

Rossendale Borough Council

Human Resources Strategy

2005/2007

HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY

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1. **Introduction**

- 1.1 Rossendale has ambitious plans for the future. These are set out in Rossendale Alive (our Community Strategy) and Rossendale BC's Improvement Plan. Achieving our ambitions requires us to transform the way the Council engages with, and provides services to, local people and organisations.
- 1.2 Our Elected Members and employees are central to the delivery of these plans. This Human Resources Strategy focuses on the key development areas for us over the next twelve months in order to ensure we have the skills, systems, structures and competencies we need now, and in the future. The key outcomes from this strategy will be that we:
- Build capacity within the organisation to deliver and maintain high performance and customer satisfaction
 - Deliver a culture within Rossendale Borough Council which is one of continuous improvement and where the customer is the primary focus for staff
 - Develop a workforce which is representative of the Community of Rossendale and meets the needs of its customers
 - Ensure the skills and competency base of the workforce are highly developed specifically in relation to project management, project planning and contract management to ensure delivery of high performance services
 - Provide for good communication which improves motivation of staff and ultimately customer satisfaction
 - Establishes a framework to enable Elected Members to develop their role as Community Leader

2. Rossendale Borough Council – Policy and Performance Management Framework

2.1 Rossendale Alive

The Council and the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) have agreed an overall vision for the Borough which is called “Rossendale Alive”. The vision encompasses the long term (year 2020) **Community Strategy** and is split across 8 **Strategic Objectives** as illustrated below:-

- **Community Safety** – a place where people do not live in fear of crime;
- **Health** – a place where vulnerable people are looked after and all residents can look forward to a long healthy life;
- **Education** – a place where people of all ages will be well educated and capable of providing business with the human resource to compete in highly competitive global markets;
- **Environment** – a place which has attractive rural settings, a fantastic street scene and is easily accessible for all;
- **Housing** – a place where people have a choice of high quality housing which is affordable for all;
- **Economy** – a place where job prospects and wages are high and the cost of living is low;
- **Community Network** – a place where all opinions count and people respect and celebrate difference in gender; sexuality; race; culture and religion;
- **Culture** – a place which is a cracking place to live for people of all ages and is widely accepted as a major place to visit.

2.2 8 x 8 by 2008

The Council’s contribution to the vision is defined by its overarching mission of “8 x 8 by 2008”. This means that by 2008 the Council is determined to have 8 out of 10 customers satisfied with its services. In addition the Council will seek to have 8 out of 10 of its corporate priority indicators in the top quartile of performance by 2008.

3. Rossendale Borough Council - Corporate Objectives

Similar to the Community Strategy, the Council has 8 Corporate Objectives of which five of these are shared with the Local Strategic Partnership (i.e., **Environment; Housing; Culture; Economy; Community Involvement**). In addition to the shared objectives, the Council has three internal objectives which are categorised as follows:-

- **Improvement** – the continuous provision of high quality public services built upon the foundations of Finance Risk, Performance, Procurement and Human Resources Management
- **Customers** – being responsive and proactive to meet the needs of all our customers (i.e. “*Putting Customers First*”)
- **Partnerships** – increasing our capacity to deliver through effective partnerships

4. Rossendale Borough Council - Priorities for Improvement

Across the 8 RBC Corporate Objectives, local people and Elected Members have identified priorities for improvement. The aim of the prioritisation process is to ensure that the Council’s resources and business plans are focused on delivering on the things that really matter to the well-being of Rossendale residents. The following list represents a ranked list of priorities for improvement (together with *their associated Corporate Objective*):-

1. **Finance & Risk Management** (*Improvement*)
2. **Member Development & Political Arrangements** (*Community Involvement*)
3. **Human Resources** (*Improvement*)
4. **Housing Stock Transfer** (*Housing*)
5. **Customer Services** (*Customers*)
6. **Revenues & Benefits** (*Partnerships*)
7. **Street Scene & Liveability** (*Environment*)
8. **Rawtenstall Town Centre** (*Economy*)

In addition to the priorities for improvement, Elected Members have also identified those priorities that will be delivered through existing Council resources i.e., Performance Management; Procurement Strategy; District Vision; ELEVATE; Equalities. In addition to this, Elected Members have also identified those priorities that will be delivered through greater levels of external resources - Leisure Services (i.e., improved income levels); Housing Services (i.e., stock transfer); Spatial Development & Building Control (i.e., planning delivery grant and fee income).

