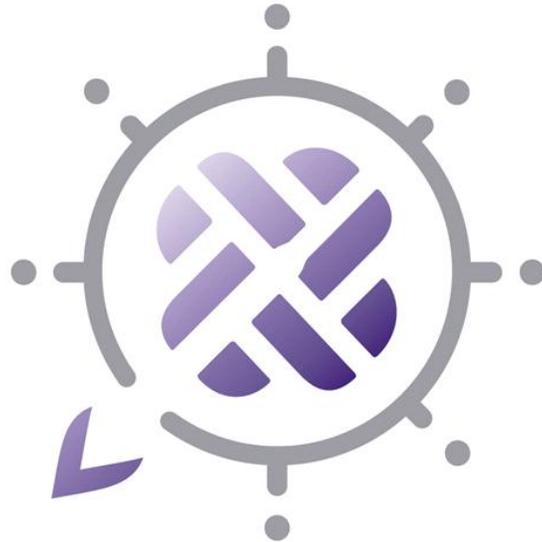


SOUTH WEST COUNCILS

ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12



South West Councils provides a lobbying voice for member authorities where there are issues of common concern across the South West e.g. on pay and funding issues. This includes raising issues through the Local Government Group which is assisted by the Chair of SW Councils being a member of the Executive of LGG and other SW Councils Members having key roles in the national LGG Structure.

South West Councils supports local authorities, police and fire authorities and other organisations with all aspects of their employer role. In addition SW Councils Employers Panel constitutes the Employers side of regional consultative and negotiating body with the South West Trade Unions, the South West Provincial Council and works at a regional level with the national Local Government Employers. SW Councils also offer a wide range of learning and developmental activities to support all our Members and partners in developing a highly skilled and motivated workforce.

Members of SW Councils played a key role in the work of the South West Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (SW RIEP) providing a framework for Local Authorities to act together and support each other to improve public services and deliver value for money and SW Councils continues to support the legacy through sharing of information and best practice from these programmes. SW Councils also provides the local democratic leadership in the South West for the SW Migration Partnership, a role supported by Home Office funding which is continuing into 2012-13 although the longer term remains uncertain.

THE VISION

The staffing and resources of South West Councils working through Members aim to:

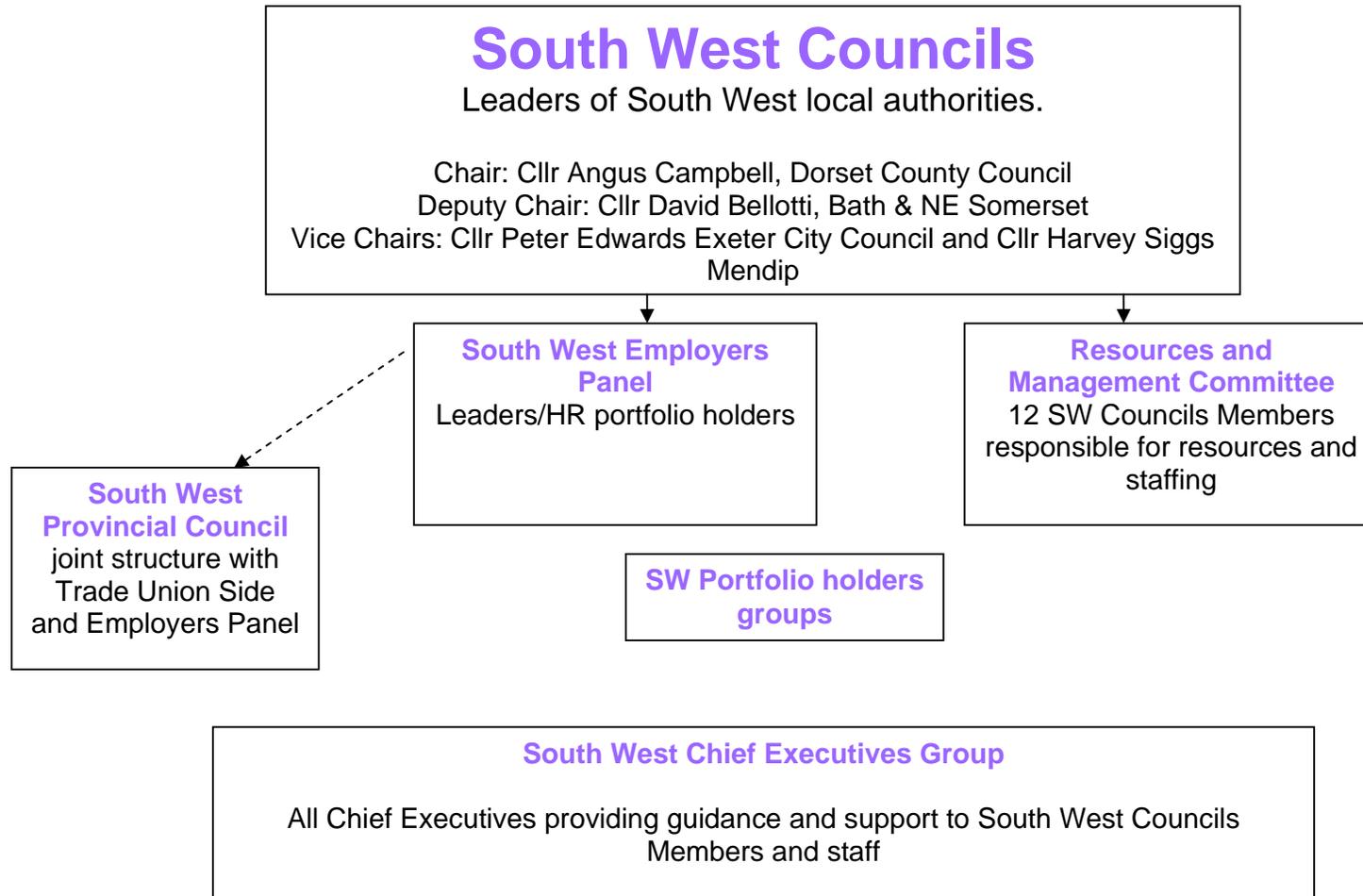
“Help make the South West an even better place to live, work and visit”

