

# People Strategy 2009 - 2011

## Part 1

**Gill Martin**  
**Head of Human Resources**  
Civic Centre  
Plymouth  
PL1 2AA  
01752 304890  
[gill.martin@plymouth.gov.uk](mailto:gill.martin@plymouth.gov.uk)

## **Contents**

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>The Vision</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Our Values</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>The Context – National picture and future challenges</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>The Context – Local picture</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Working in Partnership</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Where are we now?</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Where do we want to be (the key challenges ahead)?</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>How do we get there? - Overview of Corporate Workforce Development Plan</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Monitoring</b>

## 1 Introduction

Plymouth City Council employs more than 13,000 people in a variety of roles and across a range of services and is the largest employer in Plymouth.

This People Strategy has been developed to ensure the diverse workforce is fit for the future to deliver excellent value for money services to the people of Plymouth.

Whilst Plymouth City Council has come a long way in improving services it needs to keep up the momentum of improvement and ensure that the right staff are in the right places with the right skills to help sustain continuous improvement.

If Plymouth is to meet its aspiration of becoming an excellent council by 2012 it now needs to ensure it has a common culture across the council and its employees all share the same vision for the organisation it wants to be.

This latest People Strategy follows on from the “Striving for Success” organisational development strategy and links the Council’s overall vision, values and priorities with national and regional challenges. This document brings together the organisation’s strategic human resource intentions and workforce planning processes to form Plymouth City Council’s overarching approach to people management from 2009 – 2011.

This strategy aims to ensure the organisation:

- 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 organisational change
- Has policies which support diversity and good people management

The strategy is supported by fourteen corporate improvement priorities which have been clustered under three areas of permanent focus for the council:

- Improving our customers’ experience
- Improving our city
- Improving our Council

The council has identified “supporting council staff to perform better” as one of its 14 corporate priorities. This means that people management activities are being recognised as a high priority.

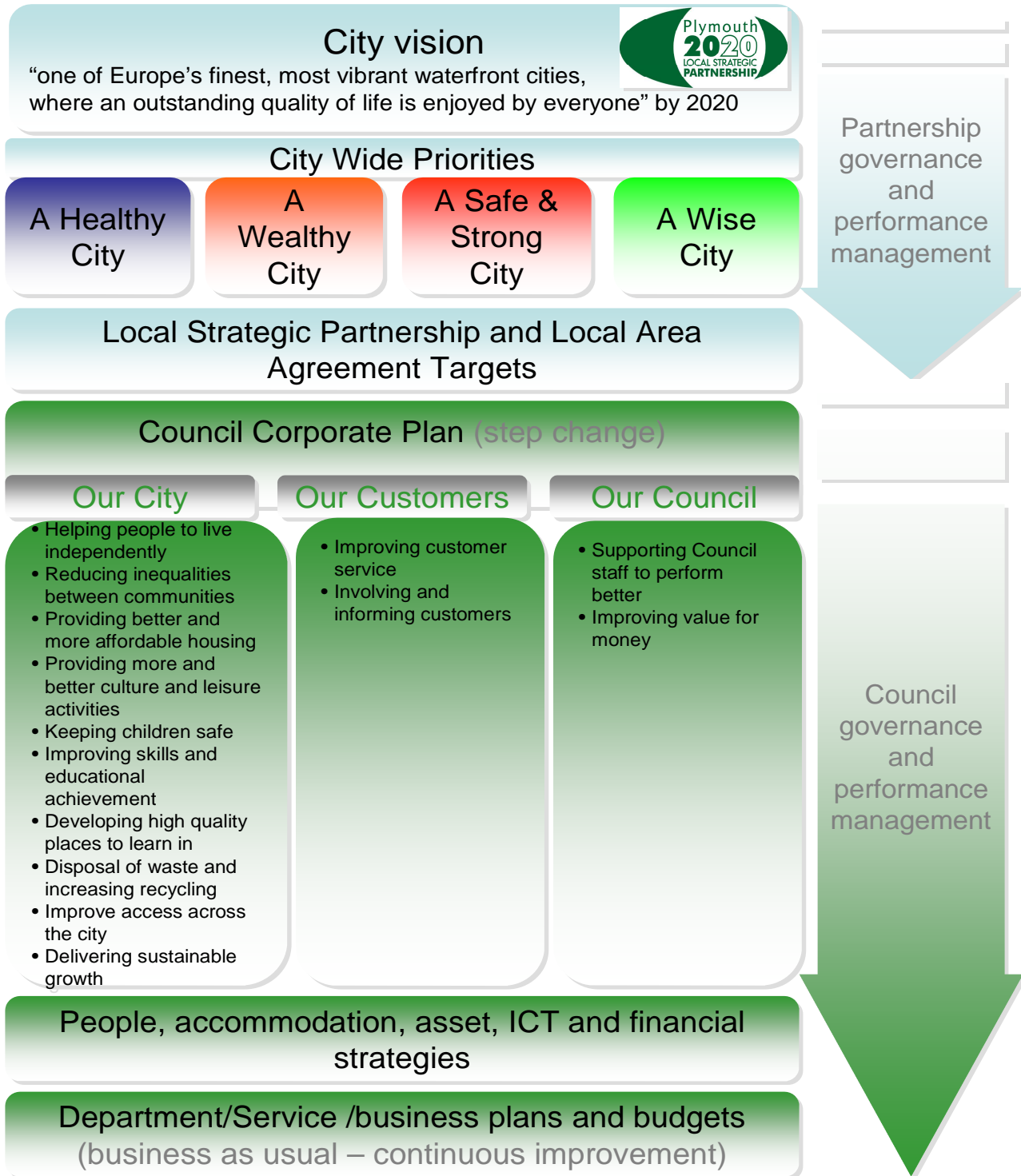
The People Strategy also sets out how the council will respond to the national picture in relation to people management in the public sector.

