

Tendring
District Council



Tendring District Council People Strategy 2016-2020





Contents

1 - Introduction	4
2 - Background	5
3 - Disability Profile	6
4 - Values	6
5 - Joining	7
5.1 - Attraction.....	7
5.2 - Recruitment	7
5.3 - Starting.....	8
6 - Staying	8
6.1 - Retention Strategies	9
6.2 - Engagement	9
6.3 - Succession Planning	10
6.4 - Performance Review.....	10
7 - Growing	11
7.1 - Staff Development.....	11
7.2 - Broadening Experience	11
7.3 - Qualification Programmes	12
7.4 - Apprenticeships	12
8 - Leaving	12
8.1 - Transfer and Promotion.....	13
8.2 - Dismissal	13
8.3 - Retirement.....	13
9 - Support for Volunteers	14
9.1 - Contractors	14
10 - Quality and Effectiveness Monitoring	14
10.1 - Investors in People.....	14
10.2 - Staff Engagement Survey.....	15
10.3 - HR Metrics.....	15
10.4 - Performance Monitoring	15
10.5 - The Stories That Are Told.....	15
10.6 - Activity Timeline	15
11 - Background Papers	16



1 - Introduction

“This People Strategy sets out Tendring District Council’s approach and commitment to our staff for the next four years. It will run concurrently with the organisation’s Corporate Plan.

It is certain that this Council will undergo great change over the coming four years and our commitment to ensuring we have the right people, in the right place, with the right skills is paramount to our future success in helping the District to thrive.

Over the next four years the emphasis for the organisation will be to face outwards towards the community it serves. To fulfil its commitment to place community leadership at the heart of its practice, the organisation will continue its shift to greater transparency, increased staff engagement, devolved decision making and ongoing collaboration and innovation.

To achieve this, our staff will need to build upon their existing skills and knowledge and adapt to different ways of working. As an Investors in People Gold organisation we have shown our commitment to having and involving the very best workforce. We are proud to have achieved such a prestigious award in recognition of the hard work and dedication of our staff. This People Strategy underlines that commitment and its implementation sets a path for us to maintain and improve upon what has already been achieved.

The following pages detail how we intend to achieve this.”

Ian Davidson, Chief Executive.



“I welcome this new People Strategy 2016 to 2020. Following the agreement of Members to adopt the Council’s Corporate Plan, this People Strategy outlines how we will enable and support the workforce of the Council to meet its priorities. The changes and challenges we face over the next four years are considerable. The People Strategy sets out the priorities to ensure we have a skilled, capable and motivated workforce which is equipped and ready to face and address these challenges.”

Cllr Ricky Callender, Chairman of Human Resources Committee



2 - Background

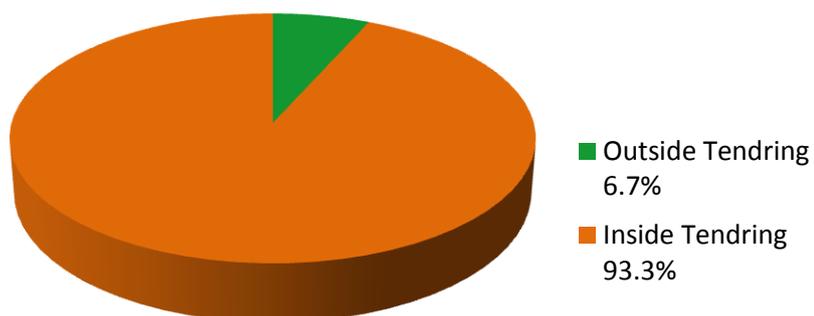
Tendring District Council (TDC) has an excellent reputation as a major employer within the local community. It employs 507 contracted staff as well as 202 casual or seasonal workers and 29 apprentices. More than 90% of the workforce lives within the District. Naturally, these local staff also have a personal interest in the services provided by the Council and want to see it deliver the highest possible quality.

