

Workforce Strategy Update Report

Final Decision-Maker	Employment Committee
Lead Head of Service/Lead Director	Stephen McGinnes, Mid Kent Services Director
Lead Officer and Report Author	Bal Sandher, Head of HR Shared Services
Classification	Public
Wards affected	No wards

Executive Summary

The Council has had a Workforce Strategy since 2008 and this has been reviewed and developed as the priorities and environment has changed. The most recent version covers the period 2016 - 2020 and was agreed at the Policy and Resources Committee 29 June 2016. As part of the approval the P&R Committee requested that the Employment Committee should receive progress updates twice per year.

At Appendix I the report sets out the progress made against the action plan that supports the Workforce Strategy.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the Committee note the progress of the actions set out in the Workforce Strategy.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Employment Committee	28 January 2019

Workforce Strategy Update Report

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 The key themes of the Workforce Strategy are:

- Organisation culture and change;
- Resourcing;
- Development, and
- Reward.

1.2 There has been progress against all of the themes, much of which is cross cutting and affects more than one theme.

1.3 Organisation culture and change

1.3.1 A report was presented to the Employment Committee in June 2018 on Employee Wellbeing and Mental Health. There were a number of initiatives outlined in the report to support mental wellbeing and this has been further enhanced with the launch of a new online resource for staff on mental health. The online platform provides advice and information on how to look after your mental health, links to videos on mindfulness and where to find further support if needed.

1.3.2 We rolled out Mental Health First Aid training in October 2018. Fifteen staff attended the training and we have another 16 staff booked on the course in January 2019. This training is delivered by our Learning and Development Officer who has completed the training and qualified to deliver this in-house. The training teaches how to recognise warning signs of mental ill health, encourage staff to talk more freely about mental health, reduce stigma and to feel confident to guide staff to the appropriate support. The list of trained mental health first aiders has been published across the council to enable staff to contact one of the mental first aiders if required. In addition, a policy on Mental Health First Aid has been developed and introduced to inform staff and managers about the role of a Mental Health First Aid as well as responsibilities of managers.

1.3.3 The One Council update in September was carried out in a different format compared to previous One Council events. This was based on staff feedback from previous briefings where a more informal event was expressed as the preferred format. The event was held at the Maidstone Invicta Park Barracks and a number of stalls were arranged by the army to allow staff the opportunity to find out about their work as well as a tour of the barracks. There were also other stalls organised by the council which included an activity on the new strategic plan and information provided by Kent Connected on 'let's talk travel' in relation to how they can support staff to explore different travel arrangements.

1.3.4 The next One Council will be held on 27th February 2019. This will include the Council update and the annual staff awards. This event will

take place at Maidstone's Leisure Centre for all staff to attend and gives the opportunity to recognise the great contribution our team members have made to achieving the council's objectives and delivering great services to the public. This has become an important part of reinforcing our culture and values. The One Council update also provides an opportunity to remind staff of the priorities that we are all working towards and update them on the progress of various projects. This year we will update staff on the Council's recently adopted Strategic Plan.

- 1.3.5 We have developed an engagement plan by working with the Communications team that clearly informs the way the council will communicate to staff on a number of important messages. This includes communication from the corporate, manager and staff level. The plan sets out the different times in the year that we will be engaging with staff in order to ensure we continually improve the way we involve and communicate with all employees.
- 1.3.6 The Council has been delivering a payroll service for Dartford Borough Council from April 2018. We have held two review meetings and the feedback from Dartford has been very positive, with Dartford reporting that there has been a huge improvement in the payroll service that is being delivered by our Payroll team compared to their previous payroll provider. The success is a testament of the hard work and professionalism of our Payroll team.