5. Rossendale Borough Council – 2005/2007 Human Resources Strategy

5.1 Human Resources activity sits under the RBC Corporate Objective of Improvement. Given the ambitious future plans of the Council, Elected Members have prioritised Human Resources as the third highest priority due to the impact that it will have on the delivery of high quality services to local people. As a result of the improvement prioritisation process, the next twelve months will continue to see a significant transformation in the way the Council provides services to local people as it moves to a commissioner of services. Human Resources will play a key role in the delivery of a number of key activities. In addition there will be the need for the Human Resources Team to deliver on the following areas:-

- Recruitment, Selection, Retention, Training & Development
- Development of pay and reward initiatives, Single Status incorporating job evaluation
- Equalities
- Pension Strain Implications
- Performance Management (e.g., Personal Development Reviews)
- Business Efficiency (e.g., Sickness Absence/Productive Time; Revs & Bens/Transactional, Health and Safety)
- Business As Usual (e.g., Payroll, Policies & Procedures, HR Advice, Competency Framework)
- External influencers (pay and workforce strategy, impact of the National Procurement Strategy, impact of the Gershon Report)

5.2 In order to achieve the overarching Human Resources Strategy a three year Business Plan has been developed. It is recognised there are a number of key challenges and these are summarised as follows:-

- Human Resources Capacity
- Structural Reviews/Organisational redesign
- Industrial Relations and Staff Morale
- Training & Development
- Productive Time
- Performance Management
- Customer Satisfaction
- Improving Equalities
- Financial Management

6. The current reality within Rossendale Council as identified by the SWOT Analysis

Rossendale has made significant improvements. Overall, the Council's performance reporting estimates illustrate that over 57% of its performance indicators show improvement against last year. However, a lack of focus over the last decade means that 50% of its performance indicators remain in the bottom quartile of performance. The Staff Survey undertaken in November 2005 demonstrated that staffs are aware of the need to change but many are concerned by the pace of change, and this has had a consequential effect on staff morale.

With the support of Members the organisation has undergone major structural change and as new staff have been recruited to the organisation the skills and competency levels of staff have increased. As more change is envisaged over the next twelve months there will be a need for effective internal and external communication and the engagement of staff and trade unions. The Human Resources Team has led on the implementation of the Equalities Standard for Local Government and a range of Human Resources policies are now in place but there is still a need to embed these throughout the organisation, particularly in relation to health and safety, absence management and performance management. A comprehensive organisational development plan is in place and this needs to be developed further by the introduction of core competencies.

Customer satisfaction is still low and there is still a need for the organisation to develop a customer focused and outcome driven culture. With the development of the Town Centre and the master planning exercise there is the opportunity to revitalise and raise the profile of the Council. In addition there are opportunities to build capacity and attract investment by partnership working. The Human Resources Team has expertise in relation to TUPE and partnering and has contributed significantly to the establishment of the Rossendale Leisure Trust and the transferring of the Highways function back to the County Council.

The Human Resources Team will continue to have a significant role in the overall improvement agenda of the Council.

SWOT Analysis

INTERNAL STRENGTHS	INTERNAL WEAKNESSES
<p>Low turnover of staff Awareness of the need to change New energise management team Identified mission "Rossendale Alive" Some structural change in place Priorities established Positive relationships with members Absence Policy and other Performance Mgt Policies in place Established HR expertise including Personnel, health and safety, training and development pay and reward Flexible working policies agreed as a tool to increase staff morale Expertise in relation to TUPE</p>	<p>A need to develop Performance Management into an improvement culture A need to be outcome focused A need to improve customer satisfaction A need to build capacity A need for investment in services Increase staff morale A need to reduce inefficiencies in relation to business processes A need to increase awareness of diversity issues A lack of recognition which staff have in relation to their personal contribution to customer satisfaction The need to improve communication both internal and external Pace of change</p>
EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES	EXTERNAL THREATS
<p>Opportunity to raise the profile of the Council and therefore increase it's leadership role within the Community Develop partnership working to improve capacity and investment in services Raise awareness of Equality and Diversity and promote the Council as an Employer Strength and Vitality of the local people Strong Community identity</p>	<p>Retention of key individuals Available resources Further legislative /performance requirements</p>