Of the 738 staff, 363 are full time (49%) and 405 are women (55%). The Council is committed to ensuring that its entire staff receive the best opportunities for development and to providing them with the right support to succeed in their work role. This support includes a concern for the health and well-being of its staff. TDC is committed to supporting staff with disabilities and to ensuring that the ethnic diversity of the workforce reflects that of the local community.

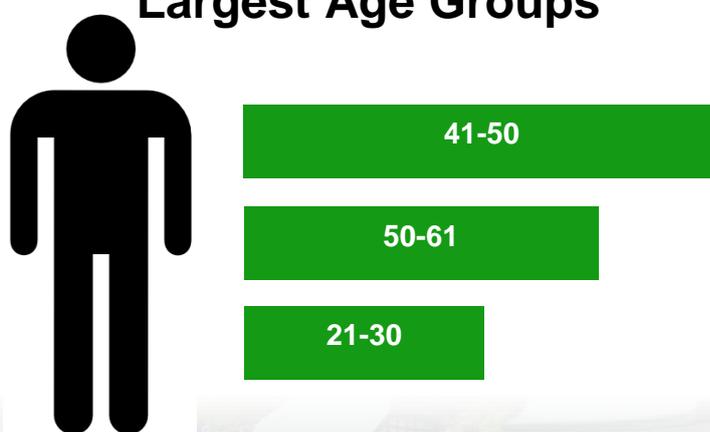
Ratio of TDC Workforce



Workforce living within Tendring



Largest Age Groups



3 - Disability Profile

The Council has been awarded the 'Two Ticks' accreditation for the past 19 years. The government is replacing this accreditation with the new Disability Confident scheme. TDC is fully committed to supporting Disability Confident and has already been awarded the Level 2 – Disability Confident Employer badge. Over the next year we will work to achieve Level 3 which is the highest level recognition.



4 - Values

The values outlined in the Corporate Plan help to define the kind of organisation the Council wants to be, how it wants to work and how it wants to be seen. All Councillors and staff are expected to uphold, demonstrate and promote the values of personal integrity, honesty and respect for others

TDC wants the people it employs to work collaboratively both 'in-house' and with external partners; to be innovative, flexible, professional and committed to delivering excellence in public services and real benefits to the people of Tendring.

The organisation will make decisions which are sustainable and which reflect and promote the diversity and equality of communities and individuals.

This People Strategy will seek to ensure that the Council's values are maintained through the underpinning behaviours in its Universal Competency Framework and its application through the way it recruits, selects, develops and manages the performance of its entire staff.

Our Values

- Councillors and Staff uphold personal integrity, honesty and respect for others
- Innovative, flexible, professional staff committed to delivering excellence
- Recognising the diversity and equality of individuals
- Working collaboratively



5 - Joining

The process for a person to join the organisation begins at the 'attraction' stage.

5.1 - Attraction

Attraction is the first stage of the recruitment process. Tendring District Council will utilise its excellent 'brand reputation' as a top performing local authority to be an employer of choice for the local community and beyond. TDC will build upon its practice as a provider of flexible working conditions offering a package of benefits in addition to basic salary. As Tendring is a less accessible geographic area than say, Colchester or Ipswich, it expects to attract staff who are local to the area, who are looking for a high quality work life balance and who wish to contribute to the lives of residents within the District.

“Tendring District Council will utilise its excellent ‘brand reputation’ as a top performing local authority to be an employer of choice for the local community and beyond.”

The organisation will continually review and assess its advertising methods to ensure it is seen by the greatest potential range of applicants. It is expected that increased use of social media will play a part in this with the use of Twitter, Glassdoor, LinkedIn and Facebook along with the continued use of more traditional means such as website, radio and professional press.

The process for applying for posts will be periodically reviewed to ensure that the system is as streamlined as possible and there are no unnecessary barriers for application so that processes are appropriate for the role.

In specialist roles where recruitment is problematic we will continue to offer 'student' opportunities for the postholder to 'earn and learn' while they train to become fully qualified. Only in exceptional circumstances will 'market forces' supplements be used.

