

THE PEOPLE STRATEGY 2010 - 2013

Introduction

People are at the heart of successful change whether these are citizens, people in partner organisations, elected members, employees, managers or the Trade Unions. They have and will continue to be fundamental in enabling Stockton to maintain its position as one of the highest performing councils in the country.

This Strategy will support and help deliver our priorities and vision for the Borough. It has been developed in consultation with our partners, managers, staff and trade unions. It builds on previous strategies and will be key to empowering our people to deliver great value to customers and make Stockton an even better place to live and work. The Strategy will help us to meet the challenges facing public services over the next three years and it will help us to meet our vision:

‘We are passionate about creating a clean, green and vibrant place where people are safe, healthy and happy.

We are ambitious, open and fair.

We deliver great services for your money.’

Neil Schneider

Chief Executive

Terry Laing

Cabinet Member: Management and Finance

What has been achieved so far

Since the last People Strategy was developed in 2007, there have been enormous changes in the environment in which the Council works and these changes will continue to grow with the additional pressure of future public spending cuts.

Over the last 3 years the Human Resources Service (HR) has moved from a largely reactive service to a position where people strategies are placed at the heart of corporate planning and policy development. In doing so significant changes have been delivered.

The implementation of single status means that there is now a fair and transparent pay and grading structure in place whilst inefficient and costly premium payments have been eliminated. A Workforce Development Strategy has raised the skills of both managers and employees. Modern working methods are being supported through the introduction of a new flexible working scheme and the highly commended Health and Well Being Strategy, both of which have contributed to a reduction in the number of days lost to absence of 17.5%.

Additional support for managers to help them workforce plan and performance manage is being facilitated through a new people skills development programme, improved workforce planning information and a review of all major HR policies to ensure they are fit for purpose.

Employee engagement with the Council is strong as evidenced through an employee questionnaire and this is being further enhanced through the development of employee networks. This work is now being extended to our citizens through the Recruitment and Engagement Group, together with a range of proactive measures to improve the diversity of our workforce.

Investors in People status has been retained with the achievement of a silver award against the new more challenging standards. The Council is working more closely with our trade union colleagues and the partnership agreement will provide the foundation to enable us to jointly tackle some of the difficult challenges which lie ahead.

The introduction of a Balanced Scorecard in HR means that they are able to benchmark themselves and measure performance over a range of indicators, which have been agreed corporately.

Challenges over the next 3 years

The next 3 years will create even greater challenges. Stockton Council is a highly successful organisation and this success needs to be sustained over time. ¹Research shows that sustaining high quality performance needs high quality leaders and managers, a workforce which is fully committed to the Council's vision and values and an organisation which can work flexibly with shared knowledge and learning across functions and departments and which demonstrates good people management.

The future financial climate however will bring special challenges. It is certain that demand for services will continue to grow and we therefore need to be in a position to respond to change quickly and flexibly, working with partners across the public, private and voluntary sectors to deliver cost effective, personalised services into the future.

The Borough is an area of contrast with a quarter of our residents living in the least deprived areas whilst just over a quarter live in the most deprived areas. The consequence of this is that there are considerable inequalities. Life expectancy is lower than for England as a whole and priority areas include reducing early deaths from cancer, heart and respiratory diseases, to addressing obesity and excessive smoking and alcohol consumption.

The Borough has a population of 191,900 of whom 120,000 are of working age. Although on a number of economic comparisons we compare well with the North East, we compare less favourably when the whole of Great Britain is taken into account. We have higher unemployment, fewer qualifications and more people claiming sickness and incapacity benefits.

74% of our employees live within the Borough. By aligning our actions to these wider priorities we can help to reduce inequalities and improve the quality of life for our employees and their families. Detailed workforce information is attached at Annex 1 and Annex 2.

¹ CIPD (2010), Shaping the Future – Sustainable Organisation Performance. What really makes a difference

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Continuing to meet our priorities and improve the life of our citizen's means we need effective and ambitious leaders who are able to work in a complex and rapidly shifting environment. They must be able to develop and promote a shared vision of the Council, work together, take corporate responsibility for change and engage with and motivate their staff. People are at the heart of successful change whether these are citizens, people in partner organisations, employees, managers or Trade Unions. An effective HR service will be critical to its success.

