Report to Stronger Council Select Committee
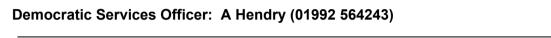
Date of meeting: 24 January 2023

Portfolio: Internal Resources - Councillor S Kane

Subject: Onboarding/Induction

Officer contact for further information: Andy Cartwright (Corporate Business Partner Systems Analytics. Performance & Digital)

Democratic Services Officer: A Hendry (01992 564243)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

To note the work being done to utilise our HR/Payroll system iTrent regarding our Onboarding/Induction Process

Executive Summary

The report provides the Committee with an update on developments to our Onboarding/Induction process which will be showcased at the meeting.

Report:

1. A candidate forms an impression of an organisation throughout the recruitment process, and one element that is often overlooked is the period between job offer and start date where the offered applicant is working their notice, which could be a number of week/s or month/s. Applicants could be wondering if they have made the right decision, potentially being counter offered by their current employer or attending further interviews in case something they consider better is available.

2. Pre-start date onboarding is an opportunity for the organisation to help settle a new employee into the organisation and ensure they have everything they need before their start date. It also supports the new employee in understanding more about the organisation's culture and values, as well as some of the more practical aspects that might otherwise be overlooked.

3. Onboarding does not stop at the point that the new employee starts and will continue right up to and including the probationary period, with Managers ensuring (through regular catch ups and review setting) that the new employee has all the resources and information that they need to perform their job effectively. With our new ways of working , this also includes elements of wellbeing and ensuring a good work life balance (in particular for those working flexibly and / or working at home – as this could still be new for some new starters).

4. Some interesting statistics:
   - "Organisations with a strong onboarding process improve new hire retention by 82% and productivity by over 70%" (Brandon Hall Group)
   - "Employees who felt that they received effective onboarding are 18 times more likely to feel committed to their organisation" (Bamboo HR)
   - "77% of employees who go through onboarding programs do well and meet their goals in their first performance reviews" (eLearning Industry)

- "11% of employees simply didn't get the proper information on what to do, and when to show up" (Indeed)

5. Onboarding at Epping Forest District Council has previously involved several manual communications between the People Team and the on-boarder, with forms and information emailed or posted and then manually updated in the system.

6. Those who have been offered a role found that they had little or no communication from the point of confirmation of start date (when their vetting had been completed) and physically starting with the Council.

Onboarding at EFDC

7. The People Team have worked to enhance the onboarding experience, automating some of the process where it is possible and avoiding manual paper forms from being circulated back and forth between different parties.

8. Onboarding will now start from the point that an employee contract is sent, and the People Team will activate an account allowing the new employee to access an onboarding portal that will be available to them up to and including their start date. The onboarding portal has been developed as part of the iTrent HR/Payroll system that the team already currently use, which means seamless data from job application to onboarding to employee records.

9. The onboarding portal will include information about the benefits of working at Epping Forest District Council as well as further information that will be beneficial to review before they start. There is also an opportunity to update their personal information (that would have otherwise been circulated via email's and required to have been manually input by the People Team). There are also screens that will show the new starter their team, as well as navigation around the civic centre further helping to enhance their feeling of belonging and alleviating some of the anxieties that they may have about their first day of joining us.

10. The onboarding portal is simple for the user to use and has purposely been designed to not overwhelm the on-boarder with too much information. Screenshots of the onboarding portal are included within appendix 1.

11. The onboarding portal is supplemented with an onboarding/induction guide for managers (available on the Council's intranet) that helps them with new staff starting on some of the things that they may want to check or do. This includes things such as allocating a buddy for when they start and ensuring that they have ordered the right equipment from the ICT team.

12. The guide covers the first few months of the new starter's time at Epping Forest District Council to ensure that they have the very best start to their time with us. It should also be noted that once the new starter is with us, they then have access to the intranet and Employee Self Service which have further detail should they require it.

The future of Onboarding at EFDC

13. The iTrent onboarding portal is relatively new functionality for the software provider, the People Team have been speaking with their product design team and suggesting additional ideas and enhancements for them to consider for the future. In the meantime, we will be considering any feedback from new starters who use the portal, adding additional introductory videos, as well as look at embedding any other information requirements in cooperation with the Shared Payroll function.

14. As the opening paragraph of this report suggests, an impression of the organisation is gained throughout the recruitment process and thus we will also look to revisit the recruitment portal (where job applicants apply) and the job application form itself to have a more consistent look and feel, as well as add any detail that will add greater usability and

support further automation in the process.

Reason for decision:

"An employee's first impressions of an organisation have a significant impact on their integration within the team and job satisfaction" (Cipd)

The report provides the Committee with an outline of the work the People Team are carrying out to improve the applicant experience and will showcase the system/process at the meeting.

Options considered and rejected: In the current labour market candidates are looking very closely at all aspects of an organisation. To stay competitive the Council must ensure that at the start of a candidate's recruitment process with us is a positive and engaging experience. To do nothing would be detrimental to providing the talented individuals we need to deliver services to our residents

Consultation undertaken: N/A

Resource implications: N/A

Legal and Governance Implications: N/A

Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications: As the onboarding process is virtual our new employees do not have to travel to the Civic Offices for face-to-face workshops.

Consultation Undertaken: N/A

Background Papers: N/A

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management:

The onboarding/induction process ensures new employees are aware of the Council's expectations and performance standards in their roles.

Equality:

It provides easier access to all the information a new starter would want to have regarding their employment and new employer in a timely manner.