5.2 - Recruitment

Aspects of recruitment such as application sifting, interviews and pre-start contact will be increasingly led by the recruiting manager with HR administrative and advisory support. The organisation has a bank of staff that have been trained in interview techniques and this will increase in the near future.

Interview assessment will make use of the Universal Competency Framework as well as assessing technical knowledge and competence for the role. TDC has an established reputation within the County with other local authorities for excellence in practice in the delivery and analysis of psychometric testing. For its own recruitment practice the organisation will continue to use psychometrics when appropriate. Their use and analysis will be managed within the People, Performance and Projects team



“The emphasis of the organisation on community leadership, active engagement and partnering with the community and other stakeholders, will be reflected in recruitment practice to try to ensure that new recruits have an understanding of and ability to, respond to the changing demands of public service.”

During the period between an offer of employment and commencement in post new starters will be encouraged to complete at least some of their essential introductory induction. This will include the use of online learning material including an introduction to the organisation and local government, Safeguarding and Prevent.

5.3 - Starting

The organisation will continue to use a six month probationary/induction period. The process for assessing and reviewing progress during the probation period will be refreshed and updated guidance will be provided for managers to help them with this process. The guide will include a revised checklist and a suggested format for a review.

A positive and successful probationary/induction period is vital. In the rare instance where performance is unsatisfactory HR will support the line manager to address the issues with the employee and, on occasions, to terminate the employment.

When the applicant is an existing member of staff the ‘Joining’ process still applies. As part of ‘Starting’ there will still need to be a planned induction. It can be a mistake to assume that an existing employee already knows all about the organisation and its processes in relation to their new post. In addition the review stages of the first six months will also be applied and can be extended if required.

Occasionally, staff will join the organisation as a result of a TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings, Protection of Employment) arrangement. In these cases the organisation will work co-operatively with the ‘handing over’ employer and will endeavour to ensure that the employees concerned have a planned and structured introduction to the organisation.

6 - Staying

Historically staff retention has not presented a challenge for the organisation as the culture of local government has been one of longevity of service. However, the consequences of governmental austerity policies have led to a significant reduction in the size of the workforce in recent years. The demands placed upon staff have changed and the environment in which they work has changed and will continue to change rapidly over the next four years. The skills required of Officers, especially those in leadership roles, are greater and require a more commercial and entrepreneurial approach.



6.1 - Retention Strategies

The factors that come into play for attracting staff are also key for retaining them. Therefore the organisation will continue to develop a variety of staff benefits, promotions linked to health and well-being and flexible working. Currently the employee benefit offer includes a childcare voucher scheme, salary sacrifice car purchase scheme, cycle to work, discounted corporate gym membership and numerous discounts with local businesses.

As the Transforming The Way We Work programme is implemented increased flexible working opportunities will become available. This change is in keeping with the national trend, cited in the 2016 Local Government Authority (LGA) Local government Workforce Survey; in which 93% of councils said it was their policy to increase flexible working. HR will work closely with managers to help them adjust work patterns to meet these changes.

For posts which are especially hard to fill due to national skill shortages the organisation will seek to work collaboratively with other local authorities and the LGA to find ways to attract and retain suitably qualified staff. In highly exceptional circumstances the organisation may consider the use of a special honorarium payment as a retention incentive.

The organisation will continue to foster good working relations with its recognised union, UNISON. The Council is fully supportive of staff rights to utilise union membership and will continue to promote this part of its employee relations strategy.

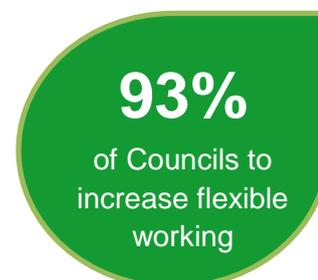
6.2 - Engagement

The extent to which staff feel able to influence their working life and to manage the demands of their role, to be heard, able to take responsibility and have the opportunity to influence change greatly affects retention. Staff engagement will therefore be a continuing priority.

However, the results of the recent survey also show that there is still work to be done.

