Dwellings	2,282
Total Rates	\$4,720,586
Total Revenue	\$8,660,477
Total Expenditure	\$9,547,953
Number of Employees	45

The Shire of Northampton is approximately 475km north of Perth with an area of 12,499 square kilometres. The closest regional centre to Northampton is Geraldton, 50 kilometres to the south.

The Shire has two main town centres, Northampton and Kalbarri. The smaller towns or rural hubs are Binnu, Isseka, Port Gregory, Ajana and Horrocks. The town of Northampton is the second oldest settlement in Western Australia and celebrated its 150th year anniversary in 2014.

The predominant industries in the shire is broad acre agriculture, fishing and tourism.

The Shire had a population of 3,319 in the 2016 Australian Bureau of Statistics Census. It is estimated that the population will remain stable over the next 10 years.

The population comprises 52.2% males and 47.8% females, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people made up 5.5% of the population. The median age is 51 years which is higher than the State average of 36 years. Changes in age structure and cultural diversity of residents will pose significant challenges in the management of current and future demand for quality lifestyles.

The Shire is a mix of both urban and rural areas and the workforce reflects this with a mix of rangers, gardeners and cleaners and a road maintenance/construction works crew. The diversity and size of the Shire are the major challenges. The towns of Northampton and Kalbarri are some 110kms apart and most infrastructure is duplicated in both centres. It is a challenge for Council to balance the needs of both communities.

Historically the Shire's main focus has been roads, rates and rubbish. With such a geographically large Shire dependent on agriculture, the roads remain a significant priority however in recent years the following have been a high priority:

- Aged Care
- Health Services
- Environmental Initiatives
- Recreation/Youth Activities
- Northampton Bypass

The community's expectations regarding these services are expanded in the Community Strategic Plan.

The External Environment

External factors influencing Council's workforce are:

Age of staff – The average age of the staff is 53 years. The skill and experience of the staff is a major advantage to Council and the efficiency that they are able to carry out major road work construction projects is a testament to this.

Policy and legislation – There are no changes to policy or legislation at this stage that are expected to influence the current workforce.

Competition - The major competing industries for the workforce are local mining (fly-in/fly-out), agriculture, tourism and the fishing industry. Traditionally Council has not experienced any difficulty in attracting and retaining Line 3 employees (rangers, gardeners, works crew). There has been limited turnover of senior staff, there have been some issues attracting positions such as Planners, Building Surveyors and Environmental Health Officers. The major competitor for senior staff is the local government industry.

Organisational Structure

Appendix A illustrates Council's organisational structure.

There is no expectation to change the current structure as it supports efficient and effective outcomes. There have been requests in relation to the employment of a Community Development Officer and or an Events Coordinator position. The organisational structure is constantly being reviewed to ensure community expectations can be met, if the requirement for either position arises a provision will need to be made in future budget cycles.

Current Workforce

The following information has been collected relating to Council's current workforce:

Hours of Work

Works staff work an 80 hour fortnight with a set RDO one day each fortnight. Should any overtime be required this can be taken as time in lieu or paid at overtime rates.

Administration staff work a 76 hour fortnight and one RDO is taken each month at the discretion of the staff with agreement of their manager. Overtime is generally not applicable.

Casual employees hours vary depending on each situation. Should a casual be required by the works crew they will work the same hours as that crew for the duration of a specific project.

The Shires casual cleaners have been transitioning to permanent part time status and established hours of work reflect the time required to clean the relevant designated buildings.

Contract employees are not generally utilised by the Council. When they are the hours vary depending on the work being carried out and this is agreed with the Chief Executive Officer. It is usually only for short, defined periods of time.

Leave Liability

At the 30th June 2020:

- 68% of all staff were owed 4 weeks (or one years accrual) or less annual leave
- 27% of all staff were owed 4 to 8 weeks (or 1 to 2 years of accruals)
- 5% of all staff were owed more than 8 weeks (more than 2 years accruals)
- 53% of staff have worked for Council for more than 10 years and are either entitled to take long service leave or have already taken it. 9 staff members (20%) are owed their full entitlement.

The total leave liability as disclosed in the financial statements as at the 30th June 2020 is \$851,755, \$787,109 is current and \$64,646 is non-current.

The leave liability is high. Council management has discussed plans with individual staff members to ensure their leave is taken. Council have an experienced workforce with a low turn-over rate and subsequently a high leave liability is an adverse impact which needs to be managed.

