

# **Report to Stronger Council Select Committee**

**Date of meeting: 21 July 2022**

**Portfolio: Internal Resource (Cllr S Kane)**

**Subject: People Strategy Overview 2022**

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## **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

**The Committee are asked to consider the report as information on the continuing People Strategy for 2022. The People Strategy for 2023-2027 is currently in review and draft format.**

## **Report**

### **People Team**

#### **Common Operating Model**

Consultation and recruitment are still underway for the remaining teams/positions to finalise the restructure process.

- Legal Team – new structure implemented and recruitment to vacant posts
- Housing Asset and Property Team – implementation of new structure ongoing
- Housing Strategy Team restructure - on hold pending further review

#### **People Strategy 2020 – 2022**

#### **Attracting, On-Boarding and Retaining Talent**

##### **Recruitment**

- Recruitment lifecycle within iRecruit has also been amended to include candidate withdrawal from process electronically which will allow candidates to notify us that they are withdrawing from the process. This will reduce manual work currently performed by the team and better overview / reduced frustration for recruiting managers who might have previously been expecting a candidate for interview (a 'no show').
- The portal in which candidates search for jobs will also be in scope for review as new enhancements are planned for later this year which will enable this to perform better (visually) on mobile devices. This will also give us the opportunity to revisit the look / feel of the portal.
- The People Team have advertised for a Resourcing Apprentice. The job role will include (and not be limited to), liaising with recruiting managers on the requirements of their vacancies, seeking applicants and advertising jobs via various digital channels and supporting with any off-payroll resourcing requirements. This role will play a fundamental part in the onboarding process, ensuring that new employees have the very best start to their employment at Epping Forest District Council. The application deadline is 15 July.

## **Employee Self Service (iTrent):**

- We have added functionality to allow elements of offboarding for candidates leaving the authority. This will allow staff who have left to access for a period to the employee self-service system with reduced functionality enabling them to obtain things such as their payslips / p45 after they have left.
- In March 2022 we went live with a new version of Employee Self Service. This gave a clearer view of information for staff accessing their information as well as greater oversight of items such as their annual leave as well as making it easier for staff to view this information on mobile devices.

## **MiTeam (iTrent):**

- The manager system (used for administration of a managers reportees) has had a few small tweaks, mainly to support the manager in accessing the right information that they need. It has been clear to the People Team that we need to do a little more in this area, so we plan to do this via some Power Hour sessions with managers so that they have a better understanding of the information that they have on their team. We will also supplement this with some additional user guides.
- The manager system is also due for a facelift later this year so that it looks and feels a little more similar to the way that the Employee Self Service system works. We do not plan to update this straight away when available, but we are hopeful that this upgrade this will further make accessing information on staff for managers easier and more straight forward.

## **Onboarding**

- Our Onboarding Guide has been re-launched and re-communicated. New starters are automatically contacted and invited to HRBP Power Hours; this is also open to existing employees. The Power Hours are now run face-to-face and are a mandatory part of employee onboarding. The monthly Power Hours are run as part of the People Days, which includes coffee catch-up for all employees and a coaching clinic where employees can be coached on leadership/management issues, HR, or mental health support.
- Onboarding module is currently in progress of being built. Relevant steps within the lifecycle have been added to enable this to work. (Once candidate reaches Contract Offer stage, they will be sent an email which will enable them to log into the onboarding portal). The portal will initially have a checklist of personal detail / items for the candidate to check as well as information about their first day and their team. The module is a newer product from the supplier and new functionality is being added upon each new release so we fully expect that this will continue to be developed as newer enhancements are made available. Once such enhancement will be that of candidates 'digitally signing' their contract within the onboarding system.

## **Developing our skills and behaviours**

- **Leadership Development Programme** comes to an end in July, with final workshops being run face-to-face in the Civic Conference Suite. Delegate evaluation shows that the programme has been well received, particularly leadership coaching and the opportunity for managers to collaborate across service areas through the workshops. Continued leadership coaching for this year has been offered as a support to those in senior roles, and this has been taken up by a number.
- **Team Managers (TM) ILM workshop** has run and supported our Team Managers to complete the ILM 3 certificate in Leadership and Management.
- **ILM 5 in Leadership & Management** – for a second year this has been offered to all

managers, as part of the SOLACE Apprenticeship. This means the programme is fully funded from our Apprenticeship Levy.

