



# People Strategy

## 2009 - 2012

A high quality workforce delivering high quality  
services

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## Our priorities

*To improve the quality of people's lives and preserve all that is best in East Herts*

To ensure that we achieve our vision, the Council have identified six key priorities:

- *Promoting prosperity and wellbeing; providing access and opportunities*

Our priority is to enhance the quality of life, health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities, particularly those who are vulnerable.

- *Fit for purpose, services fit for you*

Our priority is to deliver customer focused services by maintaining and developing a well managed and publicly accountable organisation.

- *Pride in East Herts*

Our priority is to improve the standards of neighbourhood and environmental management in our towns and villages.

- *Caring for what's built and where*

Our priority is to care for and improve our natural and built environment.

- *Shaping now, shaping the future*

Our priority is to safeguard and enhance our unique mix of rural and urban communities ensuring sustainable, economic and social opportunities including the continuation of effective development control and other measures.

- *Leading the way, working together*

Our priority is to deliver responsible community leadership that engages with our partners and the public.

We recognise that these are key issues that we need to tackle in the short and long term working closely with partners and stakeholders. We have made a decision to invest in our priorities areas Environment and Customer Services. Along with major service issues these challenges will be the focus for budget decisions and service plans.

We are also clear that we cannot achieve success without the performance and contribution of the people who work for us. These priorities therefore shape the people requirements for the Council and will determine the skills, talent, knowledge and behaviours needed from our employees.

## **What change is predicted?**

Both national and local factors are driving change and bringing the need for organisational development. These include:

- Rising customer expectations about choice and personalisation of services.
- Community leadership and 'Place Shaping' – the creative use of powers and influence to promote the general well-being of a community and its citizens.
- The predicted growth in population and housing in and around East Herts bringing significant environmental impact and increasing demand for services.
- The drive for efficiency including LAA, Pathfinder, pressure on Local Government finance settlement.
- The drive to implement new partnerships and new shared services arrangements through the Pathfinder initiative.
- Recession – effects on the local economy and the Council's support for residents in an increasingly demanding time.

- To deliver customer focused services by maintaining and developing a well managed and accountable organisation.
- The improvement in outcomes for customers set out in Service Plans.
- To demonstrate value for money and drive out inefficiencies and cost. To manage actions that mitigates increased pressures on the budget.
- Building a local government workforce for the future.
- Changing the way the Council works through the delivery of the C3W Programme.
- Embedding the performance culture with its focus on measurement, assessment and outcome based services.
- The use of new technologies to improve productivity in the way we work with each other and with our partners and clients.
- The imperative to better manage our office accommodation to ensure it supports new ways of working.
- Changes in how people wish to work, focusing on flexible working and family friendly policies.

## What does this mean for people management?

In developing the People Strategy we listened to our customers and to people across the Council about the key people requirements for success in making East Herts a great place to work and meeting the pressures for change. You gave us your views through staff surveys, liP review, 1-1's with CMT, Heads of Service, UNISON and members of the Local Joint Panel and HR Committee. This is what you told us:

- Delivering excellent customer service is everyone's business.
- We need to ensure our workforce reflects the diversity of the local community at all levels.
- We need to ensure our people practices support the Council's priorities and our local communities.
- We need to develop our leaders and managers as more effective people managers.
- We need to empower staff to be more efficient, to streamline ways of working and drive down costs wherever possible, making technology work for us.
- We need to be much smarter at workforce planning – predicting our people requirements.
- We need a flexible work force able to drive change.
- We need to improve our communications with staff and engage them fully in the changing business.
- We need to work harder at delivering consistent people management practices within a framework of robust employment policies.
- We need to ensure key talent is sourced, motivated, and retained.

- We need to invest and develop our people, ensuring we have the right skills, knowledge and behaviours.
- We need to develop a performance based culture, measuring and maximising employees' performance, promoting innovation, team working, encouraging positive attitudes and behaviours and supporting staff to work in different more productive ways.
- We need to align incentives in pay systems with achieving the Council's priorities promoting new ways of working and to reinforce high performance, motivation, including encouraging a total rewards approach.
- We need to ensure our people have the right tools, processes, policies and environment they need to succeed.