Awards and Agreements

The works staff are employed under a collective agreement or by default the Local Government Industry Award 2020.

The administration staff are employed under the Local Government Industry Award 2020.

The following positions have individual contracts with Councils:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Deputy Chief Executive Officer
- Manager of Works and Services
- Environmental Health Officer
- Town Planning and Building Services functions are supported by external consultants

Employment Status

At 31st December 2020 the status of Council's employees was:

	Northampton	Kalbarri	Port Gregory	Horrocks	Total
Full-time	33	6	0	0	39
Part-time	3.0	1.8	0.4	0.8	6

Workforce Profile

At the 31st December 2020 the profile of Council's employees was:

- Average Age is 53 years
- Gender – 41% of staff are female and 59% are male
- There was no Aboriginal staff
- Average length of service of permanent employees is 11 years
- Turnover rate is less than 5% per year over the last 10 years.

The workforce profile varies between administration staff and works staff, however these differences are acceptable.

Workforce data will be updated with reviews of the Workforce Plan. There is no formal ongoing data collection other than the annual EEO information return process. The workforce is relatively small which allows line managers to have a good understanding of their staff and the status of their qualifications.

This Workforce Plan is the second plan developed and based on the original (first) plan adopted by Council in 2013. The data which has been collected will be used as a baseline against which future changes in the workforce can be analysed. The current pattern which emerges in the data collected is that there is a high average length of service for staff. This offers excellent advantages to the efficiency of the Shire and the local knowledge is invaluable. The challenge that it will present in the future is passing that knowledge on to new staff members when the time comes for the current staff to retire. The Shire has commenced discussing various strategies with staff to manage this issue such as:

- Phasing in retirement (i.e. reducing hours).
- Documenting local knowledge

External Sources of Workforce

Historically the Shire has not had a problem in recruiting works staff and administration staff. Contract services are generally only required on an ad hoc basis during major road work projects such as full service bitumen works and gravel push up. Additional staff are employed on a casual basis where required for periods of staff leave and specific major projects.

Senior staff recruitment can be a long and expensive process. Recruitment is done in-house by the Chief Executive Officer and the cost of recruitment is between \$3,000 to \$5,000 plus relocation costs of the successful applicant which is capped at \$5,000. Senior staff salary packages are competitive for the industry. Relief for senior staff is generally covered in-house however this is extremely difficult for periods of extended leave which may necessitate the procurement of contract staff to back-fill critical positions.

The following is an example of the services that have been either fully or partially contracted out:

- Refuse collection
- Dozer & excavator hire
- Planning and Building Surveyor Services

While the Oakajee project has not progressed there are other projects being proposed such the renewable hydrogen project on Murchison House station which may impact the local workforce. Any significant or large scale development within shire boundaries or in close proximity has the potential to place pressure on the availability of suitable and skilled employees.

Strategic Community Plan Workforce Implications

The vision for the Shire is *a proud and unique community recognising the past and creating the future*. The Community Strategic Plan identifies the future key outcomes for the community. These key outcomes are:

1. Our Economy - To maintain or grow our population through land development to attract and support residents, visitors, and business initiatives.
2. Our Natural Environment - To support environmental protection and maintenance within Council jurisdiction, and form positive relationships government agencies, landowners, developers, and business enterprises.
3. Our People - To support our local communities in a place management approach to services, facilities, and lifestyle enhancement.
4. Our Built Environment - To provide quality in built assets, roads, and other infrastructure for continuity of services to the community
5. Our Leadership - To be accountable for good governance, strong stewardship and leadership with proactive communication and consultation

The major projects that have been identified in the Community Strategic Plan (2020 – 2030) which achieve these outcomes have been included in the Corporate Business Plan for the next 4 years (2022 to

2025) and the Long Term Financial Plan for the next 10 years. There have not been any gaps, shortages or oversupply in terms of the current workforce identified as a result of the outcomes identified. The Shire is made up of a diverse range of proactive community groups. Any new built infrastructure is not expected to have an impact on the current workforce requirements.

There are no gaps between workforce supply and demand. There are no plans to alter the balance between managerial staff and supporting staff.

Workforce practices are analysed on an ongoing basis and the scenario of contract work versus in-house services is compared. The cost of major plant is the major factor rather than the workforce cost. If plant is idle for extended periods it is often more economical to contract the work. In the past, this has been implemented by not replacing the dozer and contracting the work externally. Over the next four years it is not expected that this will be done in any other area.