7. Drivers to achieve the required improvement in services

- Changing models of service delivery
- Embed performance management throughout the organisation
- Implement the Equality Standard for Local Government and promote Equality of Opportunity within the workplace, with contractors, partners
- Develop an organisational development plan which identifies competencies and areas of development required to develop the Council
- Improve communication to engage staff in the change process
- To establish a framework to enable Elected Members to develop their role as Community Leader

7.1. Changing models of service delivery

The Council has to build capacity within the organisation to ensure improvements in service delivery which can be sustained. In addition investment is needed in a number of areas of service and this investment can only be achieved through working in partnership. The Human Resources Team already has significant expertise in relation to TUPE and implementing structural change. As the Council explores alternative methods of service delivery there will be a further requirement to review existing structures

The Council is committed to ensuring that where it works in partnership or contributes to the contract management process, it will ensure that it's partners and contractors apply rigorous standards. For example careful screening of all candidates for employment who have contact with vulnerable adults or young people, promotion of diversity, promotion of training and development within the workplace.

As a result of the improvement prioritisation process, a number of partnerships are in the process of being developed. Effective Human Resources will be key to the delivery of the following:-

- Revenues & Benefits Partnership
- Housing Stock Transfer (Yes or No Vote)
- Customer Contact Centre & One Stop Shop
- Street Scene & Liveability Improvement Planning
- Development Control

In addition it has a significant role to play in the delivery of the following projects:-

- Rawtenstall Town Hall Relocation
- Corporate Centre Review
- Risk Management
- Development of Strategies where contracts growing

7.2. To embed performance management throughout the organisation

7.2.1 The Council has to embed performance management through out the organisation to develop a culture of continuous improvement in relation to service delivery. A performance development review process is already in place. The Human Resources Unit will audit this process to ensure it takes place and it is effective.

7.2.2 The Council will use the Performance Development Review Scheme to:-

- Identify training and development needs and development training plans for individual employees
- Set agreed outcomes and targets for individual employees
- Monitor and measure employees against objectives and targets, including a competency framework, to identify strengths and address weaknesses to improve performance
- Acknowledge achievements and significant contributions to the delivery of corporate and individual objectives
- Evaluate, review and continually improve employee performance

- Improve organisational performance
- Support career development
- Use the information gained to produce the organisational development plan

7.2.3 Human Resources will support line managers in the usage of the Council's Capability Procedure to:-

- Address under-performance
- Provide access to appropriate support/counselling for employees undergoing the procedure
- Enable the organisation to deliver its objectives by the application of a procedure facilitating the transfer or exit of employees no longer able to meet standards of required performance or fulfil the new capabilities required

7.2.4 Human Resources will support line managers in the usage of the Absence Management Procedure

7.2.5 Human Resources is committed to the achievement of Investor in People Standard as a tool to embed performance management throughout the organisation

7.3. To implement the Equality Standard for Local Government and promote Equality of Opportunity within the work place, with contractors and partners

7.3.1 The Council now has a Race Equality Scheme and an Equalities Strategy. An external assessment has confirmed the position of the Council as at Level 1 of the Equalities Standard. The Council is committed to achieving Level 2 at the end of 2005/6.

