

Appendix I

The Workforce Strategy 2013 – 2015 (agreed Jan 2013)

The aim of the Workforce Strategy is to ensure that the council has the most effective human resources in place to deliver its priorities now and in the future. The Workforce Strategy has been developed taking into consideration where we are now and the council's strategic direction set out in the strategic plan. There are several assumptions in the workforce strategy which will need to be assessed during the period of the plan to check that they are still valid, these are:

- There will be no significant growth in the UK economy during this period;
- There will be no significant policy shift at either national or local level;
- Central government funding of local government will continue to shrink;
- Current proposals for Welfare Reform will be implemented.

The consequence of these assumptions mean that the Workforce Strategy has a focus on productivity, particularly 'doing more with less' whilst continuing to have ambitious aspirations for what we can achieve.

The workforce strategy is aligned to the priority areas of the national strategy for ease of reference, although the areas of focus relate to the analysis of the issues of relevance to local circumstances.

5.1 Organisation Development

Within this context of change the council will need to consider its **Future Shape** so that the organisation is designed to best suit the role and function it must deliver. As these requirements evolve the organisation structure and boundaries will need to adapt.

There are multiple factors that will impact on the environment all of which will play a part in determining what will fit the organisation best in the future. One of the major influences has become the level of partnership work that the council is now involved with, some of these are set out below.

Mid Kent Improvement Partnership

The most well established partnership for the council is the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership (MKIP) which is set up with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Swale Borough Council and Kent County Council to find ways of increasing efficiency, saving cost, resilience and delivering better services to the public. This partnership has resulted in several shared services to date and this trend is set to continue. The shared services at the beginning of 2013 are:

- Audit (MBC;TWBC;SBC with Ashford Borough Council)
- Revenues and Benefits (MBC;TWBC with SBC on systems only)
- Legal (MBC; TWBC; SBC)
- Human Resources and Payroll (MBC; SBC)
- Parking (MBC;SBC)
- Licensing (MBC; TWBC with Sevenoaks District Council)
- ICT (MBC; TWBC; SBC)

In addition there are partnerships within some of the MKIP councils that are outside of the MKIP boundary, for example Swale Borough Council has a Building Control Partnership with Gravesham and others.

There are several other services within the MKIP that are in the process of implementation, for example Environmental Health and Planning administration. There are significant organisational and workforce issues emerging from the partnerships. As the MKIP has developed the initial shared services did not transfer staff to one employer and thus minimised some of the consequent employee relations issues, however this resulted in continuing ambiguity and some loss of management control of resources within the service. The principle for future partnerships will be to TUPE transfer to one employer giving greater control over resources but this approach will also need to be carefully thought through as there are implications for the residual support service costs in a situation where, for example all transfers go to one of the three councils leaving the other two with smaller numbers.

Kent Forum and Locality Boards

The increased emphasis on partnership working with other organisations is likely to continue.

The Locality Boards will be the forum within which agencies (for example NHS, police, and district and county councils) can focus on improving one particular area with a 'joined up' approach so that resources are maximised and duplication minimised. The council has been successful in securing funding from both the police and NHS to deliver some of these priority areas and this will have implications for recruiting and managing people with different skill sets.

Corporate Improvement Programme (CIP)

The council has a small team that work alongside of line managers to introduce change in a way that ensures services streamline and become more efficient. The mission is to "Enable smarter services and a leaner organisation"

With this embedded into the council's culture the 'norm' is to constantly look for new and better ways of delivering services which will inevitably require organisational development. A cross-cutting team of senior managers meet quarterly to monitor the corporate improvements across the organisation.

Approaches to Service Delivery

With a greater emphasis on partnership work and diminished budgets the Cabinet has given some thought to the council's approach to service delivery. There is recognition that in some cases the council can have greater impact through the commissioning of other agencies to deliver a service rather than the direct delivery by council employees. In the process of the development of the strategic plan agreement was reached on the principles for service design:

1. Residents and businesses are the starting point for services; every service must be considered from the perspective of the citizen and delivered at the lowest possible level – a bottom-up approach.
2. We will enable service delivery and seek to commission services rather than deliver them ourselves wherever appropriate.
3. We will work with partners where there are economies of scale and to identify common solutions and shared services.
4. Services must achieve our priorities.