TDC will continue to improve internal communications and staff inclusion through the increased use of Video Blogs, open forum discussion space on its intranet platform (Ping) and greater use of employee consultation.

A fresh emphasis will be placed upon the values of the organisation, in alignment with the Corporate Plan, to address not only 'what' people do but 'how' they do it too. The Universal Competency Framework will be used



“In our study with frontline employees in councils, the most important action they wanted senior managers to take was to communicate with them face to face...they also wanted to be involved in developing innovations from the beginning, rather than being consulted towards the end of a process in a tokenistic way”

Key Leadership Actions For Innovation, Munro 2016 for SOLACE

The annual staff recognition event, 'Stars' will continue as a means to recognise the ongoing hard work, dedication and excellence of its Officers



as a vital element in identifying how values are being demonstrated.

The recent staff survey conducted by Dr Martin Reddington in conjunction with the Local Government Association (LGA) showed that levels of satisfaction and engagement had increased since the last survey in 2013.

6.3 - Succession Planning

Staff turnover rates for TDC are approximately 9.7% which is 4.4% below the national public sector average*. With turnover comes not only a loss of people but also a loss of knowledge and, for a time at least, skills. To ameliorate this, the organisation will start to actively develop a succession planning approach. The aim will be to ensure that knowledge and skills are sufficiently shared so that any vacancy (including any caused by long term sickness) can be covered smoothly and efficiently.

*Turnover Rates 2015 XpertHR

6.4 - Performance Review

Although structured development opportunities play a key role in growing our staff and skills, most learning takes place in the workplace 'on the job'. As such, the practice of carrying out regular one-to-one meetings for reflection, target setting, review and on-going development coaching will continue to be a key plank of the strategy for enabling staff to grow in skills and confidence. Performance review (or appraisal), as a summative practice to review the past twelve months and to set targets for the coming twelve months will continue. The documentation for recording of reviews will be updated.

Occasionally people struggle in their role and need extra support or structure to succeed. To help facilitate this, managers will be encouraged to use coaching and mentoring skills in the workplace and to pro-actively monitor and manage performance. HR will provide professional advice and guidance to managers but early intervention by managers will be expected to address issues and minimise the need for more formal approaches. Managers will be reminded about the Universal Competency Framework (UCF) adopted by the Council and its use in identifying and managing performance issues. Additional guidance on its use will be issued and stored on the organisation's intranet (Ping!).



7 - Growing

7.1 - Staff Development

TDC remains committed to ensuring that its staff have the necessary skills for the jobs they perform. Given the changed environment in which local authorities now work many staff are being asked to perform a wider range of tasks and to forge closer than ever links with partners and stakeholders.

The Corporate Plan for 2016 to 2020 emphasises community leadership as a core purpose for the Council. The 2014 University of Birmingham research report "*The 21st Century Public Service Workforce*", (Needham, Mangan and Dickinson, 2011) assert that in future public sector workers will need to perform a number of new roles to fulfil their responsibilities, such as 'story teller', 'resource weaver', 'system-architect' and 'navigator'.

The 2016 LGA Workforce Survey research shows that across councils in England the top 3 priorities were 'supporting commerciality, 'supporting digitalisation/use of technology' and 'managing performance'. This top three also applies for TDC. Many staff already apply a greater commercial and entrepreneurial approach and the aim will be to build upon those skills possibly with an additional focus on 'Systems Thinking' and developing more 'agile' processes.

Managers will be given the opportunity to develop coaching skills as a standard part of their line management practice.

The organisation will continue to be an active member of the VineHR Partnership and will utilise the training opportunities it provides whenever possible.

7.2 - Broadening Experience

Opportunities for secondment, job swap and acting up will be increased whenever possible. TDC will seek to establish these opportunities not only 'in-house' but also with other authorities or partner agencies where appropriate. This will enable employees to see alternative ways of working, experience different environments and bring a fresh perspective and new skills to their own role.

