
Workforce Strategy

June 2022

1 The Council's Vision

The Council's vision as set out in the Corporate Strategy is:

To be a financially sustainable Council that delivers good value services, provides clear leadership and, with our partners, addresses the needs of the Borough.

2 Workforce Strategy

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

- be customer focused
- be corporately aware
- demonstrate a "can do" approach to work
- appreciate the Council as a good employer
- consider themselves as colleagues in a joint endeavour to achieve the corporate vision.

The Workforce Strategy will be updated annually and will identify improvement priorities for the year ahead.

The annual update will also report on the achievement of the improvement priorities identified the previous year, and on the outcomes of the previous year's equal opportunities monitoring.

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.

The Sections below provide an overview of the Council's current approaches to developing these "building blocks".

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 proactively seek out opportunities for service transformation and to set standards.
- 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.
- Corporate working will be promoted throughout the Council.
- All managers and supervisors will be expected to behave in accordance with the Council's Supervisory and Management Capability Checklists.
- Up to date advice, training and support on Council policies and procedures for dealing with a range of employee relations issues 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 that reflect their responsibilities.

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 balance internal progression with external recruitment so that the Council continuously reinvigorates its talent pool, and that appropriate succession planning ensures an appropriately skilled workforce for the future.
- We will endeavour to attract suitable applicants by clear job descriptions, person specifications and advertisements. Promoting new flexible, hybrid and remote ways of working will be key to the effective recruitment of hard to fill posts.
- There will be a fair and consistent recruitment and selection framework that supports diversity within the workforce and that is regularly inspected by our internal audit team. Our workforce broadly reflects the ethnic and gender distribution of the residents of the borough.
- We will offer employees a fair and competitive rate for the job that reflects the principles of equal pay. We will ensure equal status for part-time staff. In 2021/2022 of a workforce of 249 permanent employees, 86 were employed on a part time basis.
- Wherever possible, we will offer employees flexible working opportunities that reflect the diversity of the workforce and facilitate a healthy Work Life Balance. The Council has adopted transitional working arrangements with the majority of its workforce working remotely on a regular basis. Work is being undertaken on developing a long-term strategy and policy to further enable and embed remote working within the organisation. A remote working policy will be presented to Members for approval during 2022.
- We will ensure that all working environments are safe and healthy.
- We will foster a supportive management ethos that recognises and values everyone's contribution.
- We will offer employees suitable training and development opportunities.

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 accredited employee representatives and the Trade Union (Unison). There is an effective Joint Employee Consultative Committee which provides an opportunity for elected members, managers and employees to debate staffing issues.
- 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-Bullying and Harassment and Confidential Reporting Codes of Practice/Procedures.

- We will ensure that corporate information is easily accessible and will continue to develop the use of information technology for this purpose. All employees can access relevant corporate policies and e-learning modules on the Council’s intranet. The Council has invested in a much-improved e-learning system which will be made available to staff in June 2022. Due to the increase of remote working, online learning will be a vital tool to ensure that staff continue to develop in their role and gain a greater understanding of the Council’s key priorities and policies.
- We will encourage development of a culture of corporate and co-operative working across the Council. Training around better utilising IT platforms such as Microsoft Teams is a priority in order to help remote workers to work collaboratively, improve knowledge and idea sharing as well as improving communication amongst team members.
- We will encourage employees to influence the shape of future service delivery in an environment that embraces transformation and 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 Review of Corporate Development Priorities

Action	Progress
<p><u>Developing leadership capacity</u></p> <p>i) Provide structured development opportunities that enhance management capacity and enable succession planning that takes account of the anticipated departure of many senior staff over the next 5 years.</p>	<p>A number of staff have been promoted into more senior positions which have involved taking online management responsibility and have completed “People Management Skills” and “Team Leadership” training.</p> <p>Many other opportunities have been taken to develop managerial capacity through project work, work shadowing and online learning.</p>

<p><u>Developing the skills and capacity of the workforce</u></p> <p>i) Support the development of appropriate officers in skill sets required to meet current legislation/service requirements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There have been 1,232 instances of employees undertaking online training, online seminars, workshops, and e-learning courses. <i>(The total is likely to be significantly higher than this due to professional development online seminars being free of charge which staff can book directly onto)</i> ➤ There have been 85 instances of staff attending external training and development events or courses. (The impact of the pandemic has meant a large number of courses moved to online learning during the past 12 months). ➤ A Planning Officer and Building Control Officer completed their Masters degrees and have progressed within their teams.
<p><u>Organisational development</u></p> <p>i) Continue to re-align the Council's Establishment with its re-defined priorities.</p> <p>ii) Continue to develop the knowledge base of elected Members in response to changes in legislation, Government initiatives etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 51 adjustments to job roles, have been agreed at the meetings of the General Purposes Committee in June, and October 2021 and January and March 2022. ➤ Officers have provided Member briefings on a range of topics such as planning (including the Local Plan), housing and licensing, at Committee and Advisory Board meetings.
<p><u>Resourcing, recruitment and retention</u></p> <p>i) Provide work placements to local schools.</p> <p>ii) Explore opportunities for providing apprenticeship placements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Due to the pandemic, it has not been possible to arrangement work placements with schools during the past 12 months. ➤ Staff in the Revenues and Benefits team in Financial Services have worked towards achieving their IRRV's Higher Level Revenue & Benefits Practitioner Apprenticeship (Level 4).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Two Members of the Building Control team will commence CIOF Level 3 Certificate in Technical Support for Public Service Building Standards in July 2022. ➤ The Council continues to consider whether or not vacancies for posts provide suitable apprenticeship opportunities and will promote such opportunities when they arise.
<p><u>Pay and Reward</u></p> <p>The Council continues to align its pay settlements with those set elsewhere in the Public Sector.</p>	<p>The Council awarded a 2% pay settlement for 2022/23.</p>

4 Equalities Monitoring 2021/22

In accordance with Equality legislation, the Authority is legally obliged to consider how our activities as an employer affect people who share different protected characteristics.