7.3.2 An Equalities Implementation Group has been established, in addition to systems of monitoring. To achieve Level 2 of the Standard the Council is committed to the following activities:

- Use its capacity as a commissioner of services to work with partners and contractors to offer sustainable and high quality opportunities to all persons regardless of age, disability, race, religion, belief, sexual orientation or gender.
- Implement a Policy of Impact Assessment for all new policies and functions of the Council and implement a three year assessment action plan in relation to existing policies and function of the Council
- Attract and maintain a diverse, balanced and representative workforce and comply with BVPI targets

- Review and update it's Action Plans in relation to the Generic Equality Standards and the Race Equality Schemes
- Ensure that allegations of harassment and bullying are properly addressed and that any inappropriate practice/behaviour is eliminated
- Use the interview guarantee scheme and apply a positive reasonable adjustment approach both in the recruitment of disabled people and their retention in the Council's employment
- Develop a series of positive actions aimed specifically at generating successful job applications from under-represented ethnic minority groups and engaging with the relevant groups within Rossendale

7.4. To develop an organisational development plan which identifies competencies and areas of development required to develop the Council

7.4.1 The Council is changing and with that change there is a requirement for different skills and competencies. A competency framework has been developed and Human Resources will play an important role in developing and recruiting to these competencies.

7.4.2 As identified staff will be required to approach their work differently as the organisation continues to change. The journey towards being a commissioner of services will create a need for more multi-skilled staff as well as the introduction of core skills such as partnership, project management and contract management. The performance development review process will be used to provide employees with a wide range of skills to deliver services in the complex and rapidly changing environment in which they work.

7.4.3 The Council will utilise the performance development review process to develop the organisational development plan. The development of the plan will result in:-

- Targeted training and development activity to help deliver the Council vision
- Ensure that the leadership has the correct skills and competencies to deliver the commissioning models of service
- A culture of continuous improvement and celebration of success
- An identification of skills' gap and training needs through the performance development review process
- Improved employee performance throughout the Council through continuous development
- Improved recruitment and selection training and promotion of best practice to ensure recruitment of employees with the new skills and competencies

- Development and implementation of an induction policy and training

7.4.4 The Council will work with following partners to deliver the outcomes as identified in the Strategy:

- University of Central Lancashire
- North West Employers
- IDEA
- Training Providers
- East Lancashire Leadership Academy
- Dialogue
- Greengage
- E-Procurement Partnership
- Other partners and agencies

7.5. To improve communication and engage staff in the change process

7.5.1 The priorities for improvement will result in more changes for all Council staff. Even though 88% of staff agree that the Council needs to change only 18% are comfortable with the way that change has been achieved to date. There is an appropriate balance to be struck between increasing the pace at which change is introduced to satisfy customers whilst at the same time striving to be recognised as a good employer. Most importantly, this key challenge is crucial to maintaining business continuity at a time of great change and therefore we will need to improve relations with Trade Unions and involve staff where possible in the change process.

7.5.2 The Council will use it's formal and informal consultative structures and communication networks to:-

- Communicate with all its employees in an open and constructive manner utilising a range of methods including the staff newsletter, intranet, staff meetings, regular one to ones, team briefing
- Successfully communicate the need for change and engage with employees to achieve this change
- Engage with the Trade Unions in consulting and communicating with the workforce as a whole and gaining commitment to joint objectives

- conduct regular staff attitude surveys and use these to identify areas for development and to provide feedback on the effectiveness of our activities

7.6. To develop the leadership skills of Members of the Council

7.6.1 The priority of improvements affects Council Members as well as staff. As Members develop into a role of Community Leader they will need to develop their skills and competencies in different areas.

7.6.2 The Council will develop and use the Council's Member Development Programme to:-

- Generate a positive attitude to change by gaining Member commitment
- Develop a clear understanding of the Council's plans, objectives and priorities amongst the Members
- Create a culture whereby Elected Members are receptive to change and recognise that change is a feature of continuous improvement
- To equip members with the skills and knowledge to undertake effectively key HR activities with which they are involved

7.6.3 The Council will provide Members with a wide range of skills to fulfil their role as Councillors in the complex and rapidly changing environment in which they operate. To do this we will, in consultation with Members, and use the Council's Member Development Programme to:-