## 2 The Vision

The Plymouth 2020 local strategic partnership has a shared vision of making Plymouth “One of Europe’s finest, most vibrant waterfront cities, where an outstanding quality of life is enjoyed by everyone” by 2020.

To achieve this shared vision the partners have agreed to focus their priorities around four themed areas aimed at making the city healthy, wealthy, safe and wise.

The diagram below illustrates the relationship between the city goals, the Council's Corporate Improvement Priorities and the support required from the People Strategy:



Partners have their own visions and strategies that ultimately aim to deliver the shared vision for the city. Plymouth City Council's vision is to deliver excellent local services to Plymouth residents and has set itself a goal of becoming an "excellent" council by 2012.

**We are setting an ambitious vision to change the culture of the Organisation and support the development of our staff. This will be delivered through our Corporate Improvement Priority “Supporting staff to perform better”.**

## **Improving our Council: Supporting staff to perform better**

The Council will have a culture focused on the needs of its customers and achieving high performance and good value for money. The culture will deal with change confidently and professionally and it will encourage working across internal and external partner organisations to accomplish shared goals.

Employees will understand the vision for the organisation and the city and know how they contribute. They will be proud to work for Plymouth City Council and about the quality of services they provide. The culture will be one in which all employees know their responsibilities for continuously improving performance and are supported by their managers to acquire new skills and innovate to accomplish this.

They will take responsibility for ensuring their customers are satisfied and strive to be recognised by independent assessment as being amongst the best local authorities in the country.

The organisation will act as one team with aligned goals. There will be effective team working across service, department and LSP partner organisation boundaries and this is reflected in all business plans.

We will know what skills we have in our workforce and be using them flexibly to maximise the benefit to the organisation. All employees will be confident and willing to deal with changes to drive improvement. They will understand that the organisation will be continuously evolving and this will involve working in different ways, as well as greater integration with partners.

The workforce development plan will take into account external challenges and opportunities as well as the changing shape of the organisation and meeting the increasing expectations of our customers.

It will be clear what competencies are required to perform each role and everyone will be performance managed against them. Line managers will use learning and development opportunities to ensure their staff have the skills to carry out their current roles well and to encourage progression.