1.4 Resourcing

- 1.4.1 We will be introducing a new HR service delivery model within the next couple of months that involves HR Advisors working more closely with department management teams to provide a department specific proactive service. The aim of this model is to add value to the business by creating a "key" allocated resource for departments. The HR Advisor's role will be to listen and communicate more meaningfully with the business to gain a greater understanding of the business. By offering solutions to these challenges, HR Advisors will not only improve the capability of managers but also build up the manager's confidence in them.
- 1.4.2 To ensure we continue to attract high calibre candidates to employment opportunities at the council, we have designed a new on-line job page which provides candidates with information on Maidstone as a borough, priorities of the council, benefits and rewards that are available to staff. The aim of the job page is to ensure the council is presented in the best light to attract good candidates and improve the candidate experience in applying for roles.
- 1.4.3 All employers with a pay bill over £3 million per annum must pay an apprenticeship levy of 0.5% of their monthly pay bill. In addition, we are required to have 2.3% of the workforce on apprenticeships as an average from period 01/04/2017 to 31/03/2021. For Maidstone Borough Council this equates to approximately 14 apprentices a year on average.

An apprentice can be a newly appointed member of staff, employed into an apprentice post, or can be an existing member of staff undertaking an apprenticeship qualification. We currently have five apprentices within the Council. We also recently ran drop-in sessions for staff to explain how the qualifications work under an apprenticeship and to invite expressions of interest. There was a number of staff interested in studying an apprentice qualification. Currently we have 12 staff studying for a qualification through this route with another 8 staff interested in completing apprentice qualification in 2019-2020. A breakdown of the type of qualification and cost from the levy has been provided below:

Team	Qualification	Cost from levy	Start/End date
Grounds Maintenance	L2: Horticulture	£4,000	Completed Sept 2019
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Development Management	L3: Public Service Operational Delivery	£3,000	Completed Sept 2019
Grounds Maintenance x 2	L2: Horticulture	£4,000	Jan 2019
Street Scene	L2: Local Environmental Services Skills	£1,500	Jan 2019
Customer Services	L2: Customer Services	£1,500	Dec 2018
Grounds Maintenance	L2: Horticulture	£2,000	Jan 2019
Grounds Maintenance	L3: Horticulture	£2,500	Jan 2019
Waste & Street Scene	L2: Team Leader	£5,000	Nov 2018
Grounds Maintenance x 2	L2: Team Leader	£10,000	Nov 2018
Museum	L2: Team Leader	£5,000	Nov 2018
Policy & Information	L4: Data Analyst	£15,000	

The following will start their apprenticeship qualification in 2019-2020:

Team	Qualification	Cost from levy
Housing	L4 Construction Management	£12,000
Grounds Maintenance	L3: Horticulture	£2,500
Mid Kent Planning Support	L7: Senior Leaders Master's Degree	£18,000
Environmental Improvement	L3: Learning & Development	£2,500
Street Scene	L2: Team Leader	£5,000
Customer Services	L4: Associate Project Management	£9,000
Environmental Improvement	L4: Associate Project Management	£9,000
Economic Development	L4: Associate Project Management	£9,000

1.4.4 On 14th November 2018 the council was awarded with the Disability Confident Committed certificate. Disability confident are working with employers to ensure that disabled people and those with long term health conditions have the opportunities to fulfil their potential and realise their aspirations.

As a Disability Confident Committed Employer we have committed to:

- Ensuring our recruitment process is inclusive and accessible
- Communicating and promoting vacancies
- Offering an interview to disabled people
- Anticipating and providing reasonable adjustments as required
- Supporting any existing employee who acquires a disability or long term health condition, enabling them to stay in work
- One activity that will make a difference for disabled people

We will be working towards Level 2 (Disability Confident Employer) and Level 3 (Disability Confident Leader).

1.5 Development

1.5.1 Following last year's cycle of appraisals we carried out an internal survey to understand staff's view on our appraisal process and system and the impact it had on their motivation. The results were largely positive with more than 90% of staff feeling that they received useful feedback from their line manager in their appraisal. 62% of staff said they felt motivated after their appraisal, and 70% of staff said they were having regular 1:1's with their line manager. Regular discussions and feedback are an important element of staff engagement, and going forward we will be working with line managers to develop their skills in 1:1 meetings and ensure that they take place regularly for all staff.

1.5.2 We have delivered two pilot programmes of a new programme called Personal Best. The programme is intended to help people move from a fixed mind-set to a growth mind-set by achieving a personal goal, supported by 1:1 coaching and workshops. The challenge of engaging staff that have a fixed mind-set was highlighted in the Investors in People Review last year, and the programme is part of our action plan as a way of changing people's mind-sets which in turn would increase their level of engagement with the Council and empowerment to take responsibility in line with our STRIVE values. The programme has been piloted with 2 groups - Environment & Public Realm and Revenues & Benefits. The evaluation of the programme has shown that it was well received and staff felt more confident in their own abilities and the contribution they make to the council as well as generating ideas for the council. It has been agreed to run two further programmes during which our Learning and Development Manager will be training to deliver the programme going forward.

