

Annex 1

HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY (incorporating the Pay and Workforce Strategy)

1 The Council's Vision

The Council's vision is:

“An organisation that provides excellent public services, good value for money and effective community leadership.”

So as to achieve this vision we aspire to provide customer focused, efficient services. We also strive to continuously improve our performance. In attempting to achieve these aspirations we are guided by the following corporate values:

That all people having dealings with the Council have a right to equality of treatment, courtesy, promptness and integrity.

The Council believes in fairness, consensus, involvement and learning in respect of its dealings with the people of the Borough and its communities, and that these values should be mirrored in the Council's relationship with staff.

Our external strategic aims are:

To continuously improve our services in terms of value for money.

To improve the public's access to, and influence over, services provided by the Council and the Council's role in representing the public.

To protect and enhance the built and natural environment.

To provide good parking management, to achieve better management of land drainage, to promote improvements in transportation.

To provide financial assistance through the timely and accurate processing of claims for Housing and Council Tax benefit.

To improve the availability and quality of housing for those most in need.

To develop leisure and cultural services for local people and visitors.

To protect and improve public health.

To reduce crime and disorder and the fear of crime.

To promote and improve public safety.

To promote the well being of the local economy and enhance the viability and vitality of population centres.

To deliver, with others, benefits beyond those possible from the Council's resources.

To provide leadership on community issues that are beyond the remit of a single agency.

To improve the well being of communities in Tonbridge & Malling.

We also have several internally focussed aims, as follows:

To recruit, develop and retain well-informed, qualified staff who take a responsibility for developing themselves.

To improve health and safety in Council premises and activities.

To manage the Council's financial affairs to support its service delivery objectives.

To maintain the Council's high standards of financial management and probity.

To identify and exploit cost-effective opportunities for external funding.

To improve management of information within the Council.

To continue improving the match between the Council's property holdings and its service delivery, organisational and financial needs.

To improve the Council's ability to achieve its strategic and operational objectives through its organisational structure and its performance management system.

To deliver greater efficiency, transparency and accountability in the way Councillors, staff and the Council as a whole carry out their business.

2 Human Resource Strategy

The Human Resources Strategy is about recognising and developing the crucial contribution of every employee. This is prompted by the aspiration that all employees will:

- be customer focused
- be corporately aware
- demonstrate a “can do” approach to work
- be proud to work for Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council
- appreciate the Council as a good employer
- enjoy all the aspects of their work
- consider themselves as colleagues in a joint endeavour to achieve the corporate vision.

In order to align our Human Resource activities with the Council’s values and strategic aims, four key building blocks are used to inform and direct human resource activities. These are:

- Leadership and Management
- Effective Recruitment and Retention
- Communication and Team Working
- Workforce Development.

Working with partners, external service providers, and other authorities The Council will give ongoing consideration to the further development of the Strategy. The Strategy will be updated annually and will identify any improvement priorities for the year ahead. The annual update will also report on the achievement of the improvement priorities identified the previous year.

Leadership and Management Development

We want managers and supervisors throughout Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council to meet their responsibilities to their colleagues by providing leadership, direction, purpose and support.

Managers and supervisors will be expected to set standards to ensure that the Council’s performance is maintained and improved.

Corporate working will be promoted throughout the Council.

All managers and supervisors will be expected to uphold the Investors in People Standard and to motivate and communicate effectively with their teams.

Up to date advice, training and support on Council policies and procedures will ensure consistency of management style.

New managers and supervisors will be equipped for their role by participating in appropriate training and development activities.

Throughout their careers with the Council managers and supervisors will have opportunities to attend training and development events.

All managers and supervisors will be expected to behave in accordance with the Council's Supervisory and Management Capability Checklists.

All managers and supervisors will contribute to developing an organisational climate that encourages innovation, by encouraging their staff to engage positively in service transformation and in developing new ways of working.

Effective Recruitment & Retention

We want an employment package that attracts and retains capable people who are committed to delivering excellent services to the community.

We will endeavour to attract suitable applicants by clear job descriptions, person specifications and advertisements.

There will be a fair and consistent recruitment and selection framework that encourages diversity within the workforce.

We will offer employees a fair and competitive rate for the job that reflects the principles of equal pay. We will offer equal status for part-time staff. We will try to ensure job security wherever possible.

Wherever possible, we will offer employees flexible working opportunities that reflect the diversity of the workforce and facilitate a healthy Work Life Balance.

We will ensure that working environments are safe and healthy.

We will encourage career development by advertising vacancies internally and developing our own leaders for the future.

We will foster a supportive management ethos that recognises and values everyone's contribution.

We will offer employees suitable training and development opportunities.

Where relevant we will encourage staff to develop their basic numeracy and literacy skills.

Communication and Team Working

We want to create a climate of trust, honesty and involvement. We recognise the need for open and honest two-way communication.

We will maintain a system of annual individual appraisals and regular team briefings across the organisation.

We will maintain a constructive relationship with recognised employee representatives and the Trade Union.