Over the next four years, TDC will develop and commission a number of staff development opportunities to ensure that the workforce is equipped with this additional skill set, especially targeting those managers and leaders who report directly to Heads of Service.

Story Teller – author and communicate stories of how new worlds of public services might be fashion and communicate options for the future

Resource Weaver – make creative use of existing resources...weaving together miscellaneous and disparate materials to generate something new and useful for service users and citizens

System Architect – describe and compile coherent local systems of public support from the myriad of public, private, third sector and other resources.

Navigator – guiding citizens...around the range of possibilities that might be available in a system of local public services

Needham, Mangham & Dickinson, 2014



7.3 - Qualification Programmes

The 'Grow Our Own' approach for staff to gain professional qualifications in hard to recruit areas will continue subject to an annual budgetary review. From 2017 staff will be expected to apply for Career Development Loans or Student Loans for qualifying courses. The organisation will pay the loan for the employee subject to agreed terms and conditions of the sponsorship.

7.4 - Apprenticeships

Career Track is a fundamental lynch-pin for the organisation's approach to staff development. Apprenticeships give the young people of the District an opportunity to gain work experience, qualifications and skills and, for many, it leads to a first permanent job, in fact 13% of TDC employees are former apprentices. In its most recent assessment from Colchester Institute Career Track was rated as a Grade 1 training provider. As one of the largest employers in the area TDC will continue to support apprenticeship programmes as much as possible.

On average the organisation has 20 apprentices aged under 25 at any one time. This is much higher than the average reported by the LGA Workforce Survey (2016) of only six and demonstrates the Council's commitment to providing employment and education opportunities through the use of apprenticeships.

In addition TDC, through Career Track, provides high level apprenticeships for team leaders and managers up to level 4. At the time of writing the governmental changes to apprenticeship funding, via the apprenticeship levy, are still unfolding but the organisation is optimistic that these changes will not threaten its ongoing commitment and they may in fact give it greater support.

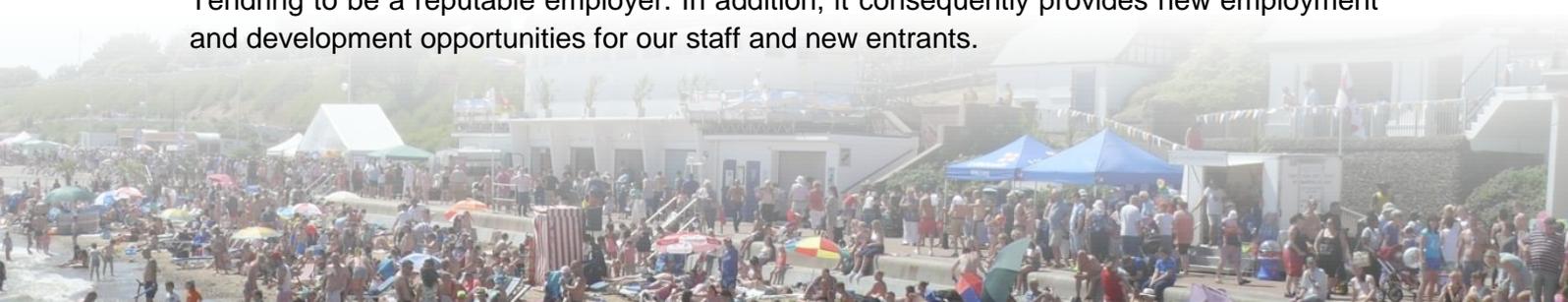
8 - Leaving

The vast majority of people who leave the organisation are going on to another job. From leaving forms and exit interviews, it appears that the most common reason is career development or salary. Some degree of staff turnover is healthy and inevitable. Approximately 95% of all leavers part on good terms, ensuring that the opportunity to return at some later date remains an option. To further support the practice of 'parting well' and of being a 'learning organisation', the practice of exit interviews will be actively encouraged and new guidance on its use will be issued.

