

Report to Stronger Council Select Committee

Date of meeting: 13 October 2020

Portfolio: Corporate Support Services (Cllr S Kane)

Subject: People Strategy

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Recommendations/Decisions Required:

To note the report.

Report:

Context

1. The People Strategy and Plan sets out clear actions and timescales over a two-year period to support the Council deliver its strategic objectives and is divided into 6 workstreams;

- Attracting, on boarding and retaining the best talent
- Developing our leadership
- Embracing change to support EFDC evolution
- Creating a culture of engagement and wellbeing
- Developing our skills and behaviours to make EFDC a great place to work
- Achieving organisational goals through a high performing and flexible workforce

At the core is transforming the People Team to become an enabler for the organisation.

The Strategy sets out the ambition for our workforce – the right people with the right skills, highly motivated high performing and business efficient.

Update

2. Attracting, on boarding and retaining the best talent

Our onboarding (induction) process has been designed and guidance is currently being tested with recently recruited candidates/new employees. The new process will bring together IT and Health & Safety Induction requirements. Feedback from the pilot programme will be considered and the process changed if necessary.

3. Developing our Leadership

A development programme for leaders and managers is being developed to include core essential skills and where continuous professional development is required. We aim to implement the programme in Q1 21/22.

4. Embracing Change to support EFDC evolution

- a. The People Team are supporting the work on the Accommodation Project by providing policy updates and guidance packs supporting the Council's aim for our employees to work flexibly during and after the refurbishment of the Civic Office building. The People team have designed a manager and employee 'Effective Flexibility' guidance tool to support a more agile mindset to working in different and remote ways. This is a follow on from our 'New Ways of Working' document produced and launched in January 2020.
- b. The Team have supported the 'go live' activity of Qualis Management with various workstreams one of which is the transfer of the Council's Housing Repairs employees to Qualis. Employees are subject to the provisions of the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations, commonly known as TUPE. The Housing Repairs employees moved to Qualis on 1 October 2020.

5. Creating a culture of engagement and wellbeing

- a. The Covid-19 pandemic has meant that this workstream has been accelerated and accentuated. A 'Let's get talking' wellbeing initiative was launched, building a repository of mental wellbeing, financial and family support tools for employees, their friends and family members.

We are also in final stages and due to launch our winter wellbeing initiative 'Keeping you a little bit warmer this winter'. This support guidance offers managers and employees hints and tips around winter wellbeing. There is a strong message of a wintertime mindset change associated with going into the winter months and the People Team have focused on more of this using studies associated with a Norwegian approach to dark winter months.

- b. We have also launched a new Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), which is known to our employees as Perkbox. The platform enables employees to access online counselling, financial and legal support and discounts from major retailers. As part of this platform there is also an integrated Wellbeing platform providing easy online access to mental and physical wellness programmes. The launch of this platform concluded on 1 September 2020.
- c. We have trained 97% of our managers on 'Mental Health for Managers' through MHFA England and have four cohorts of employees currently training to become Mental Health First Aiders. We continue to train employees in Mental Health and have set an ambitious target of 1 in 10 trained by February 2020 but due to exceed.

6. Developing skills and behaviours

EFDC have been working with other authorities and SOLACE to develop a 2-year, Level 5 Management Apprenticeship for local government. The Emerging Leaders programme offers an Institute of Leadership & Management Level 5 qualification for developing middle managers and covers a range of topics including Leading People, Managing People, Finance, Project Management, Operational Management, Communications and Problem Solving/ Decision Making. The training is funded from our Apprenticeship Levy. EFDC has 7 employees starting this programme in October 2020.

In addition, the Apprenticeship Levy is being used to offer 4 new apprenticeships in Housing. The Housing Careers Pathways programme offers a great opportunity for anyone of any age to join the programme to launch a career in Housing, whilst studying for an accredited Chartered Institute of Housing Qualification. Housing Managers are currently shortlisting for the 4 opportunities.

The Council currently has 23 apprentices in the organisation from Level 2 (GCSE level) to

Level 6 (Degree level). This means we are far exceeding the public sector target of employing 2.3% of our workforce as apprentices (which equates to 15 apprentices)

7. High performing and flexible workforce

- a. The Council needs to ensure that our services are aligned as effectively as possible so that we can deliver on our priorities and outcomes. Recognising there will always be change within Local Government that require structures to adapt, our intention is to review our current services and ensure they are aligned to deliver the corporate plan and the new recovery actions. This has necessitated some redistribution of service responsibility into functional groupings which in turn align to our priorities.

There are three phases of change taking place over the coming months, phase 1 has recently seen a realignment of services/functions so that corporate projects are delivered. This realignment has also considered the impact of support to Covid recovery projects and services moving across the Qualis.

- b. There are a number of phases to automate and improve our recruitment process using our iTrent platform and working with partner organisations (Braintree and Colchester). Phase 1 aims to automate our application process which is on track to launch in Q4 20/21.

Reason for decision:

Not applicable the report is for noting.

Options considered and rejected:

Not applicable the report is for noting.

Consultation undertaken:

Not applicable the report is for noting.

Resource implications:

Within current resources

Legal and Governance Implications:

Not applicable the report is for noting.

Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:

N/A

Consultation Undertaken:

The Trade Unions are informed and consulted as required.

Background Papers:

N/A

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management

Risk is assessed as part of the individual project development

Equality:

Equality is considered as part of the individual project development