- Identify skills gaps and training needs on an on going basis
- Target training and development activity that help Members deliver the Rossendale Borough's objectives
- Ensure all Elected Members are aware of training and development opportunities
- Monitor the participation of Members in training and development activities and evaluate the effectiveness of these activities
- In collaboration with the Members' Group officials, support initiatives that improve the performance of Elected Members
- Identify training which develops Members in their role of Community Leader

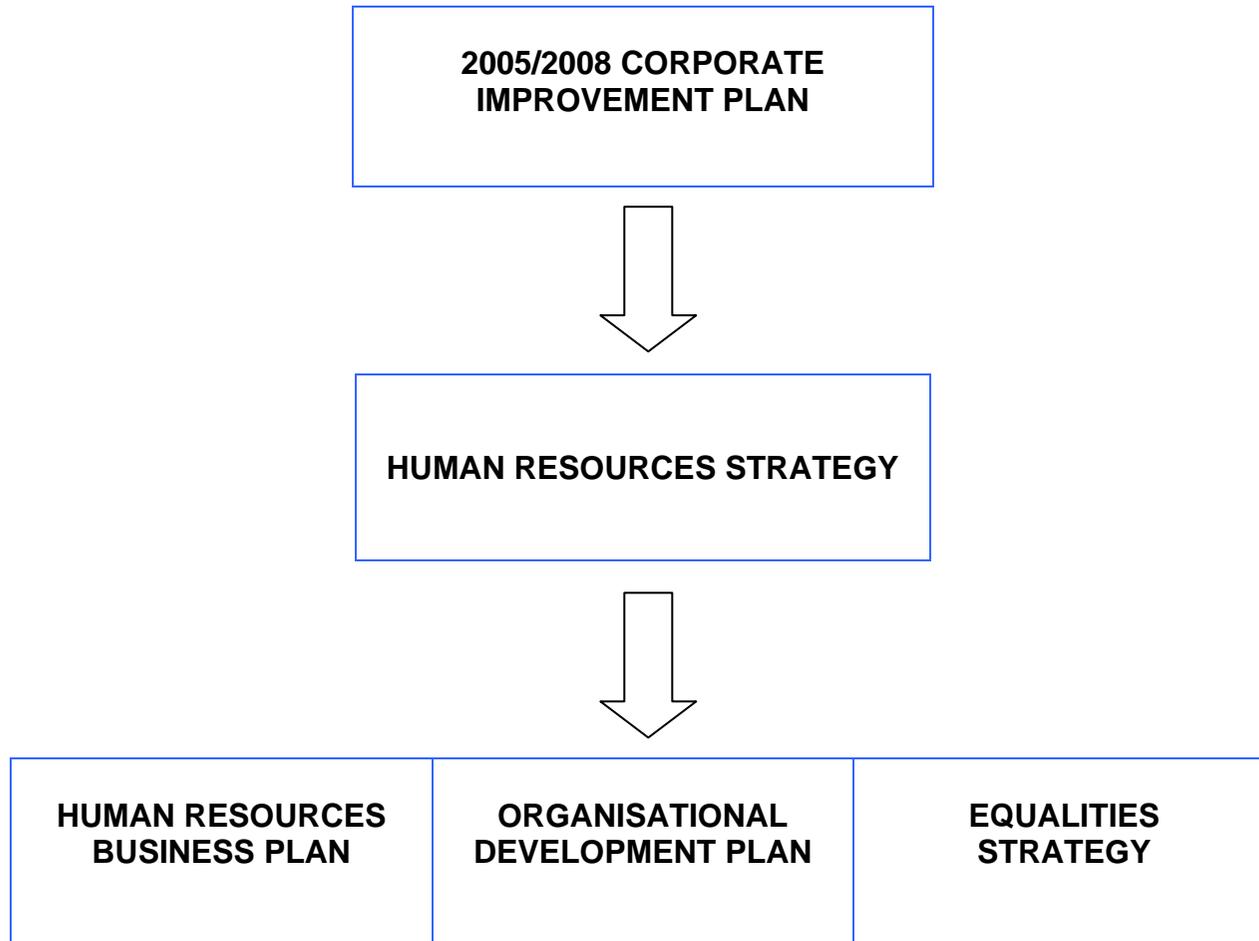
7.6.4 As new political arrangements are introduced ensuring that Members have the correct skills and competencies to ensure the Council has effective leadership and governance.

