

Message from Cllr Angus Campbell, Chair of South West Councils and Leader of Dorset County Council



As the first Chair of South West Councils I am delighted that we have returned to full membership of all 41 authorities which enables us to be a strong voice advocating the needs of the South West. I am also pleased that we have been able to build the number of Associate Members which has meant other public and not-for profit organisations being able to work with us in making the case for the South West as well as to access high quality, specialist services.

During the year we have continued to develop and shape an effective, but streamlined, organisation that is able to support me and my colleague Leaders and Chief Executives across the South West in tackling some of the difficult challenges we are facing in ensuring the best provision of services to the people of the South West. There is more to do and Members have encouraged the team to keep continually improving the services they provide and drive down costs.

The team at South West Councils have already done much to reduce their call on our resources with subscriptions being frozen for a third year in a row in 2013/14 for prompt payers. They have looked to develop new services both to meet our needs and raise revenue whilst not losing focus on the need to provide the core information sharing, lobbying and specialist HR services that Members have identified as important. For example we have seen the development of the Epaycheck system in partnership with other regions which is enabling our officers to have up-to-date pay benchmarking information at a tiny proportion of the cost we previously had to pay consultants. This is a free service to early participants and the cost remains low for those who subsequently join – and I would encourage all authorities to participate as this will make the data provided by the system even more valuable and robust. I would also highlight the South West Coaching Pool which within its first year of operation had trained over 50 coaches and has 16 organisations participating. This initiative offers our organisations the opportunity to access expert coaching services at far lower cost and is building a cohort of talented coaches within our authorities who will be a long term asset.

Not only have there been new initiatives but the existing services have, I believe, continued to be highly regarded. The specialist HR team continue to be called on to provide support through challenging issues – they remain our “emergency insurance cover” as well as a sounding board both for Members and for officers facing workforce challenges. Members of the Employers Panel have continued to shape and contribute to this work and lead our discussions regionally with the Trade Unions and I would like to thank the Chair, Cllr Harvey Siggs and the Vice Chairs, Cllrs Mike Drew and Andrew Leadbetter for their work. Andrew Leadbetter has on our behalf become a key contributor to joint working with our colleague regions and has become the Vice Chair of the CEEP (European Centre for Enterprises with Public Participation and Services of General Interest), the Voice of UK Public Employers in Europe which endeavors to influence positively how policy and legislation which effects employment is developed.

Our learning and development provision has achieved high levels of satisfaction ratings and has been re-focussed to ensure our needs are being met but also that the costs have been minimised. Members have encouraged the team to keep course fees down in order to maintain delegate numbers and ensure that we are able to train our staff. Ongoing staff development has become increasingly important as we are asking fewer staff to deal with what seems to be ever increasing challenges! And of course Member development also remains important as we have to serve our communities to the best of our ability and I particularly welcome the new Community Leadership Award which SW Councils has introduced and which provides recognition of the development of skills, knowledge and experience of Councillors and others involved in community leadership as they become more established and experienced in their role and functions. Congratulations to our colleagues who have achieved the Award and good luck to those signing up in the future.

We have continued to meet as South West Leaders and share information and experience and lobby where we have shared agendas. We have been pleased to welcome a range of speakers to our meetings including some of our MEPs and LGA colleagues including Sir Merrick Cockell, Chair of the National LGA. He and his Chief Executive have been active in developing relations with us as a regional grouping of local authorities and I believe the seat we now have on the LGA Executive has given us a chance to ensure the South West is better understood and our needs not overlooked. On your behalf I presented to the LGA Executive in May and one of the key issues we raised was around the cost of delivering adult social care in the region with the highest proportion of over 65s anywhere in the country. This was a theme that we have supported the national LGA in raising with Government.

