

Staff and Pensions Committee

6 March 2023

Annual Review of Our People Strategy and Year 3 (2023/2024) Delivery Plan

Recommendation

That the Committee notes the activity as set out in the 2022/23 Annual Review of Our People Strategy and endorses the 2023/24 Our People Strategy Delivery Plan.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The refreshed Our People Strategy 2020-2025 was originally endorsed by both the Resource and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Staff and Pensions Committee in December 2020. Since this date, the Strategy has returned to both committees on an annual basis to review and endorse the plans for the coming year.
- 1.2 The Annual Review of Our People Strategy, at Appendix 1, showcases and celebrates the activity and performance against our organisational priorities supported by HROD over the previous year, and considers the performance data, the current context and details the key priorities for the coming year.
- 1.3 The key priorities have been considered and endorsed by Corporate Board and Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee and have been updated to reflect their feedback.
- 1.4 Following approval from Members, the Annual Review will be shared with a wider audience to support the Council's ongoing Employee Offer and the ongoing recruitment and retention of our people by continuing to confirm our commitment to making Warwickshire a great place to work..
- 1.5 **Our People Achievements 2022/2023** against agreed priority actions:
 - Leading Organisation Wellbeing - focus continues on monitoring attendance rates, wellbeing initiatives and collation of evidence to apply for Silver Thrive at Work. The annual review focus on leading organisational wellbeing was endorsed by the Staff and Pensions Committee in October 2022.
 - Engagement – the new approach has been launched and the response rate and engagement score have both increased. An annual review of

engagement was endorsed by Staff and Pensions Committee in June 2022.

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – the focus continues on progressing the action plan. The Council was delighted to be awarded the Silver Inclusive Employer Award in September, which recognised the great progress made and provides the basis for future actions. An annual review focus on EDI was endorsed by Staff and Pensions Committee in September.
- Culture – a review of the culture requirements to support the council plan has been completed. To support this we have defined our culture, pulling together our values, behaviours, Employee Offer and our people and EDI visions.
- People Metrics for managers - work continues with the development of people dashboards.
- Leadership Approach – a draft approach to leadership has been developed, which articulates the expectations of leaders, along with the leadership offer to support them. We have procured a partner to work with officers in developing our leadership offer, to be launched in April 2023.
- Agile Working Approach – has developed into How We Work Best, which captures all the working arrangements across the Council. A new intranet hub has been launched, continuing to evolve and take stock of the approach, with an appreciative inquiry to understand, celebrate and embrace different ways of working being undertaken.
- Employer Offer – is now embedded in how the organisation is promoted, and ways to use it to promote the Council as an employer of choice continue to be sought.
- Recognition Platform – the Highfive recognition platform was piloted on a trial basis, with an alternative way of enabling our people to provide peer to peer recognition and thanks, being embedded going forward.
- Induction and Onboarding – Improvements on how we induct and onboard our people have been made.
- Apprentices' Pay – has been aligned with the national minimum wage rates to address attraction and recruitment challenges.
- Recruitment, Retention and Talent – developing flexible resourcing solutions, including career pathways to address attraction and recruitment challenges.
- Tier 1-4 recruitment process – approval of a reviewed approach to recruiting to leadership and management roles.
- Apprenticeship First Approach – testing a framework so that apprenticeships are routinely considered for entry roles.
- Corporate learning and development offer has been reviewed and updated, taking on board the view and input from stakeholders so that it reflects the needs of the organisation.

1.6 Our People Priorities for 2023/2024

Having considered our achievements over the last year, along with our performance measures, the workforce planning discussions with Assistant Directors, other discussions with key stakeholders and assessing the external

factors of the employment market, we have considered which actions will have the biggest impact on the issues that we are facing. The following priorities are proposed for 2023/24:

- Wellbeing – Aligned to our wellbeing offer, undertake a health needs assessment and continue to collate the evidence to apply for the Silver Thrive at Work accreditation. Procure a provider for Occupational Health and EAP.
- Our Approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – Launch our approach commitment, continue with the action plan with a particular focus, working with partners, on social mobility and the levelling up agenda, the response from the Inclusive Employers feedback, the ONS Census data and the Breaking Through and Allyship programmes.
- How We Work – Undertake an appreciative inquiry into our ways of working to showcase, celebrate and embrace the different ways of working. Continue to develop and refine the Agile Working approach including a refresh of the principles to ensure effectiveness and consistency alongside exploring options for new ways of working to support recruitment and retention.
- Workload – continue through our engagement approach to enable our people to manage their workloads.
- Engaging with Off-line Colleagues – Priority focus on how we engage with our colleagues who are not on-line, as well as those who do not currently engage in the YourSay activity.
- People Metrics, Leading with Data – Launch a series of PowerBi dashboards, to provide managers with real time data and information.
- Leadership Approach – Work with our new partner Passe Partout, to co-create and deliver a leadership offer that equips leaders with the knowledge and skills to lead people to deliver our ambitions. Finalise and launch our Approach to Leadership, setting out the expectations of our leaders along with the offer of development and support.
- Performance and Appraisal Framework - business as usual annual refresh activity, including 360 feedback for tiers 0-3 leaders.
- Performance Policy – review the tone and voice of the capability policy.
- Strategic Workforce Planning – continue to develop a, including a workforce assessment, which provides insight and challenge to ensure services are able to respond to future need and provides HROD with common themes to inform priority actions.
- Contract Type Review – Review our zero hour and sessional worker contractual arrangements.
- Pay and Reward - Review our approach to Pay and Reward. Consider and plan future developments.
- Recognition / Star Award Review – making proposals for future awards and further recognition work in future years.
- Our Approach to Benefits – Consolidate the benefits offer into one document to ensure that it supports the recruitment and retention ambition. Undertake options appraisal into implementing additional benefits, such as Electric Vehicles and Lease Car Schemes.