5. We will manage our services so no-one is disadvantaged because of where they live.
6. We will concentrate on delivering our core services, whilst recognising that there are areas we need to influence and work with others on to bring about change.
7. We will work together as one Council and with our partners to deliver change and manage expectation.

Central Government

One of the most significant changes within the period of this strategy will be the implementation of the governments 'Universal Credit' which will see the amalgamation of different employees from district councils, the Department of Work and Pensions and the HMRC into one organisation. This could affect almost 10% of the council's workforce but as yet it is unclear how this process will be implemented or the impact it will have on individuals or the organisation. There is an added complexity to this for us as the affected group is also part of the Revenues and Benefits shared service.

Localism

The Localism Act 2011 has many facets; the areas that could have the greatest impact on the workforce are the devolution of services to communities and the transfer of assets to communities. This could result in a challenge to the current service design which would lead to a transfer to community provision resulting in TUPE transfer of employees or a reduced need for particular services.

One further area of impact of the Localism Act 2011 is the requirement for all councils to publish an annual Pay Policy Statement setting out the key terms and conditions for officers; this level of openness and transparency has an impact on the culture as staff benefits are regularly scrutinised in a public arena.

Organisation Development – Workforce Plan

The aim of this priority is to ensure that *the organisation is designed to optimise its resources to enable the achievement of the vision and priorities in a manner that aligns to its values.*

To respond to the issues identified and achieve our aim there are several actions and outcomes within the workforce plan.

| Drive/Need | Outcome | Action |
|---|---|---|
| Need to review and change organisation structures | Facilitate smooth organisational change | Review the current organisation change policy and minimise difference between MKIP partners |
| Need to review and change organisation structures | Facilitate smooth organisational change | Establish clear processes and support mechanisms for managers and staff |
| Increased partnership work in MKIP | Strategic employment models agreed | Options evaluation of different employment models, agreed model applied to current and future partnerships. |
| Increased partnership work. | Flexibility in workforce movement. | Secondment policy developed. |
| Maintain and develop the | Measure levels of employee | Best Councils survey and |

| | | |
|---|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| organisation culture to be consistent with the values and priorities | engagement | engagement plan up-dated. |
| Maintain and develop the organisation culture to be consistent with the values and priorities | Monitor health and well-being | HSE Stress Survey. |

It is clear from the preceding narrative that the number of direct employees is likely to change during the life of the plan. In any workforce plan there will be factors that have a known quantifiable impact on employee numbers, factors identified that will have an impact but are not yet quantifiable (known unknowns) and factors that are not yet anticipated. At this point there are several known factors likely to impact on workforce numbers, the only one of these which is quantifiable is the TUPE transfer of the ICT workforce to Maidstone Borough Council which will result in an increase of 18.7 fte (full time equivalent) in April 2013.

5.2 Leadership development

The council has given significant investment and focus to leadership development for both political and managerial leaders. During 2011 the senior managers took part in a development programme that was designed to enhance the organisation's leadership team in order to take the organisation forward into the future. One of the aspirations that arose from this development programme was to find ways to devolve decision making to the lowest level and reduce bureaucracy. This will inevitably require the development of managers to be able to respond positively to increased freedoms and flexibilities. The council will need to engage all employees to ensure that discretionary effort is maximised and it is clear that the role of the leaders and line managers are vital to success in this endeavour. The liP Healthcheck in 2012 reinforced the need to streamline the councils competency framework to make it clear to everyone what was expected of the leaders of the organisation.

Within any political environment there is an on-going need to develop the political leadership skills within the elected member group and following the publication of the Localism Act 2011 there is a particular requirement to support them to develop the role of 'community leader'. Elections are held in every three years of four which necessitates a rolling programme of inductions for new members as it is at this point that they start to understand their role. The Cabinet have regular away days which form part of their development and there is a thorough process in place for member development at all levels which will be increasingly necessary as the requirements of members change in the future.

Employee engagement is a key to the successful future of the organisation and the approach to leadership of the organisation through the senior leadership team and line managers is fundamental to creating an engaged workforce. It is the council's ambition to be recognised at gold standard by Investors in People by 2015 and this process will be used to facilitate cultural change and engage our workforce. The role of line managers in this process will be fundamental to its success and this will require real support to develop them to deliver the requirements. The current employee engagement plan is at Appendix Three and this gives a clear programme of actions that are designed to strengthen the role of the line manager working with their teams to deliver the council priorities, this programme is known as 'One Council'. The plan is a dynamic plan that constantly evolves and is reviewed quarterly by the Corporate Leadership Team.