8. The implementation of the Human Resources Strategy will deliver of the following outcomes

8.1 The implementation of the Strategy will deliver on the following outcomes:

- Build capacity within the organisation to deliver and maintain high performance and customer satisfaction
- Deliver a culture within Rossendale Borough Council which is one of continuous improvement and where the customer is the primary focus for staff
- Develop a workforce which is representative of the Community of Rossendale and meets the needs of its customers
- Ensure the skills and competency base of the workforce are highly developed specifically in relation to project management, project planning and contract management to ensure delivery of high performance services
- Provide for good communication which improves motivation of staff and ultimately customer satisfaction
- Establishes a framework to enable Elected Members to develop their role as Community Leader

How the Best Value Performance Plan links to the overall Human Resources Strategy



Appendix A

Current Reality within Rossendale Borough Council

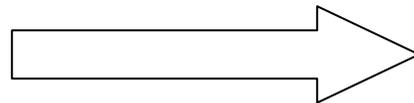
The Human Resources Strategy to transform Rossendale Borough Council

Current Reality

- A need to develop Performance Management into an improvement culture
- To be outcome focused
- A need to improve customer satisfaction
- A need to build capacity
- A need for investment in services
- Increase staff morale
- A need to reduce inefficiencies in relation to Business Processes
- A need to increase awareness of diversity issues
- A lack of recognition which staff have in relation to their personal contribution to customer satisfaction
- A need to improve internal and external communication
- A rapidly changing organisation

Key Drivers For change

- Alternative Models of service delivery
- Performance Management Culture
- Diversity Valued
- Organisational Development Plan
- Good communication and engagement of staff
- Community Leadership



Outcomes

- Build capacity within the organisation to deliver and maintain high performance and customer satisfaction
- Develop a culture of continuous improvement where the customer is the primary focus
- Develop a representative workforce which can meet the needs of customers
- Ensure the skills and competencies of the workforce are highly developed in relation to project management, project planning and contract management to ensure the delivery of high performance services
- Provide good communication
Establish a framework for Members to develop as Community Leaders

APPENDIX B

Competency Framework

Competencies within Rossendale Borough Council

In order to deliver the Human Resources Strategy, and the overall vision of the Council. Five core competencies have been identified. It is essential for all staff to develop their expertise in these areas for Rossendale to achieve sustained improvement in its services to customers:

- Listening and Communicating
- Loyalty
- Management of Performance
- Celebration of Success
- Customers Matter

Each of the competencies can be observed through **key behaviours**. Behaviours can be identified as the way in which individuals conduct themselves.

Competency	Definition	Behaviour
<p>Listening And Communicating</p>	<p>This competency is concerned with individuals ability to communicate effectively in a number of ways</p> <p>To be competent in communication individuals should have the ability to listen. Effective listening improves mutual understanding, allows improved decision making and fosters trust.</p> <p>In addition individuals should be able to consult with others in a way which encourages open and frank discussion, shows respect and in addition maintains productive working relationships.</p> <p>Individuals also need the ability to recognise the needs and feelings of others and appreciate conflicting demands</p> <p>Individuals need to challenge the accuracy and source of ambiguous information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly discusses shared problems or concerns with key individuals and ensures they are given opportunities to discuss and contribute to the resolution of problems or issues related to service provision. • Actively listens by not talking • Does not interrupt or exert their point of view • Focus attention on the speaker • Recognises the impact of their behaviour e.g. negativity, judgemental, cynicism, praise • Positively encourages challenging debate maintaining the respect and dignity of all. • Seeks feedback on their own style and performance in order to give better support – from staff, peers, manager, Members. • Explains the rationale behind advice given or decisions made where possible, knows when to intervene and when to observe or listen • Challenges cynicism and negativity, as serious threats to the achievement of excellence.