1.6 Reward

- 1.6.1 There have been a number of wellbeing events organised and promoted over the last few months. In September, we promoted Migraine Awareness week to educate staff on causes, support and management of migraines. On the National Dementia Carers Day in September, we organised training sessions on Dementia Friends Champion to raise awareness on dementia. In October, on World Mental Health Day a webinar was organised for managers to equip them with the tools to manage mental wellbeing. The main purpose for these wellbeing events is to encourage individuals to take preventative measures to avert the onset or worsening of an illness or disease and to adopt healthier lifestyles. In addition, we organised and delivered free flu vaccinations for staff in November.
- 1.6.2 The next annual Wellbeing week has been arranged to take place between 25 February and 1 March 2019. A number of events will be organised across the council to promote the importance of being healthy and active. The aim of the week is to raise awareness on wellbeing by arranging opportunities for staff to get involved in activities that will improve their fitness, mental health and their overall wellbeing.
- 1.6.3 In order to further enhance the employee benefits and rewards we have implemented a salary sacrifice scheme in December through which employees can lease a car at a significantly reduced cost. Under the scheme, employees are able to lease a brand new, fully maintained and insured car. All servicing and maintenance of the vehicle is included in the monthly salary reduction along with fully comprehensive motor insurance. There is no cost for the council in implementing this benefit apart from small amount of admin time in processing applications.
- 1.7 The Workforce Strategy sets out the key themes for the period 2016-2020, there is an associated action plan that will be updated on a regular basis to ensure the council continues to develop. The action plan that was agreed in June 2016 is at Appendix I and it has been updated with the progress to date.

2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the progress to date, and agree that work continues on the current action plan. Members could substitute alternative actions or add to the existing ones.

3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The preferred option is for the Committee to note the developments and support the on-going work.
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4. RISK

- 4.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 The Workforce Strategy was developed with input from the managers in the organisation and discussed with both the trade unions and Staff Forum.

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 Developments based on the Workforce Strategy are regularly communicated to managers and staff through Wakey Wakey, Team Talk activities, consultation with trade unions, Staff Forum and by email.
- 6.2 Actions within the Workforce Strategy are regularly reviewed by the Wider Leadership Team and twice a year by the Employment Committee.

7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The Workforce Strategy has an impact on all aspects of the corporate priorities.	Bal Sandher, Head of HR
Risk Management	The overarching risk is that if the council does not have a Workforce Strategy it may fail to put in place the actions to deliver the priorities.	Bal Sandher, Head of HR
Financial	Workforce costs are the single biggest area of expenditure for the Council, accounting for around half of the Council's total budget. The Workforce Strategy therefore has a financial impact, but this is costed within the normal annual budget. Specific initiatives described within this report are also funded from	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team

	within existing budgets.	
Staffing	The Workforce Strategy will have an impact on staff – this should be a positive impact as we work to ensure that there are improvements.	Bal Sandher, Head of HR
Legal	Although there may be specific actions arising out of the Strategy that require legal input, there is nothing identified in the plan overall that will have legal implications.	Estelle Culligan (Principal Solicitor)
Privacy and Data Protection	No personal data is contained in the report.	[Legal Team]
Equalities	No impact identified as a result of this update report. As an employer the Council has a duty to fulfil under the Equality Act 2010. This is ongoing and is embedded in the processes to deliver the Work Force Strategy	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer
Public Health	No impact identified at this time	Bal Sandher, Head of HR
Crime and Disorder	No impact identified at this time	Bal Sandher, Head of HR
Procurement	The Workforce Strategy has an impact on all aspects of the corporate priorities.	Bal Sandher, Head of HR

8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: Workforce Plan update

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Workforce Strategy

<http://aluminum:9080/documents/s49435/Enc.%201%20for%20Workforce%20Strategy%202016-2020.pdf>