- Recruitment and Retention Approach – Understand better why leavers are leaving and develop a suite of recruitment and retention tools, including career pathways, career change, talent management and the re-commissioning of the temporary agency contract.
- Apprenticeship First – review the trial and develop an approach to encourage growth of the use of apprenticeships and utilisation of the apprenticeship levy, along with supporting managers with induction of first-time workers.
- Corporate menu of Learning and Development – review to ensure this meets the needs of our people.

1.7 **Our People Measures of Success:** to monitor progress and help identify challenges a number of measures are tracked throughout the year. The performance against the key business measures and indicators, is as follows:

- Sickness Absence – has stabilised throughout the year at 8.5 days per FTE, which remains within the target of 8 days per FTE (+/- 1 day).
- Employee Engagement - has increased slightly to 76%, from 74% last year, but remains slightly below the target of 78%.
- Gender Pay Gaps – The gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps are all closer to 0 from last year, and all within target of 0% (+/-5%).
- Stress and Mental Health Absence – has remained consistent at 2.43 days per FTE and remains under the target of 2.5 days.
- Wellbeing Score - this new measure has set a promising baseline of 77% agreement.
- Proud to work for WCC – 80% agreement, an increase from 76% in the previous year.
- Safe to be authentic self – another new measure, setting a positive baseline at 79%.
- Disclosure rates – following a successful data campaign, there has been a significant increase in disclosure rates across all the main categories of disability, ethnicity, religion & belief and sexual orientation. Two new categories around carer responsibility and socio- economic background have also been introduced.
- Retention has stabilised at 86.4% and remains positively above the target of 85%.

2. Financial Implications

2.1 None arising directly from this report. The financial implications of each priority covered in this report will be considered as the work is programmed and are allowed for within the relevant service budget(s) for 2023/24.

3. Environmental Implications

3.1 None arising directly from this report.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 Our People Strategy provides direction and focus on the development and implementation of a range of projects and initiatives under the Strategy's six building blocks:
- Culture
 - Leadership
 - Performance
 - Organisational Development and Design
 - Reward and Recognition
 - Talent Development and Career Opportunities
- 4.2 In this year's annual review, to strengthen the content a summary of activities, measurements of success and priority actions for 2023/2024 through the employment journey has been provided. This aligns to other service improvement work across the two arms of HROD, Strategy and Commissioning and People Solutions. The employment journey has been divided into Attracting, Joining, Wellbeing, Performing, Rewarding, Developing and Moving On, and full details can be found on page 3 of Appendix A.
- 4.3 Alongside the achievements against the agreed priority areas, the annual review also celebrates other service improvements, awards and recognition across both HROD services.
- 4.4 The annual review provides more narrative on the proposed priority areas, particularly on the difference we make, to demonstrate the desired outcome each priority will seek.
- 4.5 2022/2023 has been another challenging but successful year for delivery against the Our People Strategy with some emerging priorities being identified throughout the year, including Strategic Workforce Planning and the Pay and Reward review.
- 4.6 Across the whole Human Resources and Organisational Development, other successes have included:
- Development of Our Approach to Leadership and procuring a partner to scope and develop our Leadership Offer.
 - Well received annual reviews for Engagement, Health and Safety and Wellbeing, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. These tell our story, celebrate successes and provide focus for further work.
 - The Payroll team were awarded the PPMA Award for Excellence in Service Delivery – Unsung Heroes.
 - The new approach to engaging our people has been well received with an increased in participation and an increase in engagement scores, along with some positive benchmark positions, for the new measures.

- From a commercial perspective, we were successful in continuing to provide services to Wokingham Borough Council and Stratford upon Avon District Council.
 - Alongside the longer-term strategic deliverables we have continued to support our people and enabled them to continually deliver for the communities that we serve.
 - In addition to supporting the Our People Strategy our HROD Delivery colleagues have had another busy and successful year, with increasing demand on all its services.
- 4.7 Some of the major projects and initiatives will continue into 2023/2024. Some key activities have been identified to best support the delivery of the Council Plan and respond to the internal and external employment challenges being faced.
- 4.8 Whilst the proposed activities for 2023/2024 have not been prioritised, it is recognised that demand on HROD may mean the approach and focus will have to be flexed during the year. Should that be the case further discussions will take place with Corporate Board. However, the recommendation is that the priority focus should be on the following 5 major issues:
- Recruitment and Retention
 - Pay and Reward
 - Strategic Workforce Planning
 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
 - Employee Engagement
- 4.9 Officers will continue to develop the HR service that they can all be proud of, with exceptional service delivery for our customers.

Appendices

1. Appendix 1 – Our People Strategy Annual Review (2022/23) and Year 3 (2023/24) Delivery Plan

Background Papers

None

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): not applicable as internal organisational report

Other members: Councillor Andy Jenns