

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet
Date: 4 April 2023
Subject: Internal Resources Portfolio
Portfolio Holder: Cllr Sam Kane

Recommending:

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

People Team

Apprentice Strategy 23/24

- EFDC have now been running successful apprentice programmes for 10 years; In this time over 50 young local people have successfully achieved nationally recognised qualifications, and career success with the Council. In addition to this, apprentices have been employed in Planning, Housing, Legal, HR, Economic Development, Internal Comms, Learning and Development and Fleet - Mechanics.
- The apprenticeship levy has also been used to upskill current employees in Management ILM 5, (Institute of Leadership & Management), IRRV (Institute of Revenues Rating & Valuation) and soon a coaching programme plus a team leader apprenticeship will be offered. We have continually exceeded our public sector apprentice target every year and utilised our levy money, which would be lost if not invested in these qualifications.
- SLT have decided that remaining funding for 23/24 will be focused on recruiting 3-4 apprentices in our harder to recruit areas, thus further supporting our 'grow our own' culture. These roles will be advertised in the Spring.

Employee Digital Skills Development

- The People Team are running a series of Skill Pill hours during February/ March to enable employees to learn more about Microsoft Teams, and how to use Teams more efficiently and particularly how to collaborate more effectively; These sessions have also been opened up to councillors. Microsoft now offer these training sessions free (as part of EFDC's contract) and the sessions will continue with Excel and other relevant digital skills development. All sessions are recorded and hosted on our Litmos Learning Management System, for all employees to view at their leisure.
- ICT are exploring apprenticeship levy to pay for specialist, costly IT qualifications, therefore focusing on retaining talent and succession planning.

People Strategy 2023 – 2027

- The new people strategy for 2023-2027 is in final design stages. Engagement sessions with Executive, Senior and wider leadership teams have taken place. The feedback window closes on Friday 3rd March any final feedback will be reviewed and considered,

so far, the feedback is extremely positive. In addition to the new People Strategy, a project plan has been submitted to our PMO team. This will be reviewed in line with their priority process and feedback given; a final service plan will then be designed.

iTrent System

- **Version Upgrade:** Work has recently been carried out to upgrade iTrent to the latest version, enabling it ready for end of year routines with Payroll. Along with this was a new updated view and navigation for managers, some of the feedback received confirms that this is a significant improvement on the old view and navigation.
- **Onboarding:** This went live in December 2022, but we have not had many new starters over this period, so we are hoping to gain some feedback from new starters who have used onboarding in January / February 2023. This feedback will feed into any development / enhancement work that we intend to do with the portal in the future.
- **Multifactor Authentication (MFA):** This has been a requirement by the software provider, and they have given all customers until November 2023 to become compliant. As a partnership of Councils who utilise the same system, we are intending to implement a solution provided by Braintree District Council's ICT team. Currently work will likely start to get busier on this in April / May when we start to move all users over to this new form of authentication for logging in to the system, although there will be some pre work to understand exactly what this involves.
- **Reference points:** Over the past few months we have participated in being a supplier reference site, this has involved either a site visit or phone call and talking about how we utilise the system, normally with some form of demo or Q&A. The supplier has to date given us £1,000 in reference points, with another £1,000 expected in coming weeks, we will use to reinvest in further developments in the system (training / consultancy etc.)

Local Pay Award

- Officers are liaising with the Senior Leadership Team regarding the implementation of the local pay award in April 2023.

Internal Communications

Upgraded Employee Intranet

- Internal Communications have had agreement from ICT to begin unpublishing resources on our current intranet site and publishing links to the new site. This will be done over a two-week period to mitigate the risk of missing resources and prevent an influx of calls to the ICT Service Desk. Once satisfied that everything is working as it should, the new site will move from the test site address to the address the current one has after this two-week period. Meaning we should have our new intranet site in place by mid to late-March.

Business Support

Local Land Charges (LLC), HMLR Project

- The Head of Implementation for HMLR is attending the Civic Offices on 14th March 2023 for a 'Data Sign Off' meeting with Christine Ferrigi.
- The 'Serve Notice' meeting is scheduled virtually between the CEO of HMLR, Georgina Blakemore and Christine Ferrigi for 27th March 2023, for a go live date of 26th April 2023.

- Between now and those meetings the team have some additional data corrections to make, whilst also reducing the search turnaround times ready for go live.

Projects

Accommodation – Commercialisation of our bookable spaces

- The proposed start date for the contract between IWG, Regus Epping and EFDC is the 1st April 2023 and although the contract is not in place yet, we have had our first commercial booking via Regus Epping, which is for a group of 90 people in the Conference Suite.

Soft Facilities Management – Outsourcing our Concierge Service

- The service transfer date to the provider, PCS Group, is 3rd April 2023.
- PCS Group are currently in the TUPE process for one EFDC employee and recruiting to the vacant posts.

