

Agenda Item 8.

TITLE	Development of the Council's People Strategy
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Personnel Board 21 st June 23
WARD	N/A
LEAD OFFICER	Louise Livingston

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

The council aims to develop a People Strategy which will enable the development of a culture which is highly focused on delivering positive customer experiences, and the right outcomes for our communities.

Positive customer experiences, from a workforce perspective, are delivered through a number of enabling themes; those themes will be confirmed through the process to develop our People Strategy. Once our strategy is developed, detailed action plans will be developed to clarify how we will meet our customer-focused aims.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendation is that Personnel Board agree to the proposed method of defining the people strategy through engagement and consultation with the wider workforce, before it is then presented to Personnel Board for sign off.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report sets out proposals for the development of our people strategy, where engagement with our workforce at all levels helps us to identify the key strategic priorities for our workforce.

BACKGROUND

1. A People Strategy is an interlinked set of corporate aims relating to how we attract, develop, retain and reward our workforce, and will include aspirations in terms of culture and performance in support of the delivery of our services. It will set out the approach for the council's relationship with its workforce, and will incorporate every phase in the employee lifecycle, from recruitment to offboarding.
2. The People Strategy will be developed in conjunction with the Council Vision and Council Plan to ensure a golden thread exists through from the vision to the plan and strategy to the objectives set in service plans and individuals appraisals.
3. The development of a People Strategy will involve understanding the views and needs of the organisation, which will be gathered through engagement with the workforce, taking into account organisational challenges and priorities.
4. The development and implementation of a People Strategy is a vital component of the Human Resources and Organisational Development team and sets the direction

for delivery, a strategy will be developed with the aim of getting sign off at Personnel Board in November 2023.

ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION

1. The council has undergone significant change over the last few years, both planned and unexpected, with the work associated with 21C, the effects of Covid.
2. With the new HR & OD structure that the Council has adopted it has the capacity and capability to deliver value-adding work and strategic level initiatives, and this now means that investment in the workforce can be achieved.
3. The lack of a strategy has resulted in under-investment in many aspects of people management, specifically learning and development, candidate attraction, leadership and management development and policy work.
4. With the focus on the People Strategy through the Workforce transformation programme, an outline plan for its development has been created which involves engagement with the wider workforce – a vital component which will improve employee engagement if handled well, and ensure the strategy becomes meaningful at an early stage for a good proportion of our workforce.
5. The high-level plan for development of the strategy is set out below, with the aim of having a draft strategy produced for consideration by Personnel Board in September 2023.

Overall Aim of Project

To deliver a people strategy which reflects:

- The need to deliver positive customer experiences with the right outcomes
- Our aspirations for how we lead our workforce to deliver that customer experience
- The need to grow and develop a culture of:
 - Customer Excellence, focused on designing and delivering services that result in the best experiences and outcomes for our customers
 - Continuous improvement where people are supported to think differently about how to improve the lives of those in our community - whilst exploring where we can make savings and deliver efficiencies
 - Authentic leadership

Key Factors Considered before engaging with the workforce

- What are our organisational challenges in the next 5 years? This will be achieved through understanding the Community Vision and Council Plan
- What culture and skills do we need to develop to meet those challenges? How close are we now to those?
- Where are our current people 'pain points'? What do we need to fix?

How we Develop the Strategy

1. Consultation

- Broad-approach consultation meetings with Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) members focusing on people: where we are vs where we need to be. It will be important for CLT to help with the horizon scanning and define the org. challenges over the next 5 years.
- Engage with Personnel Board and gather their views to be fed into the Strategy.
- Engage with the Steering Group that has been set to deliver the Community Vision and Council Plan which has Assistant Directors from across the Council to help shape and deliver the People Strategy.
- Facilitated small (up to 10) group sessions with Managers (at Head of Service Level and Service Manager level initially, with HRBP involvement) and Network Groups (particularly EDI specific) focusing on specific but interlinked themes:
 - Performance – Is WBC providing the right customer experiences and outcomes? Where do people think we are now? Where do we want to be?
 - Leadership – What does leadership mean to people?
 - What type of leaders do we need to be?
 - Investment in people – What does this mean to people? Are we doing enough?
 - Organisational Behaviours – What behaviours do we need to develop the right culture, and what is that culture?
 - Engagement – What does good look like? How do we ensure our colleagues feel invested in WBC?
 - Wellbeing – What steps do we need to take to promote and maintain positive wellbeing amongst our teams?
 - Reward – Do we provide sufficient reward for our people, in the right way? (Also defining what ‘reward’ encompasses)
 - Employer brand – Linking in with the culture that we want to develop.
 - Inclusivity – Does our approach to diversity and inclusivity work well?
- Sessions with relevant network groups and unions to talk through all themes.
- Group sessions with staff, with same themes as above

2. Consideration

Review outputs from all sessions above and establish key themes which require further exploration and actions. Consider trends demonstrated across survey history, other organisation statistics (attrition, casework, resourcing, L & D, EDI data, customer insight and feedback etc) and EDI strategies planned and already in place.

3. Reporting back to Personnel Board & CLT

Sharing outputs with Personnel Board & CLT and agreeing themes before moving to next stage

4. Action / Strategy Planning

Focus groups, by theme, to consider the outputs from initial sessions and develop into a set of high-level actions to inform strategy

5. Strategy Development & Consultation

Develop one-page strategy document for consultation across groups named above, then move to consultation across the wider Council

6. Final sign-off of Strategy

Present strategy to CLT and Personnel Board for approval, with set of high-level actions to support initiatives proposed through the strategy development process.

7. Implementation – Plans to be developed once strategy agreed.**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION**

The Council faces severe funding pressures, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£0		N/A
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0		N/A
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0		N/A

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

The cost to develop the strategy will be minimal given that it requires staff time only. Any costs in relation to implementing the strategy will be explored once detailed actions are agreed.

Cross-Council Implications

The people strategy will be linked to the Community Vision and Council Plan

Public Sector Equality Duty

N/A

List of Background Papers

None

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