

## **EMPLOYMENT MATTERS COMMITTEE**

**9 SEPTEMBER 2009**

### **WORKFORCE STRATEGY**

Report from: Tricia Palmer, Assistant Director Organisational Services

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#### **Summary**

To present to Members the Workforce Strategy for approval.

#### **1. Budget and Policy Framework**

1.1 It is within the committee's terms of reference to make recommendations on matters relating to workforce development.

#### **2. Background**

2.1 The Council has previously had a HR strategy, which covers the organisation's approach to managing and supporting its employees. In addition workforce statistics have been produced and provided to senior managers and elected Members. However there needs to be a more co-ordinated approach to considering the profile of the workforce and using this information to determine future HR strategy.

2.2 In addition the new inspection regime of Corporate Area Assessment (CAA) places a greater emphasis on workforce matters. In future the Council will be robustly measured on how well it manages its assets, including the workforce. The relevant measure (Key line of enquiry – KLOE) states:

' Does the organization plan, organize and develop its workforce effectively to support the achievement of its strategic priorities? The organization...

- Has a productive and skilled workforce
- Knows in the medium to longer term what staff it will need, with what skills and has plans to achieve this
- Engages and supports staff in organizational change, and
- Has policies that support diversity and good people management

We need to be able to demonstrate that the Council has fully considered its workforce needs both for now and in the future. This will also clearly support improvements in service as a well-structured approach to recruiting, retaining and developing our staff will inevitably have a positive impact on service delivery.

The issue of improving workforce planning has been given greater emphasis nationally in recent years and in August 2007, Management Team identified workforce planning and capacity as one of its corporate risks. Following on from this internal audit carried out a review of how the council currently manages that risk and made suggestions for some key improvements designed to further mitigate any emerging risks. The audit concluded that:

- The authority does not take a strategic approach to workforce planning
- There are inadequate arrangements to monitor and identify staffing needs
- There is insufficient capacity to meet the identified needs

2.3 The Workforce Strategy (to follow) updates the current People Strategy adopted in 2006 in the light of the above changes and recommendations. An action plan is currently being developed to support the priority areas outlined in the strategy.

### **3. Advice and analysis**

3.1 People are a key driver for this success. Medway Council remains committed to being an employer of choice within the area; to continue to recruit competitively and demonstrate best practice in training and developing its people. As a community leader it continues to set the highest employment standards and help generate economic success through encouraging a more skilled labour market especially in the current economic climate.

3.2 The strategy identifies four workforce priority areas for the Council over the next three years:

- Build a workforce that reflects the community we serve through better workforce planning, recruitment and retention.
- Improve employment opportunities within Medway.
- Improve leadership and management skills across the organisation.
- Train and develop individuals and teams to deliver effective and improving services.

### **4. Risk Management**

4.1 The workforce strategy focuses upon addressing the corporate risks surrounding workforce planning and development identified with the internal audit report (November 2008) as well as the areas identified within CAA.

### **5. Consultation and Communication**

5.1 The strategy has been developed through bringing together the best practice identified by a number of key organisations as well as drawing upon various national strategies concerned with the children's workforce, adult social care transformation, apprenticeships, train-to-gain and others.

- 5.2 The audit process included consulting with a wide range of responsible officers, a survey of service managers, the examination of relevant documents and analysis of demographic data.
- 5.3 The strategy has been discussed with Directors and Assistant Directors.
- 5.4 The strategy will be used as the over-arching workforce development document and will be communicated to managers and the trade unions. Individual proposals within the action plan will be consulted on and communicated as appropriate.
- 5.5 The Workforce Strategy has been developed in line with the council's commitment to promoting equality and diversity. A consultation meeting has been scheduled in September to gather the views of internal stakeholders, including the staff forums, on the proposed actions for taking forward the Strategy and in order to complete the initial screening element for the diversity impact assessment.

## **6. Financial and legal implications**

- 6.1 All financial implications will be met using existing resources.
- 6.2 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

## **7. Recommendations**

- 7.1 That Members comment upon and approve the Workforce Strategy.

### **Lead officer contact**

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### **Background papers**

Employment Matters Committee, *Workforce Planning Update*, 22/01/2009.