We will honour the Council's commitment to trust, honesty and involvement by working through employee relations issues according to the procedures specified in the Grievance, Disciplinary, Capability, Anti-harrasment and Confidential Reporting Codes of Practice/Procedures.

We will ensure that corporate information is easily accessible and will further develop the use of information technology for this purpose.

We will encourage development of a culture of corporate and co-operative working across the Council.

We will encourage employees to influence the shape of future service delivery in a best value environment that embraces partnership working.

Workforce Development

We want employees to know how their contribution fits into the bigger picture, and to have the skills, knowledge and information they need to do their job effectively. We want them to feel committed to the Council and to enjoy coming to work.

We will provide new employees with information about their job and employment package.

Every new employee will undergo a customised induction process.

All employee's will have an annual performance appraisal which will review their performance over the past year, set personal objectives for the year ahead, and identify any training and development needs.

All employees will have access to training and development activities that are linked with their individual objectives as well as those of the service to which they belong.

We will deal firmly and fairly with poor performance.

On return from absence due to sickness, all employee's will engage in a return to work interview with their line manager that will attempt to identify any organisational factors which may have contributed towards their illness.

3 Where we are

Leadership and Management Development

We already have the following systems and structures in place:

A robust performance management system specifying what is expected of employees.

A policy framework that provides guidance for managers on how to deal with a range of employee relations.

Investors in People accreditation for all of the Council.

Capability Checklists for supervisors and managers that specifies the expectations that the Council has of those in a leadership role in terms of knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Appropriate training and development opportunities for newly appointed supervisors and managers to equip them with the expected knowledge and skills.

Support for those who have been identified as having the potential to develop managerial skills and sponsorship of such individuals on the Diploma in Management programme or similar such qualification training in recognition that their careers may develop either within this Council or another local authority or partner organization.

Participation in the Joint Member Development Group that actively promotes training programmes for Members from all participating Councils in Kent. In recent years Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council has hosted several such training courses.

Effective Recruitment and Retention

Our recruitment and retention package currently displays the following characteristics:

A well trained and appropriately qualified workforce.

An equal pay structure.

A very favourable rate of employee turnover.

Recruitment and selection processes and procedures that have “passed” inspection by our local District Audit Team.

A range of flexible working opportunities, and in particular a growing number of part time employees.

An effective Joint Employee Consultative Committee which provides an opportunity for members, managers and employees to debate staffing issues.

A good track record in promoting employees.

Provision of a confidential employee support service.

A good track record of developing and promoting from within.

A diverse workforce where every effort is made to attract applications from minority groups and to retain staff who become disabled.

Communication and Team Working

We have already implemented the following :

A “top down” cascade of annual performance appraisals for all employees.

A system of team meetings.

An intranet which provides the opportunity for employees to access corporate plans and policies.

Constructive working relationships between directorates and a track record of cross boundary project groups (“officer study groups”) encouraging personal development.

Workforce Development

Our workforce currently demonstrates the following features:

Our workforce broadly reflects the ethnic distribution of the residents of the borough.

A commitment to diversity and to achieving successively higher levels of performance against the Equality Framework for Local Government.

Regular employee surveys to test the effectiveness of our Human Resources policies.

A low level of utilisation of the Council’s grievance and disciplinary procedures.

A systematic monitoring of turnover rates and the profile of the workforce and a commitment to succession planning to ensure an appropriately skilled workforce for the future.

4 Achievement of Improvement Priorities for the period April 2008 to March 2009

Action	Progress
<p><u>Developing leadership capacity</u></p> <p>i) Provide structured development opportunities that enhance management capacity and enable succession planning.</p>	<p>The following 2 staff successfully completed a Diploma in Management course: The Leisure Services Manager (Outdoors), and, The Systems Administrator (Revenue). The Central Services Director successfully completed the Top Managers Programme run by the National School of Government. 8 managers undertook skills development training to bridge identified gaps in their managerial capability.</p>
<p><u>Developing the skills and capacity of the workforce</u></p> <p>i) Support the development of appropriate officers in the following skill sets :</p> <p>estate management election process and procedures town planning building engineering energy conservation financial accounting council tax and housing benefits benefits investigation housing law and practice noise control countryside management</p>	<p>The following staff successfully completed courses leading to part or full professional qualifications in the targeted skill sets.</p> <p>The Property Technician The Elections & Special Projects Manager The Electoral Services Officer 3 Planning Officers The Senior Building Control Officer 1 Building Control Officer 1 Building Control Technician The Internal Auditor The Benefits Officer Manager 1 Revenue Assistant 1 Benefits Assistant The Training & Systems Officer (Finance)</p>