The Council will be an employer of choice for all sections of the community. Recruitment processes will ensure we recruit the best person for each job. Employees will receive fair and equal pay for the work they do.

Employees know how to make their views heard and are confident that managers and councillors will welcome their input however challenging and will take their views into account where they contribute to corporate goals.

There will be high levels of staff satisfaction with their learning and development opportunities, with management support and with tools to do the job well. Levels of staff retention will be high.

### 3 Our Values

Plymouth City Council aims to base all that we do, and all our working relationships, on a set of core values. They are central to our success as an organisation. Our values are:

- **Ambition**

We aspire to deliver excellent services to the people of Plymouth and to become and remain one of the country's top performing authorities.

- **Equality**

We value the equality and diversity of our residents, employees and visitors.

- **Respect**

We will respect the views of all our staff and stakeholders by being a listening and responsive organisation.

- **Integrity**

We will act with integrity in all that we do.

A competency framework is being developed to embed these values and integrate into a set of behaviours all staff will be measured against.

## 4 The Context – National and future challenges

There are a number of key influences and challenges expected to affect human resources management in local government over the next few years.

### **Modernisation of Local Government**

Strong and prosperous communities – the Local Government White Paper  
Local Government Association's "Closer to People and Places"  
Local Area Agreement  
Community leadership/planning changes  
National Local Government Workforce Strategy 2007 – Local Government the place to be, the place to work  
Public Service Agreement targets  
Comprehensive Area Assessment  
National Performance Indicators

### **Working in partnerships**

Increased need to work in partnership  
Developing closer working with voluntary and community partners  
Further development of links with health and police  
Skill development with partners

### **The financial/resources context**

Pressure on terms and conditions  
Cost of Single Status implementation and Equal Pay claims  
Efficiency Agenda including Gershon  
Economic downturn and affects of this on employment

### **Single Status**

Completion of Job Evaluation  
Embedding new pay and grading systems  
Flexibility to meet ongoing change  
Controlling costs and improving performance

### **Equal Opportunities and diversity in employment**

Mainstreaming of equality policies into day to day employment practices  
Ensure that the image of the Council is positive and welcoming to those groups with low representation in the workplace  
The integration of equality legislation and statutory requirements

### **The changing world of work**

National recruitment and retention challenges  
Capacity and skills gaps  
The Leitch Report  
Changing working patterns  
Increased flexibility and re-skilling  
Development of a lifelong learning approach  
Managing an older workforce  
New working approaches  
Work/life balance issues and employee well-being promotion  
Health and Safety legislation and directives  
OGC report Working beyond walls (2008)

**The National Local Government Workforce Strategy 2007 – Local Government the place to be, the place to work** replaces the National Pay and workforce Strategy (2005). Plymouth City Council's People Strategy acknowledges the priorities highlighted in the national strategy as shown below, whilst also taking into consideration local needs.

#### **The National Pay and Workforce Strategy 2007 focuses on:**

**Organisational development** – effectively building workforce support for new structures and new ways of working to deliver people focused and efficient services, in partnership

**Leadership development** – building visionary and ambitious leadership which makes the best use of both the political and managerial role, operating in a partnership context

**Skills development** – with partners, developing employees' skills and knowledge, in an innovative, high performance, multi-agency context

**Recruitment and retention** – with partners, taking action to address key future occupational skill shortages, promote jobs and careers, identify, develop and motivate talent and address diversity issues.

**Pay and rewards** – modernising pay systems to reflect new structures, new priorities and new ways of working and to reinforce high performance, including encouraging a total rewards approach

These national aims and priorities have been incorporated into Plymouth City Council's Corporate Workforce Development Plan (Part 2).

#### **Local Government Workforce Survey 2008**

The Local Government Workforce Survey was conducted between July and September 2008. Key findings are similar to those identified in Plymouth. This shows that whilst Plymouth has some activities underway, there are some key activities it will need to undertake if it is to achieve excellence by 2012.