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## People Strategy 2009-2012

The People Strategy is the Council's framework for the delivery of people management over the next three years. Everyone has some responsibility for delivering the seven key people objectives identified in this document.

These seven objectives are the building blocks of our People Strategy. They will ensure that the work of the HR Service is closely aligned to the Council's objectives.

### Organisational Development

- Ensure managers have the skills and capability to support a performance culture with its focus on measurement, assessment and outcome based services.
- Engaging staff and encouraging their contribution to organisational improvement/change at the earliest opportunity.
- Support the success of the C3W programme. Ensuring staff have the skills, equipment and working environment they need to work efficiently and effectively.
- Develop a more flexible workforce supported by flexible employment packages.
- Integrate workforce planning with strategic, financial and service planning to inform decision making and help drive out costs.
- Ensure initiatives are embedded into the organisation and action plans are followed through to completion.

### Learning and Development

- Enable the Council to develop a performance based culture - making the link between corporate priorities, service and personal objectives, performance and learning and development by:
  - Ensuring the Performance Development Review Scheme (PDRS) is fit for purpose, easy to use and a benefit to managers and staff.
  - Developing a learning organisation, creating a culture of innovation and continuous improvement.
  - Improving the link between the corporate training plan and corporate priorities, to provide staff with the skills and knowledge they need to deliver the Council's services and improve performance.

- Maintain the Investors in People (IiP) Standard, improving the way the Council works, through the success of staff.
- Maximise the value for money from spending on training including government funding and initiatives for learning and development.

### **Resourcing**

- Use robust population, labour market and workforce data to develop a comprehensive picture of current and future recruitment and retention needs.
- Develop streamlined, efficient and effective recruitment processes and systems to source high quality people.
- Manage staff potential by improving career opportunities and progression.
- Develop succession planning for critical roles.
- Identify internal actions (such as redesigning roles or processes) to resolve recruitment and retention problems.
- Identify external actions (review external suppliers) to ensure we attract the quality of applicants and ensure value for money.
- Review and optimise the mix of permanent and short term appointments

### **Equality and Diversity**

- Support the commitment, achievement and evaluation of the Corporate Equality Plan.
- Promote equality of opportunity and diversity in employment and training.

### **Employee Relations and Reward**

- Ensure employee relations issues are managed fairly and effectively by reviewing and improving policies and procedures and ensuring managers have the skills and support they need to manage any issues arising from performance or conduct
- Ensure that people practices support the Council's values.
- Work in partnership with Trade Unions, to achieve fair and affordable conditions of employment for staff.
- Modernise pay systems and complete a review of benefits to ensure they motivate, aid retention and are value for money.

### **Health and Safety**



- Support the commitment, achievement and evaluation of the Corporate Health and Safety Plan.
- Ensure the health, safety and welfare of staff.
- Provide a pro-active Occupational Health Unit

### **HR and Payroll Service**

- Improve customer service, providing a value for money, efficient service to the Council.
- Deliver an efficient payroll service to East Herts that is accurate and timely.
- Ensure people management information is reliable and informs people management decisions within the Council.
- Work with management to improve our HR management information targets on turnover, sickness absence, training and development/performance management and equalities monitoring.
- Review all transactional processes in order to streamline processes and get the basics right.
- New opportunities for partnership working are explored to support Pathfinder and shared services.

### **How will the impact of the People Strategy be measured?**

We will set challenging targets annually. Our performance in achieving our strategic objectives will be closely monitored and measured against those targets.

Our targets will be measured through our people management information statistics; achievement of action plans; improvement in the staff survey measures; achievement of external standards, recognition, awards e.g. Investors in People and through HR quarterly performance reports.

Progress on meeting these will be measured and reported to the Corporate Management Team and HR Committee annually to demonstrate the difference being made to the Council as a result of implementation of the strategy.

## **How will we keep the People Strategy relevant?**

Any strategy needs to be kept relevant by continuously assessing it against changing requirements and expectations within the Council and in the light of external drivers. We need managers, trade unions and staff to play their full role by commenting on and identifying any gaps that emerge over time.

Please contact the Head of HR with any views or any questions about the content or applications of our People Strategy.

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