

**REPORT TO:** Corporate Services Policy Performance Board

**DATE:** 23 February 2010

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director – Corporate & Policy

**SUBJECT:** Halton Borough Council's People Strategy

**WARDS:** Borough wide

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

The purpose of the report is to present a draft of the Council's People Strategy for consideration and comment.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

**Members recommend to Executive Board that the People Strategy for Halton Borough Council is adopted and implemented.**

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

Members will be aware that the Council has initiated two processes, which will have a significant impact on the way it organises itself.

These are:

- 1) The Efficiency Review, which is changing the way we work;
- 2) The work with the Leadership Centre, to improve the way that the Council's Management Team and Executive Board work, and in particular, make space for the development of strategic policy, complemented by the advice from Sensei UK to Management Team on managing change.

A major factor in any organisation's ability to implement change will be dependent upon the availability and potential of its workforce. This is why Halton Borough Council is developing a People Strategy.

The Strategy has been prepared by a cross-directorate working group, which also included a representative from the Trade Unions.

A People Strategy is founded upon the principle that developing their 'people' best develops organisations. If our people are well trained, are well motivated and they feel that they are being treated well, and then good organisational performance will follow.

## **What is a People Strategy?**

Whilst there are many similarities between a Workforce Development Plan, a Human Resource Strategy and a People Strategy, there are also some notable distinctions. Workforce Development Plans help us to decide how many employees are needed now and will be needed in the future to prepare for and respond to workforce planning issues. A Human Resource Strategy can create a framework to ensure that we recruit, retain and reward the right number of people with the right skills to deliver our strategic priorities.

However, a People Strategy is an overarching strategy for how people will be deployed, managed and developed within the organisation and how they will be expected to behave. A key driver in the development of any People Strategy is the relationship between delivering customer focused services and ensuring that there is an appropriate workforce in place to do this.

## **Purpose of a People Strategy**

At Halton Borough Council, we recognise that a strategic approach is needed to develop a workforce, which is best able to deliver our corporate objectives. To achieve this, we need the right people, working in the right way and within the right culture.

Therefore, through the development of a People Strategy the organisation will be able to address leadership, skills development, recruitment and retention and pay issues in a structured and coordinated way.

Developing a People Strategy is helping us to plan for the future by providing a framework for us to assess our current workforce and people management activity and identify any gaps that need to be filled. The strategy can then act as a forerunner to directorate Workforce Development Plans, which provide information on operational/practical human resources requirements in greater detail.

Our People Strategy is divided into nine sections:

Section 1 – outlines why we have developed a People Strategy. We make reference to the role people play in improving organisational performance. The development of a People Strategy is helping us to plan for the future by providing a framework for us to assess our current workforce and people management activity. It also allows us to address leadership, skills development, recruitment and retention and pay issues in a structured and coordinated way.

Section 2 – provides a summary of ‘where we are now’ in relation to the background and strategic context for the development of our

People Strategy. The section also explores the environment in which we operate, 'where we are going' and how internal and external factors have influenced the development of people based priorities for the organisation.

Section 3 – outlines 'what we want to achieve', our vision for the type of organisation we would wish to develop and emphasises the close links between Halton's Community Strategy and Halton Borough Council's corporate plan and the harmony that exists between our borough-wide and corporate priorities. This section also reaffirms the importance of our workforce in driving forward and implementing these priorities. However, the section also recognises that if our People Strategy is to be implemented successfully, then 'People' issues must be firmly embedded within our business/service planning processes

Section 4 - having outlined in earlier sections, the vision and type of organisation we would like to have in the future, section 4 introduces the 'how we are going to get there' and includes the key strategic aims that will enable us to achieve our vision, identifying the priority actions needed to achieve this. Key priorities are:

1. Attract, develop, and retain excellent people;
2. Prepare for change, and promote improvement
3. Value the diversity of our workforce
4. Develop leadership
5. Maintain our 'can do' business culture
6. Meet customer needs
- 7 Recognise the role of partner agencies in meeting customer needs
- 8 Promote and fulfil the duty to safeguard children and adults of Halton

Section 5 – This section focuses on key areas of work, which we would wish to implement.

Section 6 – Implementing the Strategy provides information on an action plan and supporting strategies and documents, for example, work force development plans.

Section 7 – provides a summary of the Efficiency Review process.

Section 8 – evaluating the strategy; here we emphasise the fact that our People Strategy is not a 'one off document' and will need to be continually reviewed and refreshed. This will only be possible if people strategy strategic aims are embedded within the operational and service planning processes of our organisation and we set out plans for how we intend to do this.

Section 9 - Appendices

## **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Members are advised that it would be the intention to launch the strategy prior to the implementation of the Council's new structures in April 2010. This is because the People Strategy will be used as a reference point for ensuring that we continue to develop and maintain a workforce that can provide and deliver the services that our customers both want and need. It will also help us to focus on the wider workforce planning as well as learning and development activity needed to implement the Efficiency Review Programme.

## **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

A People Strategy provides a framework for planning our future workforce requirements in a structural and co-ordinated way. Its main purpose is to bring together into one place a strategy for how our people will be deployed, managed and developed within our organisation.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

### **6.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

### **6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

### **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

### **6.4 A Safer Halton**

### **6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

The key to the People Strategy is that it focuses on how we manage our people to deliver our Corporate Priorities. If we implement the People Strategy action plan it will help us to deploy our resources to agreed priorities in the best way possible. The People Strategy is also being used to flag up and transfer areas of notable practice across the organisation, and to identify areas where improvements can also be made. Therefore, this approach has positive implications for all the Council's priorities.

## **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

There are no significant risks arising from this report.

## **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

The importance of Halton's Equalities Scheme is reflected in the Council's People Strategy. A key driver in the development of our People Strategy has been the relationship between delivering customer

focused services and ensuring that there is an appropriate workforce in place to do this.

To do this, at the core of the document is a commitment to Value the Diversity of Our Workforce. This aim focuses on building a diverse workforce that is best placed to understand the needs of our customers, the people of Halton.

The ultimate aim of the People Strategy will be to make it possible for Halton Borough Council to take a leading role in securing a better future for the people of Halton. To achieve this, our People Strategy will allow us to make sure that:

“The Council is a first class employer that engages a well-trained, motivated and committed workforce in a working environment of trust, cooperation and respect”.

## **9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

| <b>Document</b>                          | <b>Place of Inspection</b> | <b>Contact Officer</b> |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>People Strategy<br/>0151 471 7526</b> | <b>Municipal Building</b>  | <b>Wesley Rourke</b>   |