<p>ii) Undertake an in house Customer Care training programme for all front line staff.</p> <p>iii) All relevant staff to have undertaken the e-learning Fire Awareness training package.</p> <p>iv) Complete the Diversity Awareness training programme for all those in a supervisory or managerial position.</p> <p>v) Provide Emergency First Aid training for relevant staff employed on the Summer Play Scheme).</p> <p>vi) Provide the Leisure Services Business Unit's (LSBU) core training matrix that includes fire awareness, customer care, manual handling, basic health & safety.</p>	<p>1 Benefits Investigation Officer The Housing Strategy & Enabling Officer The Housing Options Officer 1 Environmental Health Officer (Environmental Protection) 1 Ranger.</p> <p>All identified front line staff undertook the in house course. The contents of this programme have now been incorporated into the induction programme to ensure that new staff receive an appropriate level of training.</p> <p>This has been achieved</p> <p>This programme has been completed.</p> <p>All relevant staff undertook the appropriate training.</p> <p>This has been provided.</p> <p>Note – Items ii) to vi) were all provided as in house training programmes. The learning outcomes were evaluated , and all were judged to have achieved their set objectives.</p>
<p><u>Organisational development</u></p> <p>i) Undertake a staff survey to assess how staff feel about many aspects of their working lives with the Council and to identify an improvement action</p>	<p>The Staff Survey was undertaken. Where outcomes for specific services were significantly below the organisational norm, the</p>

<p>plan.</p>	<p>Central Services Director and the Personnel & Development Manager agreed a series of actions with the relevant Director aimed at addressing the gap.</p>
<p><u>Resourcing, recruitment and retention</u></p> <p>i) Explore options with other authorities in Kent to further develop recruitment via the Internet.</p> <p>ii) Provide work placements to local schools.</p> <p>iii) Enhance the profile of the Council as an employer of disabled people by gaining re-accreditation of the Two Ticks Scheme.</p> <p>iv) Review the Council's Grievance and Disciplinary policies and the Dismissal Procedure in the context of the Employment Act 2008.</p>	<p>Agreement has been reached to pilot an on line application process via the KCC Website.</p> <p>Several work placement opportunities have been provided for Year 10 and 11 students.</p> <p>The Council was re-accredited.</p> <p>These were reviewed within the context's of the Employment Act 2008, and the Council's Diversity Policy. A revised Disciplinary Policy has been adopted by the Council.</p>
<p><u>Pay and Reward</u></p> <p>i) Track the benefits package for our staff and keep the Council's package under review.</p> <p>ii) Commission an externally provided Equal Pay Audit to assess whether the Authority's pay and benefits structure continues to be equitable.</p>	<p>The Council continued to retain a workforce that was able to deliver its key priorities.</p> <p>It was decided to defer this as there had been no significant changes in the Council's Establishment since the previous Equal Pay Audit in August 2005.</p>

5 Equalities Monitoring 2008/9

According to the legislation that governs the content of the Race, Gender and Disability Equality Schemes, the Council is required to publish the outcomes of its equality monitoring. This is available in Appendix 1 to this Strategy.

6 Workforce Development Plan, April 2009 – March 2010

Developing leadership capacity

Continue with the provision of structured development opportunities that enhance our management capacity and enable succession planning that takes account of the anticipated departure of many key senior staff over the next ten years (ongoing). In particular provide developmental opportunities for staff in the following posts:

The Chief EHO
The Senior Engineer (Drainage)
The Senior Leisure Services Officer
The Leisure Services Manager (Development)
The Housing Needs Manager
The Senior Housing Options Officer
The Private Sector Housing Environmental Health Officer

Developing the skills and capacity of the workforce

Continue to support the ongoing professional development of staff, and to equip them with the knowledge and skills required to deliver the Council's Performance Plan. During the year in question particular emphasis should be placed upon the following skill sets:

Countryside Management
Housing Studies
Housing Practice
Estates Management
Housing & Council Tax Benefits Legislation and Administration
Accounting Technician Skills
Countering Fraud
Electoral Administration
Urban & Regional Planning
Building Surveying
Food Safety and Health & Safety Enforcement Competency Development.

Ensure that staff who assume responsibilities from posts that have been deleted from the Establishment are adequately trained to undertake these duties (by March 2010).

Organisational Development

Ensure that the Council retains its Investor in People accredited status, and *benchmark the Council's level of attainment against the new "Bronze, Silver and Gold" standards (by April 2009).*

Ensure that relevant staff have completed the Child Protection e learning training packages (by March 2010).

Explore opportunities to pilot an in house apprenticeship scheme in customer service skills (by September 2009).

Resourcing, recruitment and retention

Seek to align the Council's Establishment with its re-defined priorities in the context of the need to reduce the base budget (by February 2009).

Continue to explore options with other authorities in Kent to further develop recruitment via the intranet (ongoing).

Ensure that work placements are provided to local schools (ongoing).

Seek to enhance the profile of the Council as an employer of disabled people by gaining re-accreditation of the Two Ticks Scheme (by February 2010).

Pay and Reward

Track the benefits package offered by our competitors for staff and keep the Council's package under review (ongoing).

Implement reductions in the Council's benefits package within the context of reducing the base budget (by April 2009).