- **TM Continuous Improvement Network** – People Team have been collaborating with Continuous Improvement Manager to support a network for TMs to work together; they will be trained in continuous improvement tools, and then coached to become confident using these with their own teams. The network will also measure and share themes/success with Leadership Team and across the organisation. As part of this work Service Managers/ Directors have been asked to provide their TM's Individual Development Plans.
- **Project Management Learning** – all managers recently reported this as their top development need. Therefore, the People Team have collaborated with PMO, who will assess the needs and develop bite-size appropriate learning.
- **Litmos**, our learning management system, continues to be developed. Engagement with employees is currently 90% (with a target to achieve 100% by end of 2022). Compliance training completion has increased (Safeguarding 94%, Health & Health 80%), People Team are supporting the subject matter experts to increase this. All face-to-face training is now being hosted via the platform. Other areas continue to be enabled by People Team to engage with the system e.g., Communities for Volunteer training, and Revs and Bens.
- **Career Development Pathways** – Litmos is now being developed to build career learning pathways, starting with a Team Manager and Aspiring Team Manager pathways.
- **Skill Pills** – The latest 60-minute Skill Pill (for all employees) on Improving Mental Health was very well attended (30 employees) and this will be run again in the Autumn as part of our Winter Wellbeing support, A new series of Skill Pill sessions focusing on Digital Skills kicked off with 'The Changing Digital Landscape for Local Government'. Again, this was well attended, and the video will be available to all employees on Litmos and on the intranet.
- **MS Teams training** resources - are being rolled out. The People Team are working in collaboration with ICT to create the best package of learning for employees and councillors, as we move away from Zoom, to enable cost savings.
- **'Excel skills'** is still our top requested training topic as employees are managing/manipulating data more in their rolls, so more courses are to be provided.
- **Apprentices** - In total we now have over 20 Apprentices in the workforce. Our Public Sector target is 14. We are working with Service areas to recruit higher level apprentices in Accountancy and Legal services, and possibly Culture/ Heritage. 2 of our 4 Housing apprentices have recently gained more permanent roles.

### **Engagement and Wellbeing project**

- **We have a total of 80 trained Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAs)** within the organisation. This will grow to 92 when the next cohort (of employees who work with residents) complete their training in September 22.
- **MHFA networking meeting** took place in May 2022. Our MHFA's covered 'the impact on global issues and financial crisis on mental health' and 'mental health for younger people'.
- **MHFA added to Incident Management Rota** – Customer have reached out to our MHFA network so that a trained MHFA can be on call every day, to support employees dealing with an increase of customer situations in reception.
- **Perkbox sign up** is now sitting at 92% of the organisation, a total of 556 out of 607 employees' have logged into the site to access the fantastic employee benefits and tools

with over 9017 perk redemptions so far. The free Caffe Nero or Greggs sausage roll perk is the most popular downloaded perk so far – 1486 redemptions followed by Tesco's.

- **Our third Workbuzz employee pulse survey** launched in March 2022. Employees got the opportunity to tell us what they think about working for EFDC, covering 11 key subjects including engagement, leadership, teamwork, growth, wellbeing, diversity and inclusion, purpose, manager, empowerment, reward and recognition, satisfaction. 57% of employees (311 out of 545) completed the survey – this is our highest response rate yet. Results of the survey were sent to the wider management team with a view that they would share this data with their teams. An employee dashboard was also created to highlight some key statistics and was shared with all our employees. The survey told us that 77% of employees are motivated to their best at work, 56% would recommend EFDC as a great place to work, 89% of employees believe their line manager is approachable about the flexibility they need to fulfil their personal commitments. We encourage our employees to complete the pulse surveys and be an important part of organisational change at EFDC.
- **The next WorkBuzz survey** will be launched in September 2022, we decided to have a longer break between surveys to create some space for the Creating Our Tomorrow Survey, which was LIVE during the entire month of June - to avoid survey fatigue.
- **WorkBuzz workshop sessions for employees and managers** – further to manager feedback about the WorkBuzz platform, we will be looking to set up some workshop sessions with WorkBuzz's Behavioural Science team. These sessions will be designed to help managers and employees make sense of the statistics and to help identify what needs to be done to make and support improvements in line with result feedback.
- **Perkbox Recognition** launched on 1 December 2020 continues to gain momentum, we have had overwhelming engagement on the platform and this trend is continuing. Perkbox Recognition is now known as Perkbox Celebration, we have had over 1962 employee recognitions since launching the platform in December 2020.

### **Our Ways of Working (OWOW) – Creating Our Tomorrow**

- Our employees are moving away from traditional styles of management and approaches to more agile, creative ways of working, thinking and leadership. Embedding the changes that OWOW and the Accommodation Project started, empowering employees to evolve the culture of the organisation, ensuring we embed the changes and achieve the desired outcomes:
- Embedding the Change - Assessing & Monitoring Adoption (benefits realisation) – Understanding where we are today (our current state) against where we want to be (future state) and applying interventions that will close the gaps.
- Continued Employee Engagement and Wellbeing, we have launched our Creating Our Tomorrow Survey which has been live for the month of June and will close on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> July. Update – 6<sup>th</sup> July 406 employees have taken part in the survey which is a significant increase from our previous survey Beyond the Pandemic – completed by 292 employees in 2021. The Creating Our Tomorrow survey is the third in a series of bespoke surveys conducted by an outside organisation called OnePoll and seeks to hear employees' thoughts on a specific topic, in this case – their understanding of hybrid working and how employees would like to work in future.
- Enhancing skills and flexibility of our workforce – approval has been given to implement 'Clear Review' a digital solution for performance and development, this project will start shortly regarding planned system implementation using a pilot group.
- Review of the 2019 Collective Agreement and employee Terms and Conditions is ongoing – a draft amendment to the 2019 Collective Agreement extending notice periods that employees give to EFDC has been sent to Trade Unions with a copy of employment