- Plymouth City Council is one of 46% of councils who are currently identifying and putting action plans in place to address the most critical workforce issues. Some of these issues are resulting in Plymouth working with other local public sector partners to join up services to clients and make the most effective use of human resource.
- Plymouth is one of 46% of councils who are integrating workforce planning into the business planning cycle across all services.
- Plymouth is one of 92% percent of councils who are taking action to develop their current and future leaders.
- The number of councils operating “grow your own” career pathways has risen to 86% – from 43% 2006. Plymouth is looking to develop a succession planning strategy to respond to this. (Broadly defined as - identifying potential leaders to fill key positions).
- Plymouth is one of many councils who are currently identifying skills gaps in change management, strategic commissioning, organisational development and business processing. Its workforce plan seeks to address the gaps through a range of activities. The development of these skills is critical to achieving excellence.
- Only 17% of councils are using competency based pay systems. Plymouth is currently developing a competency based framework which will drive incremental progression and be linked to performance management. This provides the necessary link to pay and performance improvement.

## 5 The Context – Local Picture

“Value and talk to us more”. This was the key message from the Plymouth City Council staff survey undertaken in 2008.

On the positive side, 65% of staff said they were satisfied with working for the council, with 12% taking a negative view and the rest being undecided.

Positive areas about working for the council were:

- Clarity about your role and how it fits with team and council objectives
- Awareness of long term goals
- Co-operation within teams
- Respecting individual differences

Staff concerns were grouped around the following four areas:

- Leadership and managing change
- Managers listening, motivating and providing feedback
- Fairness across the council and being valued
- Communication and getting customer feedback.

The council now has a wealth of information on issues such as training, induction and use of communication channels in response to 72 questions and staff comments. The councils challenge now is to make sense of all that data and act accordingly. Actions

in response to the survey are contained within Part 2 (Corporate Workforce Development Plan) of the People Strategy.

A further staff survey will be undertaken in September 2009 to identify the progress the council has made.

## **6 Working in Partnership**

The City Council recognises the need to work in partnership if it is to meet the needs of its customers and this is increasingly happening through Local Strategic Partnership. Whilst there are some clear examples of where this is already in place such as the Children's Trust, Adult Social Care, the City Centre Company and Community Safety activities the expectation is this will increase over time and will be tested through the Corporate Area Assessment process.

The organisation is currently considering the opportunities around shared locality working with multi-agency staff supporting more focussed service delivery closer to the people. This presents significant opportunities, but also key people management issues which need to be identified and addressed.

Joined up workforce development is also a significant opportunity and whilst this already exists, in part, the expansion of this across a greater proportion of the multi-agency workforces is an area for more focus through the next three years.

The opportunity also exists to work in partnership within the organisation through joining up the Council's People Strategy, Accommodation Strategy and ICT Strategy to integrate more with partners in future in shared accommodation, systems of work, skills development and performance management arrangements to ensure the customer receives the best value for money and an integrated approach to service delivery.

## **7 Where are we now?**

### **Pay and Reward (Single Status Job Evaluation) – Stage 1**

A Pay and Grading Review has been undertaken for all "NJC for Local Government Services" employees in accordance with the 2004 national pay agreement. This has been a joint exercise with the Trade Unions.

The review has resulted in a new pay and grading structure and further work is planned for revisions to some terms and conditions to support the new pay structure.

Job Evaluation results were announced in February 2008 and the outcomes implemented in December 2008 backdated to the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2007. The Council through this process has reduced the gender pay gap to less than 5% across the new structure.

## **Worklife Balance**

The council is committed to improving worklife balance and there has been significant progress on introducing policies and procedures to support flexible approaches to work to enable the Council to maximise resources and improve service delivery.

Policies/terms and conditions in place which support worklife balance include:-

- Flextime arrangement for large areas of the workforce
- Job Sharing Policy
- Working beyond Retirement Age, developed in accordance with the new Age Regulations
- Term time working
- Time off for Dependants' Care
- Paternity Leave
- Parental Leave
- Maternity/Adoption Leave
- Right to request Flexible working policy

Further work is planned to link to the review of terms and conditions due in 2009/2010 to ensure they support the council's move towards excellence by 2012.