Going forward the focus for HR will be to support the Council in transforming the way it currently works. This means that employees and managers will need new skills and the right competencies to achieve successful change. Staff will need to work more flexibly and be encouraged to work in new and innovative ways and we will need to develop different sorts of employment models. We will need to jointly plan with our partners instead of competing to ensure we have a skilled and diverse pool of talented applicants reflective of the area. If the Council is to become truly people centred, excellence in the key competencies of employee engagement and working in partnership will be critical to our success.

The Five Strategic People Management Priorities 2010 – 2013

Developing the Organisation – to develop new ways of working and achieving value for money

Over the next few years, traditional job profiles and models of service delivery will have to change. Jobs must be focused on the needs of customers and support different models of service delivery. Staff must be supported to work in a flexible working environment to increase customer choice with the focus on results rather than process. We will need to ensure our organisational structures support the delivery of flexible and responsive services where duplication and bureaucracy are effectively tackled.

Achieving excellence in leadership and management

Making these changes relies on highly skilled managers and leaders with the corporate and strategic focus needed to take the organisation forward. The leadership model and key council competencies we need have already been identified as: leading change, working corporately, delivering through partnership, engaging people and managing self. The next stage will be to develop managers appropriately using a variety

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of techniques and building on the current Management Development and Induction Programmes. Key to our success will be the embedding of a coaching and mentoring culture across the organisation

Developing the workforce

The need for a flexible and responsive workforce means that we need to build the skills and capacity of our employees. As a people centred organisation our workforce must be developed so that they have the confidence and competence to respond to new demands, to challenge existing ways of working and to develop new solutions to problems. We need to raise the basic skills of the workforce, look to the future to determine new skill needs and implement career pathways to ensure the best talent is fully utilised.

Recruiting and retaining a diverse and talented workforce

Within Stockton Council a diverse and talented workforce is highly valued. To make the changes required, we need to ensure we can recruit and retain the best staff. We need to provide employment opportunities for those not in education, employment or training, particularly for our young people by increasing the number of apprenticeships. Our recruitment plan will ensure we further improve the diversity of all sectors of the workforce. Retention will improve with improved career development. However, we can no longer work in isolation. Rather than competing with our partners we need to work together to jointly plan to meet the workforce challenges

Working Together

A committed workforce means that our employees will be motivated to achieving the Council's objectives; they will be willing to 'go the extra mile', critical in the current economic climate. Employees will want to get involved in new initiatives and in supporting change. Research shows that those companies who are ranked as the best to work for are amongst those that are also the most efficient and provide the best value for money.

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We will work with our employees and trades unions to ensure that they understand the Council's goals, are fully communicated with and have the confidence and freedom to voice their ideas for change. Employees will have good training and career opportunities and will be involved in decisions affecting their services. Their health, safety and well being at work will be fully supported.

How will we achieve these Priorities?

Delivering these priorities is the responsibility of elected members and all Council employees but particularly its leaders and managers. Managers will be fully supported to become competent in their role and will be given the information necessary to ensure they can plan for the workforce they need now and in the future as part of the service planning process. The role of HR is to lead and support these changes, working in partnership with Xentrall who will play a critical role in helping HR to deliver the Action Plan. The key actions have been set out in a detailed 3 year programme which can be found at [\(link\)](#). The broad success factors associated with each action have also been included.

The Council Plan

The Council's priorities are set out in the Council Plan 2010 - 2013. The Plan sets out key corporate improvement activities through Service Improvement Plans and business priorities through Business Unit Plans in support of the Sustainable Community Strategy. Alterations needed in line with latest resident views, developing national, sub-regional and local priorities, policy and context, the economic climate and the Council's budget position going forward are incorporated as the plan is reviewed each year. The Council Plan's framework is set out under 3 headings:

- Telling our story (Place, People, Your Council)
- Place – Economic Regeneration and Transport, Environment and Housing, Culture and Leisure
- People – Community Safety, services for children and young people, services for adults, health and wellbeing, stronger communities

Data for Stockton on Tees

- An unemployment rate of 8.5% compared with 6.2% nationally. 34.5% are aged 18 - 24
- 14% have no qualifications compared with 12.4% nationally and of those that are qualified there are less people qualified at NVQ levels 3 and 4
- Total numbers of Job Seekers Allowance claimants total 5.6% compared with 4.1% nationally of whom 33.8% have been unemployed for 6 months or longer

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- 9,630 people are claiming sickness and incapacity benefits – 5% compared with 3.9% nationally

