



# PEOPLE STRATEGY 2009 - 2014

## Introduction

The People Strategy is a key document supporting the delivery of the Council's Strategic Plan. Whilst the budget ensures that financial resources are aligned to delivering the Council's key priorities, the People Strategy ensures that our human resources (by far the most significant area of spend) have the necessary skills, focus and training to deliver on the Council's ambitions. The Strategy also recognises that with a quarter of our workforce having a TN2 postcode and over half our staff living within the borough boundaries, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council is also a significant provider of employment for our community.

In the last year we have made major strides towards ensuring we are 'Fit for Our Future' – an ambition set out in last year's Strategy. The quality of our staff and the systems, policies and processes we have put in place to support them were recognised externally in various assessments (including our CPA reassessment). We also conducted a comprehensive independent staff survey through the 'Best Companies' in October, and whilst we did not do this in order to be ranked, we have been told we would have achieved tenth place in the 'Top councils to work for'. The feedback from Best Companies was that we are in good shape and we will be looking to respond to a number of issues that were raised.

Last year's People Strategy was written in very different economic circumstances. As the recession starts to bite, there will clearly be impacts for the Council's finances and for staffing levels and for our communities. Many staff will be affected – either directly or indirectly (by friends, relatives or dependents). The full consequences of the recession and its duration are not yet known but it has already become apparent that in some areas, there have been significant reductions in workload; in others (such as housing and benefits), there have been significant increases. The Council will need to be flexible to cope with this and will also need to prepare for the recovery when it arrives. The Council is heavily reliant on income – both through fees and charges and in investment interest and loss of income have significantly increased the budgetary pressures we are facing; there is also a strong expectation from the public that we should be delivering maximum value for money. These issues will have implications for staff.

We now need to build on the things that will help us to achieve our ambitions through the difficult times ahead. We have to ensure that we are very focused in our objectives, so that precious effort is not wasted.

We have a set of organisational values that were agreed in 2007 as part of the consultation on the original People Strategy. These are:

- Customer Focus
- Responsibility
- Respect
- Communication
- Transparency
- Value Staff

These have been put together in consultation with staff and promoted throughout the Council. They will need to be reviewed when we have completed the work on establishing core competencies for all staff.

The challenge for the future will be to maintain service levels and momentum within the context of diminishing financial resources. In order to succeed, effective leadership and management at all levels will be vital, as is a highly strategic approach to learning and development to ensure that a reduced workforce is sufficiently skilled and knowledgeable to deliver the right results. A continued drive towards partnership working and shared services with other authorities will be a key part of the vision for the future for staff as this will deliver not only cost savings and efficiencies, but also resilience and development opportunities.

## Staffing Metrics

TWBC currently employs 404 people (as at January 2009). The salaries and associated costs of employing the Council's officers represent a large percentage of the Council's expenditure (excluding grant incomes).

### Gender and age distribution breakdown for the Council

Age Bands	TWBC Actuals	TWBC	Borough Population*	TWBC Actuals	TWBC	Borough Population*
	Male	%	%	Female	%	%
Under 21	2	1.2	27.4	6	2.5	25.1
21 - 30	26	15.7	11.8	40	16.7	10.9
31 - 40	31	18.7	15.6	70	29.2	15.1
41- 50	46	27.7	13.9	61	25.7	13.6
51 - 60	42	25.9	13.6	52	21.7	12.7
61+	18	10.8	17.7	10	4.2	22.6

\*Source: 2001 census (ONS)

### Ethnicity Breakdown for the Council and the Borough

	Council Staff (numbers)	%	Borough %
White: British	383	94.33	94.1
White: Irish	5	1.23	0.8
White: Other	3	0.74	2.7
Black: Caribbean			0.1
Black: African	3	0.74	0.1
Black: Other			0.0
Mixed: White & Black Caribbean			0.2
Mixed: White & Black African	1	0.25	0.1
Mixed: White & Asian			0.4
Mixed: Other	1	0.25	0.3
Asian: Indian			0.3
Asian: Pakistani	1	0.25	0.1
Asian: Bangladeshi			0.2
Asian Chinese			0.4
Asian: Other			0.1
Not known	9	2.22	0.3

## Disability Breakdown for the Council and long term limiting illness for the Borough

	Staff (numbers)	Council %	Borough %
No Disability	381	93.8	85.5
Not Known	9	2.22	0.0
Yes	16	3.94	14.5

