

Report to the Council

Committee: Council
Date: 11 October 2022
Subject: Internal Resource Portfolio
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Sam Kane

Recommending:

That the report of the Internal Resources Portfolio Holder be noted.

People Team

People Strategy 2020 – 2022

Attracting, On-Boarding and Retaining Talent

- The portal in which candidates search for jobs will be reviewed as improvements are scheduled for the new (calendar) year. This will give an opportunity to revisit the look / feel of the portal and make any necessary changes.

Developing our skills and behaviours

- We continue to support a high level of successful apprenticeships; One level 7 AAT (Accountancy) apprentice will start soon. We are advertising for 2 Legal apprentices and a Careers Coach/ Employment Practitioner Apprentice who will be based with the Homelessness Team (via Changing Futures funding). Also, we continue to look at upskilling current employees via apprenticeship levy; including Level 5 Institute of Leadership Management apprenticeships, level 5 Arboriculture and we aim to have a Level 5 Cultural & Heritage apprentice in the first cohort of this qualification in January 2023.

Engagement and Wellbeing project

- The results from our June 2022 'Creating our Tomorrow – our ways of working for the future and beyond' have just arrived. Some key highlights are;
 - Currently, 53% of employees work from home or remotely most of the time, 39% have been working in a hybrid way, 4% have been working from the office/workplace all of the time, 4% have a job where they must be on site, so cannot work from home
 - Those respondents who currently working from home some of their time (376) on average, spend 73.6% of their working time, working from home
 - 81% of employees surveyed said that within their current contracted hours, they feel as though they can be flexible in their role
 - 86% agree that having a flexible working pattern is beneficial to them
 - 79% agree that they feel that their manager has supported them in understanding how they can adopt flexibility into their working day
 - Employees would like to (continue to) work from home/remotely 70.6% of their working time on average
 - 95% of employees feel well equipped to work in line with the hybrid approach

- 92% of employees feel supported by their manager in a remote working environment
- 93% feel supported by their team in a remote working environment
- 23% of respondents would recommend EFDC to a friend or family member

Business Support

Local Land Charges (LLC), HMLR Project

- The LLC Team have recently been working through one of many lists of data corrections in preparation for the migration to Her Majesty's Land Registry (HMLR). A new set of data corrections is due to be issued to the Council on 19th Sept, with just a 5 day turnaround, regardless of the volume.
- The Service Manager for Business Support is working with our Continuous Improvement Officer and our Change Manager to hold workshops with the LLC Team to scope out the future model of the service, to increase efficiency and reduce our operating costs. As part of this process, we are also reviewing our fees and charges, and will follow the correct governance process should those need to change.

Projects

Accommodation – Commercialisation of our bookable spaces

- A PFH report was approved earlier in the year to partner with IWG and Epping Regus (our tenant on the top floor of the Civic Offices) for the advertising and booking management of our Conference Suite and Council Chamber at the Civic Offices. Regus is IWG's brand and they are the world's largest flexible workspace company, operating across 120 countries, in 3,500 locations, with over 7 million users. Some of their clients include Amazon, Apple and Disney. Epping Regus were issued with a final draft of the contract in July and they are working with their legal team to come back to us.

Soft Facilities Management – Outsourcing our Concierge Service

- An options appraisal using soft market research was presented to the Executive and Senior Leadership Team recommending a formal procurement process to review the option of outsourcing our Concierge Service at the Civic Offices. The data and detail that comes out of the tender process will then be used to provide the Executive and Senior Leadership Team with an additional options appraisal to take a decision as to whether we progress with the opportunity or not.
- The benefits for considering this as an option include;
 - Increased resilience as we will be working with a company that can be scalable to our needs and ensure we always have appropriately trained staff available to cover the shift requirements. In turn this will improve internal and external customer service and support an increase in revenue from the Conference Suite.
 - We will have an opportunity to work with a service provider and shape what we want the service to look like, such as SIA security trained employees.
 - A possible reduction in annual operating costs (as per soft market research).
 - A reduction in direct costs such as recruitment to roles, sickness absence pay, annual leave and sickness absence cover costs (we outsource this currently).

Contingency Planning

- A Safety Advisory Group (SAG) has been formed for the World Champion Slalom Event which is being held at Lee Valley next year, which includes the adjacent showground for camping.

Democratic and Electoral Services

- The Democratic and Electoral Services section have completed their permanent move out of Homefield House as part of the 'Our New Ways of Working' workstream within Programme 2025.
- A severed ICT connection has meant the Elections Team has also moved out of Homefield House slightly ahead of time, (the move was due to be mid-December). Officers are considering the future use of the building.