## **Developing Leadership Capacity**

This has been and continues to be a prioritised area of activity. Strong effective leaders will provide the vision and direction the council needs to achieve excellence. It is therefore important to invest in them to develop their skills.

Plymouth City Council introduced an Experienced Manager Development Programme which continues to develop managers to a level 5 Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) standard. To date 186 managers have completed the EMDP programme.

Further Leadership programmes delivered via the corporate training team to develop leadership capacity include;

- ILM Level 2 (introductory certificate in team leading)
- ILM Level 3 (introductory certificate in first line management)
- Open College Network (OCN) Level 3 (One to one skills in people management)

During the last three years there has been an increase in the provision of short modular workshops covering specific management skills based upon corporate improvement priority and appraisal identified learning needs.

A Coaching strategy was introduced in 2007 and continues to further develop leadership skills throughout the workforce.

These activities provide a cohesive approach to management development and provide support from supervisor through to senior manager.

## **Member Development**

A Member development plan has been developed and a member development group established with a view to developing the skills and knowledge base of elected members to maximise their ability to execute their duties and the various roles they play. As part of this process learning needs of all elected members will be identified and learning plans produced for each individual. A programme of activity has been developed. The aim is to up skill Members to undertake their diverse roles. It is also the aim to achieve Member Development Charter Status.

## **Developing skills and capacity of the workforce**

Appraisal Scheme – A corporate appraisal scheme was introduced in 2005 – this is currently being reviewed as part of the pay and reward strategy. A competency framework is under development which will identify the key competencies of the workforce to be linked to the appraisal process and be used to determine incremental progression as part of the pay and reward arrangements. This will be in place by October 2010.

As part of the appraisal process individual learning plans are produced to ensure staff are adequately developed to support them to undertake their roles and responsibilities. This includes attendance at training programmes, mentoring, coaching and shadowing.

By the end of 2009 it is intended that all eligible staff will have received an annual appraisal of their performance and have an individual learning plan identifying any learning and development needs. Strong performance management arrangements will be in place which identify and deal with poor performance and recognise and reward excellent performance.

## **Developing Health & Safety**

The council's primary aim is to improve health and safety performance and ensure that risks to the health and safety of employees, service users and others are suitably controlled. It has implemented a recognised health and safety management module approach to Health and Safety Management by the implementation of departmental Health and Safety Plans, which are reviewed and monitored on a regular basis. The council's approach and progress in relation to Health and Safety management was recognised in the HSE audit.

A health and safety management framework has been implemented including a health and safety policy that outlines clear roles and responsibilities for all levels of staff within the organisation. This ensures clear accountability exists, a suite of performance standards and improved health and safety performance is delivered.

A comprehensive Health and Safety training programme is provided by the Health, Safety and Wellbeing team, which is monitored through the Health, Safety and Welfare committee; this ensures managers and staff are up skilled to undertake their roles and deliver improving health and safety performance in a safe and controlled manner.

## **Resourcing the Organisation**

Historically Plymouth City Council has experienced difficulties in recruiting to some of the following roles, which is supported nationally by the Local Government Pay and Workforce Strategy on occupational shortages for Local Authorities;

- Social Workers – all categories – and Occupational Therapists
- Planning Officers and Transportation Planners
- Head Teachers
- Lawyers and Finance roles
- High turn-over roles such as cleaners and catering assistants
- Human Resource Advisers
- Civil Protection Officers

This has resulted in a limited capacity to deliver in some key areas which has, in some areas, resulted in high levels of agency staff and temporary workers.

Innovative advertising and recruitment campaigns have been successful in tackling the problems of hard to recruit posts. These have been designed to attract all representative groups of the local and wider community, and have included overseas recruitment, total reward packages and flexible working opportunities.