## Last year's Issues and the Outcomes Achieved

Last year's Issues	Outcomes achieved in 2008/9
Achieve level 3 of the Equality Standard for local government	Achieved
New Gateway / enhanced access to the Community / Customer First	Gateway opened 3/1108
New logo and visual identity for the Council	New logo developed and introduced and now used throughout the Council
Improved performance and recategorisation of CPA or CAA	Improvements achieved across the board including CPA reassessment, VFM and Use of Resources
Budget and impact on resource – 'More for less'	Over £2 million has been saved over the past two years, significantly in excess of efficiency savings targets
Need for co-ordinated approach to procurement	The Council is now working in partnership with Maidstone Borough Council to achieve this
Clarification of structures and alignment to priority areas	A top level management restructure has been implemented saving the Council over £200K
Master plan of the Borough / Local Development Framework –	The Council has signed up to one of the first Local Authority Asset Backed Vehicles to be established in the UK to develop master plans for its four major towns.
Vision for the Borough and integrated strategies and policies	A draft Vision for 2026 has been approved by Council
Improvements to ICT systems to deliver improved performance and service delivery, e.g. CRM, Financial Management System, Performance Management System	The Council's CRM system has been updated and rolled out at the Gateway and a new Financial Management System has been introduced.
Recruitment and retention challenges	Recruitment challenges have generally been successful with the exception of Civil Enforcement Officers. The Council has a new recruitment portal in partnership with KCC which is proving very successful
More flexible working/different ways of working/process re-engineering	All major customer-facing roles have been examined and integrated into the Council's CRM system. More comprehensive work is being undertaken through a joint approach with Maidstone and Ashford borough councils
Joint/Two tier working – working in partnership to deliver services	The Council has established a Mid-Kent Improvement Partnership with Ashford, Maidstone and Swale and new partnership arrangements have been introduced in the areas of benefits fraud, Licensing and Planning
Positive news management – working within an ever decreasing budget and increased pressure on delivery	morale and motivation maintained so far despite some difficult decisions having to be made and seen through this year.

## PEOPLE STRATEGY 2009-2014

The People Strategy clearly contributes to the Council's cross-cutting corporate commitments (delivering high quality services. Improving customer service and ensuring that we are well-managed, proactive and offering VFM). However, the People Strategy also very much supports the key themes identified in the Council's Vision and now incorporated into the Strategic Plan, as the following grid makes clear:

Healthy	Confident
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote healthy lifestyles for all staff.</li> <li>• Work in partnership with the PCT and other local employers to raise awareness of health issues and ensure that best practice is shared.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lifelong learning for staff</li> <li>• Explore partnership with other councils and local organisations to achieve resilience, cost effectiveness and development opportunities</li> <li>• The workforce to be broadly representative of the community in terms of diversity</li> <li>• Secure the dignity at work of all staff at all times.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for development for all staff and to work in partnership to ensure these are maximised.</li> <li>• Encourage community involvement by staff at all levels in order to promote community engagement and local democracy.</li> </ul>
Green	Prosperous
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreeing a travel plan for the Council, to reduce traffic congestion</li> <li>• Leading the way on green issues for the Borough and ensuring that our staff are all well informed on green issues.</li> <li>• Developing a workplace for staff that is pleasant, fit for purpose and conducive to effective work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council as an employer of choice – being the best employer we can be and setting an example, including with contractors.</li> <li>• Working with partners to upskill our workforce and give people in the community better work opportunities such as through supporting apprenticeships, Pathways to Work etc.</li> <li>• Developing expertise in issues that will have relevance for the future, such as sustainability</li> <li>• Developing key partnerships with other Councils and businesses in our Borough.</li> </ul>

In order to achieve our aims in the difficult financial climate of the next few years, we will need:

- Robust policies that give us the framework to encourage excellence in the delivery of our vision and to resolve staffing problems efficiently, effectively and fairly when things go wrong. These will be delivered in partnership with the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership.
- Well trained and effective managers who treat staff with dignity and respect and are able to coach and develop them to deliver the best outcomes for the Borough and to provide opportunities for career progression within Tunbridge Wells Borough Council or with partner organisations.
- A learning culture where learning and development opportunities are of high quality, clearly linked to desired outcomes and highly valued by all.
- An effective reward strategy that enables the Council to recruit and retain the high quality staff it needs to deliver the vision.
- To ensure that our duty of care to our staff is extended to contractors, especially as partnership working will increase the amount of work done on our behalf by workers who are not directly employed by this Council.
- To create an environment where staff are proud to work for Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.