Parking

- **Car Parking Income**

We are seeing long-term behaviour change regarding parking income post-Covid, as occupancy levels appear to have still not reached pre-pandemic levels in long-stay car parks. This is assumed to be due to the prevalence of working from home.

The implementation of new car park tariffs on 4th April 2022 is generating more income to the Council, with an increase of approximately 8.9% in parking fees and charges, compared to the previous year.

Car park income and occupancy rates are continually being reviewed by EFDC Officers.

- **InstaVolt Electric Vehicle Charging Stations**

The partnership with InstaVolt for Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations in Oakwood Hill East car park has proved to be very successful with good usage levels, customer satisfaction and increasing car park occupancy levels. The chargers are generating income to the Council through ground rent and additional parking fees income (due to increased occupancy).

InstaVolt and EFDC Officers have identified three commercially attractive EFDC off-street car parks for the next phase of EV charging points. These are Basons Lane Car Park (Ongar), Burton Road car park (Debden) and Cornmill car park (Waltham Abbey). Lease negotiations will begin for 4 rapid charging points in both Basons Lane and Burton Road car parks. The Cornmill car park proposal is subject to site survey for power supply.

- **Permits in Cornmill Car Park and Oakwood Hill East Car Park**

EFDC have introduced business, residents and visitor permits in Cornmill Car Park (Waltham Abbey), and business permits in Oakwood Hill East Car Park (Debden). The introduction of these permits has been well received and is generating additional income to the Council.

- **Cottis Lane Car Park**

The Cottis Lane car park closed on the evening of Friday 2nd September 2022 as Qualis begins construction works on delivering the new multi-storey car park, which is expected to be completed by Summer 2023. To reduce the impact on the community, Qualis have worked with local Councillors to create temporary car park at St John's Road which opened on Saturday 3rd September 2022 to provide additional spaces while the work is being carried out. EFDC are carrying out parking enforcement in the temporary car park.

ICT

Service Management

The ICT Service Desk is the first point of contact between customers (members and colleagues) and ICT

ICT service ticket management process has improved significantly in the last 9 months. The delivery against SLA for the team from January to September 2022 ranged from 98% to 100%. Up by 4% on previous year. The average ticket age has reduced and complex tickets are being resolved more quickly.

- Work is ongoing to continually improve the starters and leavers process. This includes improving the laptop build process and automating the set-up where possible. From January to September 2022, we have processed 120 new starters and 140 leavers.
- Customer satisfaction for the period:
 - Very satisfied : 96%
 - Satisfied : 4%

Strategy

- Work to deliver the ICT strategy is ongoing and a series of infrastructure and network projects are being planned to underpin the overall move to the cloud
- The strategy is being updated in line with the need to find efficiency savings in the service and across the business – to ensure that resources are focussed upon the areas of greatest impact.

Projects – Business Applications and Infrastructure

- The new Digital Planning application went live in June with learning from this project to be taken forward. A second phase of the project is being planned in order to improve Customer access.
- We successfully migrated to a new secure, personalised, free platform for emergency messaging and implemented a new fraud management system.
- The team have delivered key infrastructure projects:
 - A faster logon solution for remote/home workers.
 - Wi-Fi improvement at our satellite offices.
 - Email security improvements.
 - Scheme Managers are having old terminals replaced with corporate laptops and their way of working is changing so they no longer need local printers or telephones.
 - Out of date storage has been replaced with systems that provide better performance and 99.99% up-time.
 - ICT security has been improved through the replacement of firewalls. Additionally ICT security audits, including a 5 week Microsoft audit, are ongoing to identify potential vulnerabilities in a world where ICT security risk is increasing.

Resourcing

Following the departure of the previous service director an interim manager has been appointed and will handover to a new postholder once recruited..

Continuous work is being done on the skills matrix to ensure resilience and to focus training needs for individuals. New skills are being concentrated on areas that support the future business.

Service Desk team continue to take on more responsibilities, enabling other areas of ICT to focus on project work.

Corporate Projects

The Project Management Office (PMO) provides governance and project management resources to priority projects which are strategically aligned to EFDC's Corporate Objectives. A number of projects are in progress including :

- The Housing and Asset Management (HAMs) project with an expected 'Go Live' date of April 2023.
- A replacement financial and purchase to pay system
- New telephony solution which supports new ways of working
- Complaints case management
- Revs and Bens application transfer to the Cloud
- Microsoft Azure – moving infrastructure to the cloud