I want to thank all my colleague Leaders for the part they have played in ensuring SW Councils has become an effective support body for us and also to thank the SW Chief Executives and officers who have helped support the team at SW Councils and contribute to our working together. In particular I know the team at SW Councils would like me to publicly thank my former Chief Executive David Jenkins who retired at the end of 2012. He championed the work in supporting the delivery of the improvement agenda ensuring our efforts were well focused. I also want to thank the Chief Executive of Devon County Council, Phil Norrey for his role bringing together our Chief Executives in the SW Strategic Chief Executives group. A number of other Members and officers are working together, for example as portfolio holders groupings, or contributing to national policy on behalf of the South West such as the Health Transition Group in order to ensure the SW is getting the best outcomes – we are all very grateful for that “voluntary” contribution.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to all the local authorities in the South West whose Members and officers have demonstrated again the efficiency of the sector ensuring that people in the South West were helped through the lows – flooding and snow once again being major challenges for many of us – and able to celebrate the highs such as the Queen’s Jubilee and the Olympics.

Lets hope in 2013/14 there are many more highs to come.

THE ROLE OF SOUTH WEST COUNCILS

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:

Objective 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

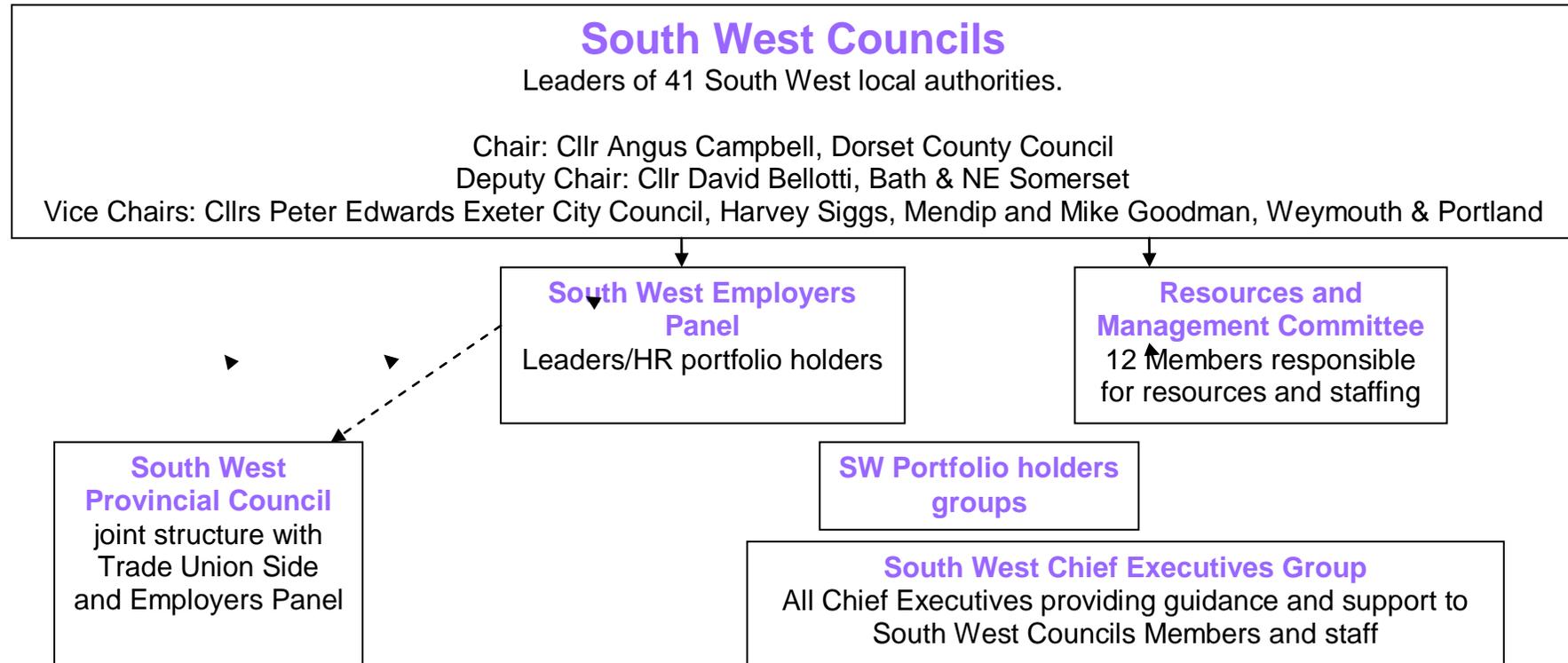
Objective 2

- ❖ Assisting Member authorities and associate members to enhance capacity and service delivery through developmental activities for improved performance and efficiency