95%

Of all leavers part on good terms

As staff leave and go on to other employment, often having gained a more responsible role, we can view this as a compliment. It is a testimony to our staff development and professional expertise. It demonstrates that other employers consider Tendring to be a reputable employer. In addition, it consequently provides new employment and development opportunities for our staff and new entrants.



When the parting is not good and the leaver is disillusioned with the organisation then an exit interview with an independent manager will be especially important for the organisation to learn from the circumstances and possibly address their concerns and so part on better terms.

8.1 - Transfer and Promotion

When staff move within the organisation as part of personal development and/or promotion, they will be treated as a transferee. Dependent upon the circumstances an exit interview from their former role, may be appropriate.

Occasionally staff may leave the organisation as the result of a TUPE transfer to another employer. In these cases the organisation will work closely with the ‘receiving’ employer to support as smooth a hand over as possible. The Council’s HR department will lead on this and will also keep the staff that are affected informed about the process and will consult with them as appropriate.

8.2 - Dismissal

On rare occasions employees leave due to capability or conduct issues. The organisation will apply a simultaneously empathetic and robust approach to the management of long-term sickness and poor performance. Managers will be given the necessary training and support to manage these issues and will continue to be supported by HR. Dismissal due to capability or conduct will always be used as an action of last resort.

The organisation is committed to retaining its staff but recognises that on occasion it may be necessary to restructure to ensure the Council is able to deliver its services effectively and is cost efficient. This may mean that occasionally staff will leave due to redundancy. At all times the organisation will seek to avoid compulsory redundancy and, in cases where posts are lost, will try to come to a mutually agreed solution that might, on occasion, include some element of voluntary redundancy.

8.3 - Retirement

Staff are entitled to continue working for as long as they wish, providing that they are capable of performing their duties. However, it is reasonable to assume that two-thirds of this number will choose to retire at or before they reach their retirement age. This could mean 33 retirees or more. TDC will continue to support staff with retirement planning and will look for ways to enhance the current support provided.



Over the next five years (to 2021) approximately **50** staff will reach their state retirement age, almost **10%** of the organisation’s current permanent workforce.



9 - Support for Volunteers

9.1 – Volunteers

Historically, the use of volunteers within the organisation has been limited and relatively ad hoc. However, as the focus of the organisation shifts to a greater community engagement focus, more structured volunteering roles will be developed either within the Council or with partnering organisations. Volunteers within TDC will receive the training and induction they require for their role, a written job role outlining their responsibilities and duties and will be asked to sign a written volunteering agreement. Volunteers will have the opportunity to have a regular catch up meeting with their line manager and an annual review.

9.2 - Contractors

In accordance with the contracting standards practised by the Council, TDC will seek to ensure that, wherever possible, those companies with which it holds contracts have standards and procedures for its people management and development that comply with employment legislation and best practice.

10 - Quality and Effectiveness Monitoring

TDC is committed to ensuring that it monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of its People Strategy. It will achieve this through a number of routes to gather a combination of ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ data. The key approaches are listed below.

10.1 - Investors in People

In December 2015 the organisation was proud to achieve Gold in its IIP assessment. This award is seen as testament to the hard work and commitment of staff throughout the organisation. Over the next 18 months the Council will transfer to being assessed against the latest standards referred to as ‘Generation 6’. These offer an even greater ‘stretch’ for TDC to achieve its action plan and embed the transformative work it has started. An independent ‘mid-point’ assessment will be carried out during 2017 and a full assessment will be scheduled during 2019. The use of the IIP Generation 6 standards will provide an independent benchmark against which the organisation can measure its progress.

“Great leadership...balancing the budget, increased partnership working, developing community hubs, manager and staff development, has contributed to rapid improvements and a capacity to improve even further. This is now a dynamic and motivated workforce dealing with change and transformation with resilience and tenacity”

Dave Abdul & Gwen Carter –
Powell IIP Gold Assessment
Review



10.2 - Staff Engagement Survey

TDC's most recent staff survey, in 2015, revealed that staff levels of satisfaction had increased. It especially noted that levels of satisfaction regarding managerial relations had improved. By using the Employee Value Proposition survey undertaken by Dr Martin Reddington staff responses remain completely confidential and anonymous as data is only seen by the surveyor and no individual responses are ever reported back to TDC. In addition by using this particular survey, the organisation is able to benchmark its results with those of other local government organisations through the Local Government Association.

