

## **Business Plan 2006/07**

### **The Director of Human Resources Overview**

The Human Resources Directorate contributes to all areas of the strategy either directly or through the provision of support to front line services. This overview highlights the Directorate activities linked to the Corporate Strategy. It also shows specific corporate projects that the Director will lead on or contribute to during this period. Performance against corporate health performance indicators and local indicators are reported to Personnel Committee. A Service Programme of activity is mapped out including more detailed project plans where appropriate and these are held within the Directorate. These are used to set objectives for staff and to monitor progress. Performance against the key service priorities are reported to the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Personnel Committee.

### **Corporate Strategy**

The Corporate Strategy is divided into three key areas, 'Our Values, Better Services and Working Better'. The Directorate applies the Corporate Values to all the work it undertakes and strives to reinforce these values with staff. This is from selection and induction of staff through its involvement with a whole range of activities to the design and implementation of strategies, policies and procedures. A key aspect of the Directorate's work is to develop the Council as an employer of choice.

The Directorate provides support to the activities of the Council to achieve Better Services by ensuring the effective management and utilisation of staff through employment practices and the provision of a safe working environment. It endeavours to increase the access to employment at the Council and other organisations where appropriate. Ensuring that employment policies and procedures and action plans reinforce the Council's aims to minimise pollution and make efficient use of resources through the increased use of flexible working patterns, home working and technology.

The most visible area of contribution for the Directorate is in the area of 'Working Better'. Last year the HR Directorate produced a corporate Workforce Development Plan, linking the workforce requirements from Directorates and the key priorities from the National Workforce Development Strategy into a strategy to take the Council forward in meeting the workforce challenges over the next 3 years and to meet the requirement under the Corporate Strategy for a skilled workforce. A key element of work is now underway to implement the developments identified within the Plan and develop key targets.

Other activities in this area are assisting in the development of customer focus when providing services and developing modern working practices that meet changing customer expectations and changing staff expectations. Ensuring we act in a sustainable manner and that we assist services in meeting the needs of all our community. The Directorate assists in performance management and service and financial planning, identifying efficiencies and savings in the Directorate and across the organisation. The Directorate is improving the Human Resource information systems and technology to support managers and staff and improve communications.

The training and development activities provided and coordinated by the Directorate linked to the appraisal process and corporate initiatives underpin the organisation's ability to deliver the Corporate Strategy.

### Corporate Programmes and Project Management

As a Member of the Corporate Management Team the Director is involved in a number of cross cutting activities and leads on projects. The Director of Human Resources has particular input into work and improvements in Customer Focus, Communications, and the development of a Skilled Workforce with Modern Working Practices, Equalities and Programme and Project Management design and training.

The Director is currently leading on the Flexible Working project with the aim of testing the feasibility of deploying flexible working practices such as home-working, remote working and hot-desking across the Council combined with flexible working hours. The project will have a major impact on improving customer service and becoming an employer of choice thus aiding recruitment and retention of high calibre staff.

This work forms a key part of the 2010 programme and supports the Workforce Development Plan. The outcome will also impact on the Council's accommodation review and support other key priorities such as Safeguarding the Environment, Customer Focus and the development of an Efficient and Effective Working Environment.

The work undertaken on the development and implementation of a council wide project management system needs to be continued and enhanced by the use of programme management to enable better working and coordination of improvements to services and projects to be delivered across the organisation.

### Areas for Improvement

As with all other Directorates, the HR Directorate has reviewed services under the Gershon/Efficiency agenda and all work will continue to be done with this in mind. The work undertaken in previous years to provide a sound structure of policies and procedures has supported the department's work and these will be reviewed in the light of additional employment legislation and changing practices to ensure they continue to assist meeting the challenges of the coming year.

The introduction of the linked Human Resource and Payroll system which enables self service for staff and Managers covering a number of activities and the greatly improved reporting and monitoring functions will significantly provide efficiencies both within the Directorate and across the organisation.

We now need to build on the experience gained over the last year within the Directorate to further develop staff in undertaking workforce planning and organisation development projects and to increase the ability of the staff to balance the need for pro-active strategy and policy development work at a corporate level with a need for a reactive demand led support service for managers and staff.

### Corporate Management

Over the last 18 months there has been a higher level of organisational development, combining and restructuring Directorates. The resulting Heads of Service and management teams now need support and development to ensure that the Council has strong leadership to face the opportunities and challenges ahead. The HR Director and the team have had considerable involvement in organisational development and will continue to support and develop managers and their staff to meet the opportunities and challenges of the future.

The Director and staff lead and take part in number of corporate groups and initiatives and this will continue during this period.

## Resources

The Human Resources Directorate staffing levels have only shown limited growth since 1999 and there has been a steady increase in workload, an increase in new legislation requiring policy development and changes in working practices. Whilst the directorate is relatively stable, there are two staff changes and there has been a large proportion of professionally qualified staff taking maternity leave. This combined with the continuing pressure on resources will mean that there will be an ongoing need to manage all resources effectively and efficiently to deliver the key service priorities.