Competency	Definition	Behaviour
<p>Loyalty</p>	<p>This competency is concerned with an individuals understanding of the value of loyalty in relation to improving their own personal effectiveness. It is concerned with the ability to build loyalty, trust and confidence throughout the organisation</p> <p>Undermining others, talking about others faults and allocating blame can undermine loyalty, trust, generate tension and affects individuals ability to be effective</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows consideration, concern and respect for other people’s feelings and opinions. • Gives reassurance and encouragement to staff throughout the change process. • Takes account of objections and concerns. Works through differences of opinion in a logical and non-judgemental manner • Remains impartial and free of personal bias when considering ways to resolve problems. • Displays a willingness to accept ultimate accountability for decisions and outcomes made by self or others. • Speaks positively about the team, the manager and the Council and does not blame others e.g. good mouthing • Makes evidence based judgements

Competency	Definition	Behaviour
<p>Management Of Performance</p>	<p>This competency is concerned with an individual's ability to maintain focused on objectives which are linked to the organisation's business plan. Where the individual is in a managerial post it is also about the ability to set objectives for staff and the use of the performance management process to ensure those improvements in performance are achieved</p> <p>Individuals who perform well in this competency will focus on action that achieves outcomes, they will evaluate performance management data including customer feedback and use this as a tool for improving service delivery</p> <p>Effective performance management is where the best use is made of the resources available and innovative solutions are considered in an attempt to resolve problems this could apply to personal and team resources and includes monitoring and controlling the way in which resources are used.</p> <p>In dealing with others, individuals will never lose sight of diversity and equalities in relation to employees and the delivery of services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritises work and uses resources in accordance with those priorities. • Sets objectives that are realistic but challenge targets. • Does not blame others when targets are not met but seeks to understand why. • Achieves personal objectives but not at the expense of others. • Collects and uses performance data to improve service delivery. • Encourages team members to take responsibility for the way they use resources and monitor them. • Understands the Council's financial systems and procedures to the level required. • Manages personal time and workloads effectively. • Understands risk assessments to the level required and takes appropriate action to reduce risk. • Take personal responsibility for identification of and strategies to deal with risk • Contributes to a positive non-discriminatory work environment.

Competency	Definition	Behaviour
<p>Celebration of Success</p>	<p>This competency is about individual's ability to recognise achievements individually and collectively. It is also about creating an environment where individuals feel they can try and praised where they succeed but also supported where they fail.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals give praise for work well done. • Individuals give critical feedback directly to the individual concerned in a way that focuses on finding a solution. • Individuals do what they say they will do. • Shared responsibility for problems. • Look for solutions rather than culprits. • Reward good practice individually and collectively, through acknowledgement and praise. • Encourage individuals to share their learning with each other and identify others from whom they can learn. • Establish and maintain constructive and open relationships with colleagues and customers. • Seeks and encourages commitment from all stakeholders and encourages staff to express their views. • Reassures, inspires and motivates staff throughout the change process. • Motivates individuals in pursuit of enhancing performance and the achievement of success • Takes time to reflect on achievements and lessons learned

Competency	Definition	Behaviour
<p>Customers Matter</p>	<p>This competency is about an individual's ability to recognise the importance and value of good customer services.</p> <p>It is also the ability to prioritise productive customer relations.</p> <p>Where the individual is in a managerial role it is ensuring quality customer services is delivered in respective areas of responsibility and through out the organisation in addition to challenging poor customer service</p> <p>It is about putting the Customer at the heart of everything the Council does</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluates performance management data, including customer feedback, as a tool for effective service delivery. • Identifies customer needs and consistently meets them. • Recognises the needs of customers who may have special requirements. e.g. barriers to communication or access. • Is positive and helpful when communicating with customers verbally and in writing. • Answers queries and solves problems confidently and effectively and keeps the customer informed of progress. • Seeks feedback from customers to improve the service. • Asks probing questions to clarify issues and concerns. • Considers customers needs in the planning and delivery of services. • Provides feedback to staff on levels of customer satisfaction. • Implements Customer Service Standards. • Challenges poor standards in customer care. • Ensures that services are available to customers are positive and helpful when communicating with customers. • Provides legible, factual, customer focused written documentation