10.3 - HR Metrics

Following the successful introduction of Team Spirit software HR will enhance its reporting systems to monitor the demographics of the organisation, turnover and sickness rates and performance management and reviews.

10.4 - Performance Monitoring

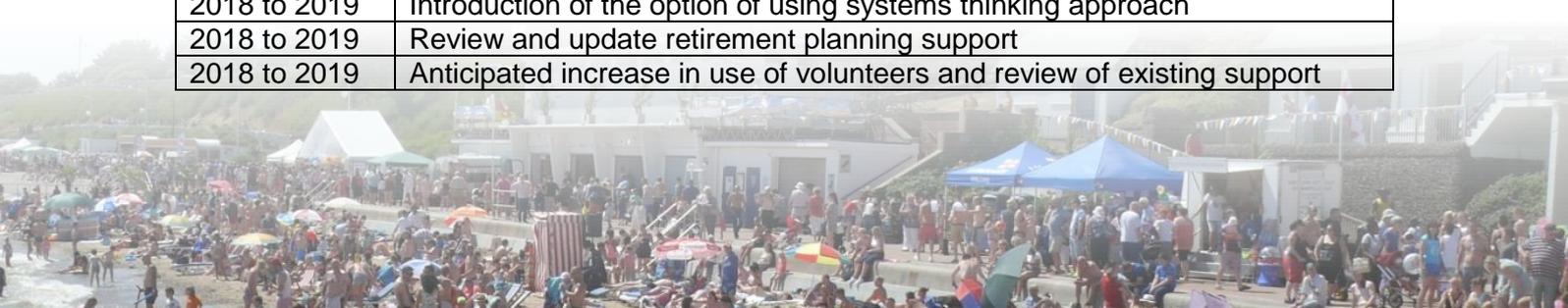
The organisation already sets itself challenging performance targets for the delivery of its services. This will continue and will be monitored via the Scrutiny procedures.

10.5 - The Stories That Are Told

Anecdotal data blended with statistical data is a powerful measure. The stories that are told within the organisation about itself and how it has changed or is changing can provide effective human interest 'soft' feedback.

10.6 - Activity Timeline

When	What
2017	Processes for applying for vacancies reviewed
2017	More managers training in recruitment techniques and processes
2017	Introduction of online induction for pre-start recruits
2017	Refreshed guidance of the UCF
2017	Appraisal/performance review process updated launched
2017 onwards	Ongoing development of TeamSpirit and automation of transaction HR
2017	Full review of Staff sponsorship policy to include introduction of Career Development Loans and Student Loans
2017	Introduction of Apprenticeship levy and Apprenticeship targets
2017	Review and update format for exit interviews
2017	Mid-point liP review
2018	Update of probation review process and guidance
2018	HR work with departments to introduce full flexible working arrangements prior to enforced change as part of office changes
2018	Introduction of succession planning strategy and implementation
2018	Possible Staff survey
2018 to 2019	Introduction of the option of using systems thinking approach
2018 to 2019	Review and update retirement planning support
2018 to 2019	Anticipated increase in use of volunteers and review of existing support



	systems
2018 to 2020	Introduction of understanding and skills acquisition for roles of 21 st Century Public Servant
End of 2018	Full liP re-assessment

11 - Background Papers

Abdul, D., Carter-Powell, G., IIP Assessment Report, 2015. Confidential unpublished report

CIPD, Resourcing and Talent Planning Survey Report, Published 2015

Local Government Association, Local Government Workforce Survey 2014/15, Published March 2016

Martin Reddington Associates, 'The Employment Deal' TDC Feedback report, 2015. Confidential unpublished report

Munro, J., Key Leadership Actions for Innovation, Published April 2016, Solace.org.uk

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