Health and Safety

In 2011 the council agreed the Health and Safety Strategy:

It has sensible health and safety at the heart of its business, it is integral to the culture and decision making processes of all aspects of the organisation.

The six key themes to deliver the strategy are:

- Strong **leadership** in championing the importance of, and a common-sense approach to, health and safety in the workplace;
- A **healthy** and **productive** workforce;
- **Everyone** involved in the provision of Council services trained to the appropriate levels of competency to **accept** and **deliver** their health and safety **responsibilities**;
- A strong framework of **policies** and **Safe Operating Procedures** (SOP) that underpin the vision and meet our legislative requirements;
- **Robust** and rigorous **monitoring, recording, and investigation** of health and safety matters and **communication** of best practice and lessons learnt from internal and external organisations;
- A **forward looking** approach that ensures the organisation is **flexible** and **adaptive** to meet the changing environment.

The development of the organisational culture to integrate health and safety into the way of working is one of the clear goals and this will also impact on the development of the organisation. Well-being factors have a clear link to employee engagement and as this is one of our main leadership aims the commitments made in the Health and Safety strategy and Action Plan that need to be delivered.

Leadership Development – The Workforce Plan

The aim of this priority is to ensure that *the organisation has effective leadership at all levels and that the senior leaders are visible and consistent in leading the workforce to deliver on priorities.*

To deliver this aim there are several actions and outcomes within the workforce plan.

| Drive/Need | Outcome | Action |
|--|---|---|
| Senior Leadership is visible | Employees feel that senior leaders are approachable and live the values | Through actions in the engagement plan e.g. leading One Council briefings |
| Develop line managers as leaders | Line managers know how to engage teams | Coaching framework delivered |
| Develop consistency of approach by leaders and managers | Managers and leaders know what is expected of them as a 'Maidstone Manager' | Streamline the competency framework and reinforce expectations. |
| Employees are engaged with the organisation | Employees behave in a way that is consistent with the values | See engagement action plan |
| Members are supported in their role as community leaders | To increase community involvement and representation | Development sessions available for Members supported by party leaders. |

5.3 Skills Development

The council has a very thorough approach to the identification and support of learning and development needs for staff and members and works in partnership with other councils to ensure a cost effective delivery of requirements.

There will be an on-going need for professional and technical skill development which would be considered to be 'business as usual'. The focus of the skill development theme within the Workforce Strategy is the areas which support the response to the changing environment.

Skill Development – The Workforce Plan

The aim of this priority is to ensure that *the organisation has people with the right skills now and for the future to deliver the council's visions and priorities in a manner that aligns to its values.*

With the changing environment there will be a need for further development of the skills of the workforce whether these are direct employees or working in partner organisations; those identified through the workforce planning process are in the table below.

| Skill area | Outcome | Target audience |
|--|--|--|
| Change management | Managing the increased pace of change | All line managers |
| Customer consultation & insight | Localism and improved resident perception | All line managers, front line staff |
| New technology | Improved efficiency, channel shift, social media | All staff and Members |
| Commercialism, business analysis & development | Services may have technical expertise but not the business skills to develop a commercial approach | Line managers in areas of opportunity for selling services |
| Project & programme management | To secure most effective approach to high level change | Line managers |
| Negotiation and influencing | Increased work with partners need to influence outside of direct control | Roles interacting with partners |
| Coaching | Develop line managers to be able to get the best from their teams in a supportive way | Line managers |
| Facilitation skills | To assist in the management of change with team work | Project members in areas of workforce change |
| Managing 'remote' workers | Develop teams with increased partnership split site working and home working | Line managers |

With the reduction in turnover and decreased levels of recruitment but increased level of redeployment the need for skill based training has increased with the need for basic induction to the work of the council decreased. The challenge is to be able to enhance the existing workforce to adapt to new ways of working and to gain the additional discretionary effort.