There are also significant health inequalities within the Borough and life expectancy for both males and females is worse than the average for England. Health priorities are:

- To reduce early deaths from cancer, heart and respiratory diseases
- To address obesity
- To reduce excessive smoking and alcohol consumption

Workforce Information

Diversity

	Number of Employees		
	1.4.2009 (Actual)	31.3.2010 (Target)	31.3.2011 (Target)
% of top 5% of employees who have a disability	6.69%	6.93%	7.56%
% of employees with a disability	6.21%	6.93%	7.05%
% of top 5% of employees from an ethnic minority	2.16%	3.78%	4.41%
% of employees from an ethnic minority	1.7%	2.3%	2.6%

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Absence

	Number of Employees		
	1.4.2009 (Actual)	31.3.2010 (Target)	31.3.2011 (Target)
Working days lost to sickness	10.14	9.64	9.14

Age Profile of Workforce

	Age						
	16-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-65	65+
Number of Employees	0.38	11.71	20.82	31.96	28.79	5.81	0.53

Employee Turnover 2009/2010: 8.15% (As at 4.3.10)

Skills Data: 89% of the workforce has attained a level 2 NVQ and 70% have attained level 3.

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Length of Service on leaving

	Length of Service (years)						
	Under 1 year	2-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-24	25+
Number of Employees (%)	18.42	28.60	18.42	13.33	6.66	5.44	9.13

Reasons for Leaving

	Reasons for Leaving							
Number of Employees (%)	Alternative Employment	Dismissal	Retirement	Personal Reasons	TUPE Transfer	Voluntary redundancy / retirement	Health	Other
	29.82	4.21	20.53	17.54	9.65	5.62	8.77	3.86

ACTION PLAN 2010 – 13

Appendix 2

Strategic Priority 1: Developing the Organisation – to develop new ways of working and achieve value for money.

Objective: Facilitate new ways of working and other models of service delivery including the implementation of Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation reviews (EIT) and Workwise². To encourage the sharing of knowledge across functions and develop policies and procedures which enable employees to work flexibly to better meet the needs of their customers. To support the development of a people focused organisational culture, which ensures the workforce promote the Council’s vision, lead and engage in successful change , manage themselves effectively, engage with others and are able to work together in partnership.

KEY ACTIONS	BY WHEN	OUTCOME
Support to EIT reviews and other major organisational reviews such as Building Schools for the Future	In accordance with agreed timetable	Achievement of targets set out in the relevant reviews
Identify and support opportunities for partnership working	2010 - 2013	Achievement of efficiencies or increased income Improved quality of service delivery
Support reviews of organisational structures to facilitate team and project based service delivery	2012	Improve knowledge sharing, innovation and creativity

² Workwise is the Council’s project aimed at the increasing the use of smarter working practices.

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Support the delivery of HR Online in partnership with Xentrall	2010	Improve the accuracy and accessibility of personal data and achieve efficiency savings through reduced paperwork and printing
Develop competency based role profiles	2012	Improved recruitment and retention of high quality employees
Continue to review HR Policies, which will support the Council’s objectives including the evaluation of the health and well being strategy, flexible working, volunteering, secondment, a corporate suggestion scheme and a travel policy.	In accordance with planned programme	Effective policies which enable the Council to achieve its identified objectives
Evaluate the current pay and grading process and undertake an equalities audit	2011	Facilitate succession planning. Reduce the costs of recruitment Meet equality objectives and minimise the risks of equal pay claims.

Strategic Priority 2: Achieving Excellence in Leadership and Management

Objective: to embed a coaching and mentoring culture and ensure our managers exemplify Gallup’s 12 elements of great managing³. This will include the delivery of a range of development opportunities for our leaders and managers in accordance with identified need

KEY ACTION	BY WHEN	OUTCOME
Develop and deliver a coaching and mentoring strategy.	2012	Improved individual and team performance
Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of coaching and mentoring	2013	

³ Based on extensive research, the 12 elements critical to employee engagement are as follows: I know what is expected of me; I have the right materials to do my job right; I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day; in the last week I have received recognition or praise; someone at work seems to care about me; someone at work encourages my development; my opinions seem to count; I am connected to the vision of my organisation; my colleagues are committed to doing high quality work; I have a friend at work; in the last 6 months someone has talked to me about my progress; in the last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.