There is not expected to be any significant change in skill levels required over the next four years. From time to time various courses are required to be updated to comply with relevant legislation however, no significant change is forecast. Council actively supports staff furthering their education by offering financial support for any educational course that relates to their current or future positions within the organisation.

Potential Gaps, Issues and Risks

Council have identified the following potential sources of risks in relation to their workforce:

- An inability to attract and retain high quality staff. Historically, managerial positions have been difficult to fill. There is a high demand in the local government industry for experienced and qualified staff. Council proposes to manage this risk by encouraging current staff to further their education and qualifications.
- Loss of corporate knowledge as a result of key staff departures. The Chief Executive Officer has been with Council for 25 years and the Manager of Works and Services has been with Council for 23 years. Their local experience and knowledge assists with the efficiency of Council, however should they depart it would present a significant loss of corporate knowledge. To manage this risk key staff are encouraged to document all processes of their positions. In a small Council it is difficult to protect against the loss of knowledge of key staff.
- A number of staff are approaching retirement, however the majority of these are works staff and their replacement is not considered to be high risk.

Financial Implications

In the preparation of the Corporate Business Plan (2021 to 2124) and the Long Term Financial Plan (2021/2022 – 2030/2031) there have been no changes to the current workforce numbers. There has been an assumption in both the Corporate Business Plan and Long Term Financial Plan that the cost of the work force will increase by 2.0% each year.

Council has prepared Asset Management Plans for Transport, Buildings, Recreation, Plant and Equipment. There are a number of new assets proposed within the plans. It has been assumed that is an assumption with any of the new projects that there will not be any increased operating costs or staff numbers of new buildings and infrastructure to Council. Therefore no provision has been made in the Workforce Plan for an increase in staff numbers.

Strategies to Meet Future Workforce Needs

In analysing the workforce profile the current workforce is on the high end in relation to age demographics. This age demographic is expected to lower in the short term with a number of employees reaching retirement age. The future workforce requirements are not expected to change in order to meet the outcomes as set out in the Community Strategic Plan and the Corporate Business Plan.

The current Community Strategic Plan has the following Key Outcomes and Objectives that correlate with the Workforce Plan.

Our Leadership	
Key Outcomes	Objectives
To maintain and expand capacity and capability in the Shire workforce as required for ongoing good governance, accountability, and transparency.	A retained and developed workforce and effective recruitment in staff turnover
To maintain best practice in all areas of Council operations incorporating appropriate risk management strategies	Policy and procedure manuals reviewed and updated as required; risk management strategies embedded in planning and operations
To demonstrate a proactive approach to community and economic development, and service delivery	Community engagement strategies in place and positive relationships with business and service providers

Staff will continue to work for the community guided by the values of Honesty, Integrity, Proactive Approach, Dialogue, Environmental Responsibility and Diligence.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Council proposes to monitor and evaluate the workforce plan annually through the following methods:

1. Workforce profile variables to be reviewed and compared:
 - Staff turnover
 - Length of time any position remains vacant
 - Average length of service for workforce

2. Collation and comparison of the following information from staff performance reviews:
 - Are staff satisfied with the level of training/professional development
 - Are supervisors satisfied with the level of staff training/professional development
 - Quantitative information from staff and their supervisors indicating level of performance in areas such as organisational culture, values and communication
 - Is management satisfied with the overall performance of each division of staff (i.e. administration, parks and gardens, roads, animal control)?

3. Risk factor comparisons – risk factors were outlined in Potential Risks. Each factor needs to be considered and compared and an overall assessment if the risk indicators have reduced or increased given the outcomes of the measurements.
 - Risk factor - An inability to attract and retain high quality staff.
Measures – number of times positions are readvertised, positive performance review, staff turnover
 - Risk factor – Loss of corporate knowledge.
Measures – progress towards documenting procedures
 - Risk factor – Retirement.
Measures – progress towards development and implementation of phased retirement scheme.

Review

Council's Workforce Plan takes into account the community's aspirations, priorities and objectives as set out in the Strategic Community Plan. The Workforce Plan will therefore need to be reviewed every four years in conjunction with the Strategic Community Plan. The review is therefore scheduled to be completed by 30 June 2025.

Appendix A

Organisational Chart