OUR BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

Our three key **overarching objectives** in supporting Members and delivering our work are:

1. Supporting Member authorities as Employers, encouraging improved performance and capacity across the region through the provision of high quality HR advice and support, and the sharing of accessible information and knowledge on a range of relevant issues;
2. Assisting member authorities and associate members to enhance capacity and service delivery through developmental activities for improved performance and efficiency;
3. Support authorities in sharing best practice and knowledge and in having a South West voice, built on consensus, of issues on national policy and funding, working with the national Local Government Group, when this is deemed appropriate by Members

ORGANISATION STRUCTURE: 2011-12

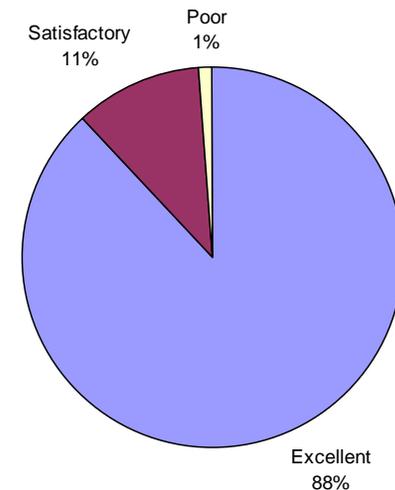


SUMMARY ACHIEVEMENTS 2011/12

2011 -12 was the first year of operation for SW Councils following a major constitutional and organisational restructure of previous regional bodies and working methods. The achievements of South West Councils in 2011/12 include:

- ❖ Local Authority Leaders and Members supported to engage, share information, discuss key policy issues and engage with the national LGA in particular through regular attendance at the LGA Executive by the Chair of South West Councils and through engagement with national Pay and Pension negotiations
- ❖ Local Authorities and Local Education Authorities advised on comprehensive employment and human resource issues including employment conditions and rights and Teachers' pay and terms and conditions
- ❖ Successfully supported authorities through a number of employment tribunal cases
- ❖ Continued provision of hot line for HR advice taken up by authorities and associate members with over 4000 phonecalls/emails
- ❖ Recruitment support and advice on Chief Executive, Director and other appointments
- ❖ Members advised on sensitive and confidential employment issues
- ❖ Supported Members of 6 Authorities during the appraisal of Chief Executives
- ❖ Independent support provided for 3 authorities to review Members Allowances
- ❖ Surveys completed on 53 issues and information shared with member authorities on a range of subjects including Update on Changes to Terms and Conditions identifying what changes had been negotiated by different authorities, Flexitime Systems, District Council Senior Management Structures, Payment of Professional Subscriptions, Adoption Policy, Rules on Claiming Business Mileage, Car Parking Charges, Probationary Periods, Redundancy Payments
- ❖ Supported authorities in developing Pay Policies through sharing of information and Seminar
- ❖ 2 authorities successfully assessed for Member Charter status
- ❖ Registered 12 Councillors onto the ILM Endorsed Community Leadership Awards, of which 4 have successfully completed and the remainder are working towards assessment

- ❖ Excellent feedback and increased number of participants on Annual: Pension Managers Conference and , PAs Conference and successful Shared Services Conference,
- ❖ Designed and delivered bespoke in-house training events on a range of subjects for 250 learners, delivered training to 956 learners overall and to 40 of the 41 authorities in the south west, and 58 authorities from outside of the South West. Delivered accredited qualification programmes to 120 candidates
- ❖ Feedback from external inspection highlighted evaluation of development programmes and quality assurance of qualification programmes as being particularly professional
- ❖ 99% of learners attending courses rated them as Good (11%) or Excellent (88%)
- ❖ Completed a wide-ranging review of the South West Migration Partnership and made government aware of local issues –won ongoing funding for 2012-13
- ❖ Put in place constitutional change to ensure a new streamlined structure responsive to Members and Member-led, organisation
- ❖ Stretching Financial income targets met and budget delivered within 1.4%
- ❖ Reduced core corporate costs whilst continuing to support ongoing development of staff following successful IIP re-accreditation. In awarding the accreditation the assessor commented:



“I am delighted that South West Councils continues to embrace the philosophy and principled of the Investors in People Standard, which is a considerable achievement given the challenges currently being faced by the organisation...the main strength of South West Councils lies with the staff...”