legislative updates and proposed extended notice periods within the statements of written particulars for new employees from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022 for all roles A-K without management responsibility. The People Team await feedback from the Trade Unions regarding this proposal.

## Internal Communications

### Corporate information platform/Intranet

- Discovery work is now complete on the new corporate information platform. The report provides an overview of many different alternatives and options for a new corporate information platform. This work was collated and shared with the project sponsor in May 2022.
- In June 2022, the Internal Communications team began started working on developing a new intranet platform with the ICT Project Manager, using our existing Joomla platform in an updated format on a new server.
- 50 Employees were initially surveyed as a sample group to find out what they needed from a new intranet platform to inform the first stage of development. Search functionality, information relevance and responsive, user-friendly design were the key findings.
- Work has been done to create the first Alpha version, based on employee feedback, and is almost ready to be shared with a group of employees for their first impressions and feedback. This will take place in July, following another round of feedback, a Beta version will be launched before launching RC1 for all employees.
- The team used the Agile approach to project management and delivery rather than a more traditional planning and task focused approach. One of Agile' s core principles are 'Adapting to change, rather than following a plan'. In this project it meant that the team were able to continuously improve throughout the project's life cycle, with these changes being made quickly and responsively. This means we are consistently looking for feedback from our end user, ensuring what we build is fit for purpose and focusses on outcomes instead of outputs.
- **Snapshot** - In addition, a solution is being set up for Internal Communications to be able to restore the intranet server without external support to gain confidence in the development and testing of solutions.

### Campaigns

- **Our Mental Health Awareness campaign** for May's awareness week was a great success. The #I'veBeenThere hashtag, sparked EFDC's People Team (all MHFAs) to get together to demonstrate the power of openly sharing their own experiences in a video, shared with employees. The video, created by our Internal Communications and a HR apprentice will be shared over our corporate external channels in July in support of the new initiative to include a trained Mental Health First Aider that will be on call every day at the Civic Offices. The feedback the whole team have received was extremely positive.
- **AuthPoint Migration** - Internal Communications supported the AuthPoint migration for the entire organisation - working with ICT to transfer 613 remote users from MobilePASS to AuthPoint. The team used the Agile approach to project management and delivery rather than a more traditional planning and task focused approach. One of Agile's core principles is 'Adapting to change, rather than following a plan'. In this project it meant that the team were able to continuously improve throughout the

project's life cycle, with these changes being made quickly and responsively. This approach enabled us all to migrate the whole organisation to a new solution in approximately 14 business days, which is incredible when you think it involved over 3,000 individual interactions with 613 individuals. The projected savings for this project are £54,745 over the next three years – that is equivalent to 73,980 refuse collections!

## **Channels**

- From our learnings from the successful AuthPoint Migration project, where we needed to communicate with all employees to get them through a complicated process and a series of steps for ICT, we realised that MS Teams was far more effective for getting people to act and follow instructions. We are now in the process of procuring a tool for company-wide messaging on MS Teams, which will enable Internal Communications to send announcements to the whole organisation via teams, get analytics for those announcements and schedule them in advance. Reducing the need for too many email communications.
- We are working with ICT to setup a new and improved text messaging solution for employees and Members through GovNotify, a texting solution that offers local authorities free messaging plans. This will replace Media Burst.

## **Events and employee engagement**

- Our first annual employee event took place on Thursday 7 July, which was well attended with a total of 180 employees. The event was held in our Civic Conference Suite. We are in the process of waiting for feedback on how the event was for employees, but initial feedback is great – with many employees saying it was a great opportunity to network with colleagues and meet new people.

## **Reason for decision:**

The report is for consideration and overview focused on the continued delivery of the People Strategy 2022 aims, the people Strategy for 2023-2027 is currently under review and will be in first draft August 2022. There are no responses or decisions required at this stage.

## **Options considered and rejected:**

## **Consultation undertaken:**

## **Resource implications:**

## **Legal and Governance Implications:**

NA

## **Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:**

## **Background Papers:**

NA

## **Impact Assessments:**

## ***Risk Management***

Not required

***Equality:***

As no decisions are required an Equality Impact Assessment is not required