Objective 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

STRUCTURE: 2012/13



SOUTH WEST COUNCILS STAFF STRUCTURE (as at end March 2013)

Chief Executive: Bryony Houlden	
<p>Director: Russ Symons</p> <p>Head of Learning & Development: Fay Edwards</p> <p>Head of HR Services: Ian Morgan</p> <p>Regional HR Advisor: Rachel Grandfield</p> <p>Principal HR Advisor: Emily Turner (P/T)</p> <p>HR Support Officer: Michele Evans</p> <p>Learning & Development Support Officer: Ann Collins</p>	<p>Business Manager: Karen Stone</p> <p>Principal Officer Finance: Jill Bowditch (P/T)</p> <p>Senior Admin Officer: Kelly- Anne Phillips (P/T)</p> <p>Senior Policy Officer and Policy/Admin Officer: Vacancies (2)</p> <p>Admin Assistant: Pam Robinson (P/T)</p> <p>Business Studies Apprentice: Lily Crouch</p>

SUMMARY ACHIEVEMENTS 2012/13

The achievements of South West Councils in 2012/13 against the key overarching objectives include:

(i) Local Government as Employers

- ❖ Local Authorities advised on comprehensive employment and human resource issues including employment conditions and rights
- ❖ Local Education Authorities supported and advised on Teachers' pay and terms and conditions and non teaching staff issues
- ❖ Continued provision of hot line for HR advice taken up by authorities and associate members with over 4000 phone calls/emails
- ❖ Recruitment support and advice on Chief Executive, Director and other appointments including provision of range of recruitment services including psychometric testing
- ❖ Members advised on sensitive and confidential employment issues
- ❖ Supported Members with Chief Executive and senior staff appraisal process
- ❖ Supported Members and Chief Executives with organisational reviews
- ❖ Surveys completed on 48 issues and information shared with member authorities on a range of subjects such as sickness/annual Leave for casual & variable hours; references policies; social worker recruitment and retention; CRB policy; salary benchmarking and comparison of posts; removal of pay progression and changes to reward packages; phased return management; whistleblowing policies; assessed and supported year in employment for newly qualified social workers; stress/wellbeing policies and procedures; drugs and alcohol policies; call centre shifts & premium rates; bring your own device' schemes; vehicle damage on duty; equal pay reviews; redundancy payments; living wage; ecigarettes.
- ❖ Held a pensions auto enrolment workshop for local authorities to help them prepare for the requirement to automatically provide an employer's pension for all workers from an individual staging date after October 2012. The session was attended by 15 authorities and covered the legal and technical aspects of using the Local Government Pension Scheme and practical considerations including staff communication and engagement.

- ❖ EPaycheck the new online pay benchmarking system was launched in May 2012. Epaycheck will provide participating local authorities with access to 'real time' pay benchmarking data. At present 29 authorities have signed up to Epaycheck in the South West and 220 across the country

What did our customers say?

"Great to have you there as a sounding board." Local Government Officer

"many many thanks again for your support and professionalism in your working with us in two extremely complex cases. I won't hesitate to use you again" Fire and Rescue Service Director

"We were very pleased to have the assistance of SW Councils to undertake a review The consultation was thorough and the report produced was clear and practical. The Association accepted all the recommendations of the report and was again supported by SW Councils to make the key appointments that will take the new arrangements forward. Good service and excellent value" Local Authority Chief Executive

" In 2011/2012 South West Councils assisted with the recruitment of the Chief Executive and Executive Director. The support provided was extremely useful and reflected South West Councils understanding of our needs as a client. We would undoubtedly use them again. It is their sector knowledge combined with their appreciation of our individual needs that sets them apart in the "market place". Local Authority Chief Executive.