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Assess all managers to identify skills gaps in the key Council competencies required to achieve a successful people centred organisation	2010	Leaders and managers who exemplify the behaviors and competencies required within the Council
Encompass the 12 elements of great management in all management development and induction programmes	2011	Improvement in the recruitment and retention of employees and an increase in customer satisfaction
Develop a succession planning and talent management policy	2010	Retention of high performing individuals and a reduction in recruitment costs
Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the policies	2012	
Investigate the development of an in house graduate development programme	2011	Improved retention of talented employees
Continue roll out of existing management programmes	2010 to March 2011	Improved individual and team performance
Incorporate future development opportunities following 360 degree appraisal programme and appraisal to meet identified needs	2011	
Evaluate and review current management development and induction programmes	2011	
Identify future management development needs for 2013 - 16	2012	

Strategic Priority 3: Developing the Workforce

Objective: To raise the skills of the workforce, identify opportunities for collaborative working and support the development of career pathways for specific groups of staff

KEY ACTION	BY WHEN	OUTCOME
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To develop a new Workforce Development Plan for the period 2010 – 2013 to develop the skills and ability of our employees and help us to plan for our future workforce requirement.	2010	Increase in skills levels by 1% each year at NVQ level 2 and level 3 or equivalent
Review the approach to appraisals and refresh the competencies to ensure they encompass Gallup's 12 elements of great managing and the Council's vision	2011	Raising the skills of the workforce, ensuring behaviours are in line with the competencies. An improvement in the recruitment and retention of the best employees to deliver the best services.
To further develop workforce data to facilitate workforce planning	2011	Target actions more effectively
To develop a strategy to increase the number of Apprentices aged 14-19	2010	Increase in the number of apprentices by 50 by 31.3.2011
Work with Xentrall to implement PSE Training module to analyse workforce skills	2011	Improved workforce development data to focus training interventions. More efficient training administration system
Develop skills profiles and identify and develop career pathways for identified job roles.	2011	Improved retention of talented employees Reduction in the number of vacancies in respect of hard to fill posts
Develop a joint workforce development plan within the Tees Valley	2012	More cost effective recruitment and retention initiatives. Reduction in skill shortages
Evaluate current Workforce development Plan to evaluate the Return on Investment	2010	
Determine whether to go for re-assessment of Investors in People	2012	

Strategic priority 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse and Talented Workforce

Objective: To increase the diversity of the workforce, tackle areas with recruitment and retention difficulties in conjunction with partner organisations and develop a talent management plan for the wider workforce.

KEY ACTION	BY WHEN	OUTCOME
Deliver the actions set out in the Recruitment and Retention Action Plan in partnership with the Recruitment and Engagement Group	2010 - 2013	Increase the diversity of the workforce in accordance with agreed targets
Develop effective plans for tackling areas of recruitment shortages (linked to strategic priorities 2 and 3) including the use of volunteers	2011	Increase the diversity of candidates and reduce the costs of recruitment
Further develop E- recruitment within the Council	2011	Increase the diversity of candidates and reduce the costs of recruitment
Develop a talent management plan for the wider workforce	2012	Retention of high performing individuals and a reduction in recruitment costs

Strategic Priority 5: Working Together

Objective: To ensure our employees are committed to the Council’s goals and values and motivated to contribute to the Council’s success whilst feeling their own health, safety and well being at work is fully supported.

KEY ACTION	BY WHEN	OUTCOME
Evaluate current Health and Well Being Strategy and develop new targets to 2013 which support the Councils corporate Health and Well Being Strategy	2011	Reduction in number of days lost to sickness in accordance with corporate targets Reduction in average duration of long term sickness to less than 50

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		days by 2012 Increase in % of employees with no recorded sickness by 0.5% per annum
Develop and market an attractive total reward package for employees	2011	Improved recruitment and retention of high quality employees
Continue to build a sustainable and positive relationship with the Trade Unions	Ongoing	Support the Council in achieving its aims and objectives and improve the working life of employees.
Deliver a corporate level employee engagement and communication plan	2011	Employees fully understand the Councils vision and are actively a part of its delivery
Support the development of employee reward and recognition policies.	2011	Improved retention of employees and improved service delivery
Deliver the actions set out in the Health, Safety and Well Being Policy	2010 - 2013	Reduction in the number of reportable Health and Safety incidents per 1000 employees to 2 per 1000 employees in 2010/11