Temporary workers are now sourced through a corporate contract with an external recruitment agency that has established a strong partnership with Plymouth City Council. This relationship will continue to develop and support the needs of the business through ongoing performance reviews.

Whilst there is an economic downturn and it is possible there will be more resources available in the market place to fill vacancies, it is anticipated that Plymouth will still struggle to attract good candidates more than other local authorities due to its geographical location. Therefore recruitment and retention strategies need to be flexible to respond to this changing environment. It is imperative that the council recruits and retains highly skilled staff if it is to achieve excellence.

Turnover rate information from the HR system and focused exit interviews provide relevant information to inform our Recruitment and Retention strategy.

## **Links with educational establishments**

Plymouth City Council has close links with the University of Plymouth and the College of St. Mark and St. John as well as a partnership with City College Plymouth who provide specific programmes of learning to various areas of the Council. It is intended to further enhance these partnerships over the next three years. These links will help the council build capacity and give the opportunity for multi-agency training and development.

## **Work experience**

Plymouth City Council works with Trident Trust to find suitable one/two week work placement opportunities for 14 – 19 year old students. Managers who wish to place students plan and own the placement which involves putting together the students

work programme, completing a Health and Safety risk assessment and preparing for their induction. Feedback continues to be excellent from this area of activity and increasingly school leavers and graduates have used this opportunity before applying for vacancies. This contributes to higher retention levels of these employees.

## **Workforce planning**

Workforce planning is integrated into the Business Planning cycle – each department is required to produce individual workforce plans linked to their business plans. These are monitored as part of the business planning arrangements, and enable departments to plan for future workforce requirements. This provides a systematic approach to human resources management linked to priorities.

## **Developing Equality and Diversity**

Having introduced the E-HR (SAP) System, the Council is now able to monitor employment in relation to diversity and equality. Monitoring on its own will not achieve a diverse workforce and further action will be required. The Council is developing employment policies and practices in line with its commitment against the Equalities Standard for Local Government. Equality impact assessments are undertaken to ensure that no discrimination takes place. Plymouth City Council has recently attained Level 3 Equality Standard.

A range of activities are underway in this area to ensure the workforce is representative of the local community, a set of targets are in place in the Corporate Plan to monitor this.

An Equalities and Diversity training programme is currently being delivered for elected members, managers and employees. This will continue through 2009, being recognised as a corporate priority for Learning and Development.

## **Management information**

The E-HR (SAP) System is essential to effective people management providing detailed information on the composition of the workforce, providing data to support policy development and assist in all aspects of people management.

Whilst the system holds all payroll and staffing information it has also been developed to include a range of modules including;

- Training and events
- Health and safety
- Managers self serve
- Grievance and disciplinary

The system has been in place since April 2006 and is already being used to support people management decision making, the effective implementation of the pay and reward arrangements and workforce monitoring.

## **8 Where we want to be (the key challenges ahead)?**

### **Changing scope of workforce and impact on services to the clients**

There are a number of key challenges facing the Council, which will impact on both services to clients and the necessary resources required to achieve service delivery. These challenges include delivering the long term solution to waste disposal, successfully managing the housing stock transfer to Plymouth Community Homes, managing the huge Building Schools for the Future Programme, meeting social care standards, continuing to improve our safeguarding children's service, delivering a Life Centre which will be a major local and regional venue and implementing a range of strategies including the ICT and Asset Management strategies.

Throughout this is the need to raise the ability of both the council's workforce and partner workforces to respond to the continuous change required to meet strategic objectives and deliver customer focus and efficient services. Extensive work through the "supporting staff to perform better" corporate improvement priority will equip managers and staff to deliver this change effectively.

### **Pay and Reward (Single Status Job Evaluation) Stage 2**

A significant output from the pay and grading review process will be the creation of role profiles and competency framework for each job. The framework is being developed with core competencies which will be integral to appraisals and recruitment. The framework will address inconsistencies emerging around its values and behaviours, the definitions of acceptable behaviours will improve overall performance and establish standards against which employee performance can be measured and individual development plans aligned.