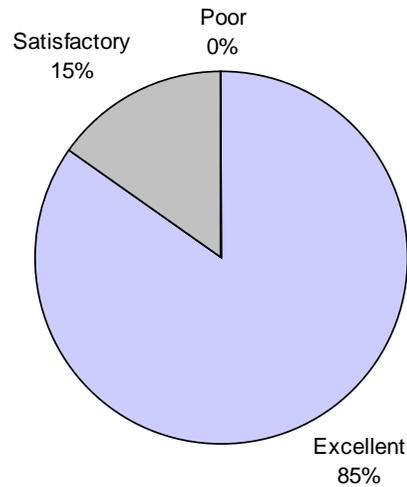
(ii) Enhancing Capacity

- ❖ 1 authority successfully assessed for Member Development Charter Plus status
- ❖ Registered 12 Councillors onto the ILM Endorsed Community Leadership Awards, of which 5 have successfully completed and the remainder are working towards assessment
- ❖ Excellent feedback from Annual: Pension Managers Conference. Numbers increased in 2012 by 7.6% from 171 in 2011 to 184 in 2012

- ❖ Held a two day HR Conference jointly with PPMA attended by Directors of HR and their teams over 25 delegates each day, free to member authorities
- ❖ Held a Education HR Conference with 47 delegates, free to member authorities
- ❖ Troubled Families Conference with 40 delegates
- ❖ Positive feedback and 64 delegates on PA's Conference
- ❖ 17 organisations are now subscribed to the South West Coaching Pool, bringing significant savings as well as delivering high quality coaching. Over 70 coaches are now in the Pool The Coaching qualification programme linked to the South West Coaching Pool continued to be successful.
- ❖ First Coaching Conference held with Professor David Clutterbuck as keynote speaker – 59 delegates attended
- ❖ Designed and delivered to 38 of the 41 authorities in the South West, in addition to this, we delivered training to 3 Associate organisations in the South West and 50 other organisations including: LGA, UKHO, Housing Associations, NHS, Pensions Administrators and Actuaries, Unison and Defra
- ❖ Feedback from external inspection highlighted evaluation of development programmes and quality assurance of qualification programmes as being particularly professional.
- ❖ The number of learners increased from 956 in 2011/12 to 1219 in 2012/13 – although not back to previous peak levels this is to be expected given the change in the market with reduced training budgets and reduced workforces in key organisations

What did our customers say?

Effectiveness of Learning 2012-13



Pension Managers Conference *“ An excellent event - very good value for money”*

“ The best training course I have ever been on, a great combination of theory and practical application”

“The Coaching Pool is An excellent resource”

“This has been a great opportunity to receive top quality coaching from outside my own organisation”

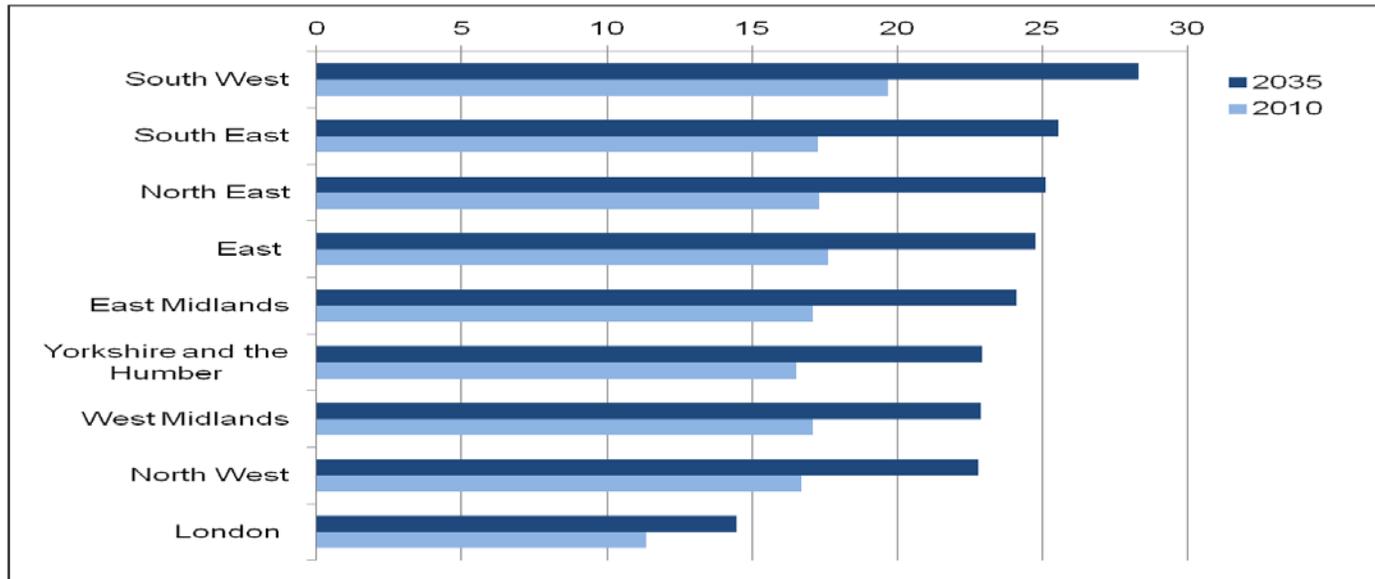
The Coaching Conference was *“ One of the best events I have been too”*.