The information included in the tables below shows the outcomes of this monitoring for the period 2021/22.

For the sake of comparison, a percentage analysis of the demographic profile of the Borough according to gender, ethnicity and disability is shown in Table 10 and a breakdown of the race, disability, gender and age distributions of the workforce in Tables 11 & 12.

In accordance with commitments made in the Equality Impact Assessment of the Flexible Working Policy the outcomes of the monitoring of the return rates from maternity leave and applications for flexible working are included in Tables 8 & 9.

Table 1 – Analysis of applications for jobs

Total Applicants	484	
Male	230	47.52%
Female	254	52.48%
Disabled	18	3.72%
Ethnic Minority	35	7.23%

Shortlisted	160	
Male	75	46.87%
Female	85	53.13%
Disabled	9	5.62%
Ethnic Minority	12	7.5%

Appointed	29	
Male	13	44.83%
Female	16	55.17%
Disabled	2	6.90%

Ethnic Minority	3	10.34%
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*Data pertaining to gender and ethnicity is not shared with recruiting managers and is requested by applicants for monitoring purposes only. The Council is a 'Disability Confident' Employer and guarantees to offer an interview to candidates who declare themselves to have a disability, and who meet the essential criteria set out within the person specification of the post. The nature of the disability is not requested and therefore it is not shared with the recruiting manager.

Table 2 – Analysis of Promotions

Promotions	14	
Male	5	35.71%
Female	9	64.29%
Disabled	1	7.14%
Ethnic Minority	1	7.14%

Table 3 – Analysis of Disciplinary Hearings

Hearings	3	
Male	1	33.33%
Female	2	66.66%
Disabled	0	0
Ethnic Minority	0	0

Table 4 – Analysis of Capability Hearings

Hearings	1	
Male	1	100%
Female	0	0
Disabled	0	0
Ethnic Minority	0	0

Table 5 – Analysis of Grievance Hearings

Cases	1	
Male	0	0
Female	1	100%
Disabled	1	100%
Ethnic Minority	0	0

Table 7 – Applications for changes to working patterns and flexible working, and success rates

Nature of the request	Requests	Requests granted
Flexible retirement	0	0
Reduction/increase in working hours or change in working pattern	6	6

Table 8 – Return rates from maternity leave

Category	Number
Number of employees on maternity leave in 21/22	2
Number still on maternity leave in 22/23	2
Number of employees who left the Council's employment on or shortly after returning from maternity leave	0
Number who returned to employment with the Council in 21/22	0

Table 9 – Demographic analysis of the Borough

Equality Characteristic	Percentage
Male	48
Female	52
White	96
Ethnic Minority	4
Permanently sick or disabled	3

Table 10 – Gender, disability and race distribution of the workforce

On 31 March 2022 there were 249 employees, of which 86 were part time.

Equality Characteristic	Headcount
Gender	Male – 97 (39%) Female – 152 (61%)
Disability	Employees who consider themselves to be disabled – 9 (3.61%)
Ethnicity	White – 201 (80.72%) Black – 4 (1.61%) Asian or Asian Black – 5 (2.01%) Other Asian – 0 Mixed – 1 (0.40%) Unknown – 38 (15.26%)

Note – any discrepancies in the totals above are due to employees not disclosing personal information.

Table 11 – Age distribution of the workforce

Age range	Number of employees
Up to 19	0
20 - 25	5 (2.01%)
26 - 35	33 (13.25%)
36 - 45	49 (19.68%)
46 - 55	98 (39.36%)
56 - 65	51 (20.48%)
Over 65	13 (5.22%)

5 Workforce Development Plan April 2022 – March 2023

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 potential departure of many experienced staff over the next five years.

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 services, to respond to changes introduced by the Government, and to the Council's transformation agenda. Specific areas of need will be identified during the 2022/23 performance appraisal process.
- Develop a remote working policy which ensures that the Council continues to provide the best possible services to all of its residents and customers by ensuring that staff work effectively and productively wherever they are based.
- Ensure training is available to all staff and managers in order to maximise the effectiveness of new ways of working and to ensure that technology is utilised to its maximum potential in support of this.
- Continue to equip staff with the digital skills required to support changes in the way we work.
- Continue to equip staff with the knowledge and skills required to support the Council's Emergency Plan.

Organisational Development

- Consider the impact on the Council's policies of any proposals from the Government to amend existing employment legislation and re-align the Council's HR policies with the timetable for any proposed amendments.
- Continue to provide briefings for Members on legislative change etc. at Committee meetings and Advisory Boards, and, where appropriate commission dedicated training sessions on cross cutting corporate issues.

Resourcing, recruitment & retention

- Continue to re-align the Council's Establishment to address shifting requirements for service delivery.
- Continue to explore alternative service delivery models.
- Develop a bespoke recruitment strategy on a case-by-case basis for hard to fill posts.
- Continue to ensure that work placements are provided to local schools.
- Continue to explore opportunities for offering apprenticeships within the Council.
- Identify roles for new recruits to the Council in the Council's Emergency Plan.

Pay and Reward

- Review the Pay Policy Statement (by March 2023).
 - Track the benefits package offered by our competitors for staff and review salaries in line with the term in employee's contracts of employment which reads "your salary will be revised on 1 April each year by an amount determined by the Authority having regard to movements in the Retail Price Index, comparative pay settlements and prevailing economic conditions" (by March 2023).
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Serving our community

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council
Gibson Building
Gibson Drive
Kings Hill
West Malling
Kent
ME19 4LZ