5.4 Recruitment and Retention

This strategy is based on the assumption that the level of economic growth will remain relatively static during the period. If the economic climate changes quickly so that there is a demand for skills within the area of the built economy (Planning and Surveying) the council

will need to quickly consider the use of market supplements for retention, however it is not anticipated that this will be necessary in the life of this plan.

The reducing size of the work force has largely been due to the deletion of posts when they become vacant. This presents more of a challenge because it means that either a replacement person has to be found internally, which may well necessitate a greater level of training or processes have to be streamlined to enable the re-distribution of work. More work needs to be undertaken to look at how people can plan for moves around the business as part of the career planning processes, this increases the need for horizontal movement between posts rather than the vertical 'promotions' that were expected in the past.

One area of direct recruitment that will continue is apprenticeships. The council has a long tradition of using trainee schemes to attract younger staff into employment and then retain them. The development of apprenticeships is consistent with one of our key priorities – Great Opportunity – which supports the growth of opportunities in the borough and apprenticeships are being encouraged in all businesses.

The age group under twenty five years is under-represented in the council and the apprenticeships help to redress this problem. However this is one of the few areas of equality imbalance that we are able to directly influence through recruitment. In the past we have been able to target particular under-represented groups when we have recruited new staff so that, although appointments continue to be on merit, we have been able to encourage applications from these areas, but with a reduced number of new recruits this is more difficult.

Recruitment and Retention – The Workforce Plan

The aim of this priority is to ensure *the right people, with the right skills are in the right roles to deliver the achievement of the council's vision and priorities in a manner that aligns to its values.* The outcomes and actions in the Workforce Plan are set out below.

| Drive/Need | Objective | Action |
|---|---|--|
| A representative and balanced workforce | Increase the % of employees under the age of 25 | Apprenticeship programme |
| A flexible workforce | Internal recruitment and selection enables horizontal movement to develop careers and give employment stability | Streamline processes for internal re-deployment. |
| A flexible workforce | Develop a range of skills from other organisations | Secondment opportunities with other organisations encouraged and a secondment policy agreed. |
| Develop skills in partner organisations | Support partner organisations to develop skills | Offer secondment opportunities to partners when opportunities arise. |

5.5 Pay and Reward

In 2012 the council made changes to the pay scales which addressed historical anomalies and strengthened the link of pay for performance for senior managers. The council has had a Total Reward approach since 2007 but it is clear that some of the benefits and flexibilities that are in place are not fully utilised by managers. The main developments in this area will be to strengthen the use of the available benefits and this will include the revision of the Staff Handbook so that employees are aware of what is on offer.

With the introduction of 'High Performance' increments for grades 13 and above there will need to be robust development of the process for agreeing high performance increments where they are applicable.

With the move to the new pay scales particular attention will be upon the impact of the changes on equal pay, this work will be combined into the annual pay policy statement published by the council.

Pay and Reward – The Workforce Plan

The aim of this priority is to ensure that we *are able to attract and retain talented people and that employees feel that they have a fair deal whilst maintaining cost efficient services for the public.*

The outcomes and actions in the Workforce Plan are set out below

| Drive/Need | Outcome | Action |
|--|---|---|
| Compliance with Localism Act | Open and transparent regarding the council's use of resources | Publish the pay policy statement annually |
| Retain competitive position as an employer | Ensure that pay scales remain at the market median | Benchmark salaries – particularly for hard to fill posts. |
| Retain competitive position as an employer | Reinforce benefits package so that employees feel they are fairly rewarded. | Update and re-issue employee handbook |
| Retain competitive position as an employer | Reinforce benefits package so that employees feel they are fairly rewarded. | Health initiatives developed |
| Retain competitive position as an employer | Reinforce benefits package – pensions are understood and valued | Auto enrolment implemented |
| Retain competitive position as an employer | Staff feel valued for their contribution | Awards ceremony continued and strengthened |
| Retain competitive position as an employer | Staff feel valued for their contribution | Mechanisms developed to increase the ways for recognising staff |

6. Summary

This workforce strategy sets out the context within which the council operates and identifies the key factors that will influence the workforce issues in the future. Although there is a general acknowledgement that it is not possible to give absolute certainty to the size and shape of the council in the next few years there are clear requirements for skills and flexibilities to enable the appropriate and timely response to change. The plan will be reviewed as needs emerge and as more up to date feedback is received from staff surveys, a summary of the actions are set out in Appendix Three.