Contingency Planning

- Our current Corporate Business Continuity Plan is being reviewed and Service Plan template along with guidance will be produced following training sessions.

Insurance and Risk

- A Council wide Risk Management Framework, Policy & Strategy is being developed in conjunction with Chief Internal Auditor which will shortly going to Senior Officers and Members for consultation and ultimate approval by Cabinet. Expected achievement date to be by end of June 2023
- Risk Management training was rolled out in February 2023 to Senior Officers, provided by Zurich Risk Solutions. Member training will be rolled out in November 2023 in conjunction with the Chief Internal Auditor.
- The Insurance & Risk Specialist will deliver further training workshops throughout the year with individual service areas.
- The Insurance & Risk Specialist is continuing to work with the Fleet Management team, Health & Safety and HR on revising our Driving at Work policy, Drink & Drugs policy and producing a Drivers Handbook to ensure the Council is compliant with its obligations under the Health & Safety at Work Act and Road Traffic Acts amongst other obligations. The final documents will require approval by SLT and is expected to be finalised by Q1 of 2023/2024

Democratic and Election Services

- Preparations continue for the Local elections in May, and the Count this year will be held at the Waltham Abbey Marriot Delta Hotel. Members are requested to remind their family, friends and constituents of the requirement to show voter id at these elections when they attend their own polling station to vote.
- The financial pressures faced by the Council has necessitated a reduction in the resources available, and some changes are planned to the service provided by the Democratic Services section:
 - From the new municipal year, Members will notice a change to the format of committee minutes. They will become more concise and focused on the outcome of discussions rather than the discussion itself. The Democratic Services section

has been reviewing the style of minutes employed at a number of other Councils for the various different committees to ensure that the Council is complying with legislation and best practice. The new format will be trialled for next municipal year and reviewed.

- The number of paper copies of agenda provided by the Democratic Services section for committee meetings will also be decreased in a further effort to reduce costs. From the beginning of the new municipal year, a trial is being instigated to only provide the Chairman of committees with a paper copy of an agenda. If a member wishes to receive a paper copy of the agenda for a meeting, then they will need to contact the Democratic Services section at least one week before the meeting to request it. Only members (or substitutes) of that committee will be able to receive a paper copy of the agenda and papers for that meeting. 'Blanket' requests for a paper copy of an agenda for a particular committee for the whole of the municipal year will not be accepted. Members who have forgotten their device a spare will be made available at meetings rather than providing a paper copy of the agenda.

- The latest Members Coffee Morning was held on Wednesday 1 March 2023 and support was provided by Democratic Services Officers to Councillors who required assistance with accessing or using the Modern.Gov app. Members are also reminded to report any IT issues in respect of accessing Committee agenda on the Modern.Gov app or accessing their Epping Forest Email addresses to the Member Services Team and/or the ICT Helpdesk for logging and resolution.

Communications & PR

- To enhance the **audio quality in the Council Chamber** and taking account of budgetary constraints, Facilities, ICT, Planning and Corporate Communications have been working with the assistance of several councillors to develop affordable enhancements to the audio and visual quality.
- A new Wi-Fi-based hearing assistance system based on smartphone technology is due to replace the outdated and inadequate IR hearing system. A new Digital Signal Processor (DSP) has been installed to improve audio quality along with new speakers to enhance sound quality. Larger TV monitors are being installed to aid viewing of PowerPoint and planning presentations.

Webcasting Update

- Microsoft Teams will replace Zoom for hybrid webcast meetings later this year. Members will be able to join meetings via the Council's licensed MS Teams app. Free MS Teams app and browser options are also available to external attendees such as objectors, applicants and parish councils at planning meetings.
- The move to MS Teams is part of the Council's wider savings. Further cost reductions have been identified in the Council's webcasting contract. From July, webcasting costs will be reduced by approximately 50 percent to £10,000 per year. Main webcasting commitments will be retained including the live streaming of
 - Full Council
 - Cabinet
 - O&S
 - DDMC
 - Plans Sub Committees

ICT

Service Management, Security & Networks

ICT are making continuous improvements to provide an efficient experience for all their customers, by providing training and controlled ticket management with realistic SLA's.

Tickets are being managed at first- and second-line support, reaching out to third line with all the information to empower them to complete the request efficiently and within SLA. The average ticket age has reduced, and complex tickets are being resolved more quickly, due to the one team approach.