“Well balanced and interesting programme - very good and well organised day” PA Conference

“Good to have people to liase with - formed new contacts” Troubled families conference

(iii) Working together for the South West

- ❖ 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
- ❖ Leaders and HR Portfolio holders facilitated to influence the national Pay and Pension negotiations on behalf of the South West
- ❖ Lobbying activity on a range of issues of importance to the South West eg the impacts of the ageing population with the South West having the largest proportion of over 65



Percentage of Population aged 65+ 2010 and over 2030 (ONS)

- ❖ Regular e bulleting newsletters produced to share information and celebrate success in the South West through SW Councils News and SW Migration Partnership Bulletin
- ❖ Development of the South West Councils website to facilitate a secure area for networks of local authority Members and officers; providing a discussion arena and area to share files and best practice - 11 groups are actively using this facility

- ❖ A range of Member and officer Networks are supported and sustained

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Children's Services Lead Members' network ➤ Adult Services Lead Members' network ➤ Overview and Scrutiny Members' network ➤ Overview and Scrutiny Officers' network ➤ Education Personnel Officers' group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reward group ➤ Member Support Officers' network ➤ South West Equalities network ➤ Learning and Development network
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- ❖ SW Councils meetings are held twice a year for Leaders and this year have included some interesting speakers including
 - Cllr Shona Johnstone, Cambridgeshire County Council, Vice Chair of the LGA Economy and Transport Group, who updated Members on the LGA's Local Growth Campaign
 - Cllr Roger Phillips, Herefordshire Council and Deputy Chair, Local Government Workforce Board, who briefed Members on pay and pension reforms.
 - Cllr Gary Porter, Vice Chairman LGA, who updated Members on the National LGA work
 - Dr Jocelyn Jones, Mindful Practice, who gave a presentation to Members on the Promoting and Improving High Quality Assessment and Intervention Review, a SW Councils sponsored project to Members.
 - Two South West MEPs –Julie Girling and Graham Watson updated on European developments impacting on the region
- ❖ Chief Executives meeting three times a year and during 2012/13 discussions have included:
 - Engagement with central Government with representatives from the Department for Communities and Local Government, Department for Business Innovation and Skills, Department for Transport and the Cabinet Office attending
 - Welfare reform
 - Regular engagement from Dept of Health discussing and updating on changes to the Health Service, including the transition of public health, the introduction of Health and Wellbeing Boards and Clinical Commissioning Groups
- ❖ Supported information sharing events. Including setting up events for Government Departments to share information with local authorities eg Business Rates retention with the Department of Communities and Local Government and two Universal Credits Workshops in conjunction with the Department of Work and Pensions
- ❖ Made government aware of local issues on Asylum and Migration issues and secured ongoing funding for 2013-14

What did our customers say?

“An excellent opportunity to influence the national agenda” Local Authority Leader

“thank you for organising the Chief Executives meeting on Tuesday, it was very interesting and helpful” – Local Authority Chief Executive

(iv) Corporate

- ❖ Subscriptions frozen at 2010 level and charges for specialist HR services and training and development reduced or frozen
- ❖ Income increased and core corporate costs decreased from more effective use of office space and contract re-negotiation
- ❖ Stretching Financial income targets met and budget delivered within 3.5%
- ❖ Ongoing development of staff following successful IIP re-accreditation. Apprentice employed and supported to achieve Level 2 in Business Studies

What did our customers say?

“an excellent financial performance which augurs well for the future” Resource and Management Committee