Part of this process has also identified the need to update and review the current employee terms and conditions to ensure they support the new pay and grading structure and equality legislation.

Work on this is expected to be completed in the 2009/2010 financial year and the outcomes will be expected to support a modern customer focussed, accessible council.

### **Re-aligning focus of corporate training**

Following learning needs identified from the Corporate Improvement Priorities, a review of the corporate learning and development training programmes will be undertaken to ensure learning and development activity is focussed on the councils priorities.

### **Addressing skills shortages and surpluses**

Plymouth City Council currently has limited information regarding current or future potential skill shortages and surpluses. Improved workforce data will assist in the identification of these areas so that relevant plans to address each situation can be put

into place. To support this a skills audit will be undertaken across the entire council to identify skills gaps within the workforce. Once these gaps have been identified a development programme will be established to ensure skills are aligned appropriately and gaps are filled in order to improve service delivery.

An integral part of this activity will be to develop a succession planning strategy, enabling Plymouth City Council employees to be trained and developed in order to achieve their own career aspirations

### **Addressing workforce flexibility**

The changing way in which council services will be delivered in the future will require a more flexible workforce with different skills and more emphasis on the outcomes. This will also require more flexibility in how people will be managed. This has links with current business continuity planning processes as well as skills development and lifelong learning. To maximise the flexibility of the workforce and achieve high standards of customer focussed delivery, the council also needs to continue to promote the health and wellbeing of employees and achieve further reductions in sickness absence. It needs to maximise the attendance of staff at work to ensure high levels of performance are maintained.

The alignment of the People Strategy, ICT Strategy and Accommodation Strategy provides the opportunity for a flexible use of the workforce in the future, with significant opportunities in the creation of new accommodation to occupy space in a different way and maximise the use of ICT facilities. Implementation plans for accommodation, workforce flexibility and ICT will be joined up and both ICT and HR will be critical enablers to ensuring the Council maximises the use of it's estate. The council's vision is to create a modern efficient effective and sustainable estate that fully utilises IT to enable flexible team working and service delivery.

### **Developing e-learning**

In order to support the development of the workforce, an e-learning pilot is currently being implemented with e-learning packages being trialled to support varied learning opportunities for employees. The roll out of the manager self service module of the E-HR system during 2009 will utilise e-learning packages to provide this to in excess of 400 managers. This way of learning can be effective for office based staff and enables learning to take place at an individuals pace, away from a classroom setting. It is also a cost effective method of information giving and will be further used for health and safety and ICT training.

### **Lean Systems**

The council is currently piloting a "lean systems" project – the purpose of which is to identify and remove unnecessary wasteful processes. The pilot will be evaluated and the benefits of this approach will be considered throughout the organisation. Ongoing work on standardisation of processes and the removal of bureaucracy will further enhance service delivery and support the achievement of value for money services.



## **Investors in People (IIP)**

Currently Children's Services are working towards achieving IIP standards. Following this consideration will be given to rolling this out across the entire organisation, learning lessons from Children's Services. This will provide clear people management standards which are recognised nationally, which will support the council in achieving excellence.

## **Modern employment policies and practices**

All aspects of the People Strategy will be underpinned by modern employment practices and procedures. The council will ensure that policies are regularly reviewed to ensure compliance with legislation and that they reflect best practice.

The council will benchmark its policies against other employers and use information from regular staff surveys, leavers interviews and its management information systems to inform policy development.

All policies will be developed in conjunction with service managers and by a robust consultation process.

## **9 How do we get there?**

A Corporate Workforce Development Plan has been produced which outlines the gaps, issues and actions. A skills audit is planned during 2009/10 to further support this. This Plan is Part 2 of the People Strategy.

## **10 Monitoring**

With the ever changing shape of the workforce and to ensure that the key challenges are achieved, it is intended that this strategy and workforce plan will be monitored on a regular basis and updated annually in line with business planning processes.

The achievement of the actions contained in this strategy will play an integral part in enabling Plymouth City Council and its partners to realise the vision of being an excellent Council by 2012.