KPI's – SLA Metrics & Analysis for w/c 27 February 2023

Tickets Raised	Outstanding	On Hold	Resolved	Within SLA	% Within SLA	Outside SLA	% Outside SLA
124	26	2	90	120	96%	0	100%

Customer Feedback February 2023

Satisfaction Level	Ticket Handling	Customer service	Technical skill	Time taken
Very satisfied	93%	93%	86%	93%
Satisfied	0%	7.00%	14%	7%
Dissatisfied	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Very Dissatisfied	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
(blank) No response	7%	0.40%	0.81%	0.40%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Customer comments on service provided:

- Quickly, Thank you.
- Sorted in seconds - with quick response to the HOTH - very happy.
- Johnathan was brilliant, very thorough and explained the things he was doing. Thanks.
- Prompt and complete fix.
- Joe was really helpful and knowledgeable 5 Stars.
- Quick service to resolve issue.
- Excellent service from Joe, who resolved the problem and took the time to explain what to do if it happened again. Thank you. Fabulous service from the helpdesk as always!

Strategy

The ICT 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

17 priorities for the ICT to deliver mostly by the end of March with some into April 2023.

- Data capture form
- Replace backup repository servers
- Biffa/Whitespace server upgrade
- Azure AD for Mod.Gov
- General enquires form
- Members Portal
- Grounds maintenance moving to Qualis
- Decommission Boxi 4.1 Bular servers
- DR cost saving
- Licence issues on servers
- Website accessibility changes
- MS 0365 MFA
- People Safe contract renewal
- iTrent MFA
- Encrypted mail to our mail server
- TSG SharePoint scoping in Housing only
- SurveyMonkey contract renewal

The following projects have been delivered by ICT:

1. Linking Granicus to Azure AD
2. Replaced all EFDC printers to supplier Rioch
3. Moved an on-premises application Proval in Housing to SaaS
4. ICT completed the sandbox DR Test
5. Data Capture Form mentioned above is now built and go live planned for 9 March.

Corporate Projects

The Project Management Office (PMO) provides governance and project management resources.

The 'project portfolio' currently consists of 28 projects, which are either in 'scoping and design' or 'in delivery'. Of these, 28 a number are categorised as priority projects, which are strategically aligned to EFDC's Corporate Objectives. Priority projects are also reported on a quarterly basis through Overview and Scrutiny.

The Priority Projects in progress include:

- Financial ICT Systems Replacement
- Housing & Asset Management System
- Epping Leisure Centre (Contract Agreement & Implementation)
- Waste Management Contract
- Transfer Services to Qualis
- North Weald Master Planning/Enterprise Zone
- Local Plan
- M3 PP Proposal
- People Programme
- Green Agenda Programme

The PMO has continued to work on reviewing and aligning projects to EFDC's Corporate objectives so that time, effort, and money can be directed and supported on the right projects. Steering Groups continue to develop and evolve to support the roles of the key stakeholders involved.

Service Planning for the 23/24 financial year is underway for all Service Areas. Draft Service Plans have been received back from all Service Areas that identify proposed projects for the 23/24 delivery year. The PMO are currently working through each of these to assess and scrutinise. The output of this activity will allow EFDC to have a prioritised forward plan for delivery and an understanding of the resource capacity available to deliver. Final versions of Service Plans will be completed once this task has finished and the forward delivery plan agreed.

The PMO is also currently mapping out a process and timeline to complete a full health check/deep dive on all Priority Projects to identify any gaps, re-align where appropriate and identify opportunities for support. This task aligns with the work that is underway on Service Planning.

The PMO is moving forward with a procurement for licenses for TeamHood which will give us a tool to allow us to start to use a Kan Ban Board System which in turn will support our appetite for a greater level of agile project delivery within the organisation. Sadly, we were unsuccessful with our joint bid with Haringey Council for funding to implement a system called Monday.com. This leaves us with a gap for a system to support project delivery. However, we are hopeful that TeamHood will fill some of this.

Parking

Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Station Installations

Four rapid Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points have been installed at the Council's Bansons Lane off-street public car park in Ongar. The chargers are expected to go live by the end of March 2023 and will be the first public fast-charging points for electric vehicles in Ongar.

EFDC first partnered with InstaVolt for EV charging points in its Oakwood Hill East car park last year. Following this success, the Bansons Lane car park in Ongar was identified as another site to expand the number of public chargers offered in the Epping Forest area.

Rapid EV charging points in Burton Road car park in Debden is also currently being explored. The installation of EV chargers in the district aims to not only encourage use of electric vehicles but also improve air quality and reduce the district's carbon footprint as well as helping the Council meet its commitment to become carbon neutral by 2030.

Park Mark Award

The Council has been awarded Park Mark awards for 2023 and achieved retention of its Park Mark status in its off-street public car parks. The Park Mark award is a national standard to ensure safer parking and is awarded to car parks that have achieved the requirements of a risk assessment conducted by the Police Crime Prevention Initiative.

The assessments include management and maintenance of the facility, ensuring that there are appropriate levels of surveillance, lighting, signage, and cleanliness. These criteria are known to reduce the opportunity for crime and create a safer environment for the motorist and their vehicle.