

MONITORING THE WORKFORCE STRATEGY 2012-15

Purpose of the report

1. To provide Members with a progress report on the Workforce Strategy 2012-15 since its launch in May 2012.

Background

2. The Workforce Strategy 2012-15 replaced the previous Workforce Plan 2010-12. The new Strategy was approved by Members at a meeting of Cabinet in April 2012 and was launched to staff in May 2012. Members last received a presentation on the Workforce Strategy at Scrutiny Committee in July 2012.
3. The Workforce Strategy is premised on ensuring '*the council has the right people, with the right skills, in the right places, at the right time to deliver the right services to our customers*'. It sets out the strategic priorities for the development of the council's workforce, and how core competencies will be delivered through the following priority areas:

Skills and Behaviours Development – we want to encourage our managers to be visionary and ambitious, and lead, develop, and motivate their teams to deliver our services effectively in challenging times. We want to be seen to be valuing flexibility, innovation, and decision-making and at all times excellent customer service.

Recruitment and Retention – we want to recruit and retain a workforce with the skills and values we need, to promote jobs and careers as an employer of choice, and identify, develop and motivate talent. We are committed to promoting equality and diversity and to actively challenging and addressing accessibility barriers and issues faced by some groups of staff.

Pay Reward and Recognition – we want to provide a fair and flexible reward package within the current financial constraints and ensure

fairness across all groups of employees. We will recognise great work and ideas through rewarding staff that do well and are high performers.

Wellbeing and Engagement – we want to be an organisation where risks are managed sensibly and proportionately to ensure the levels of accidents and incidents of occupational ill health are as low as possible. We will actively promote and manage our staff's wellbeing so that people feel cared for and valued.

Performance and Change – we want to work in an organisation that can transform quickly and effectively, that is highly productive and focussed on achievement that values and engages with employees and has a culture that is collaborative, innovative, inclusive and creative.

Governance Arrangements

4. We appointed a new Head of Strategic Workforce Development and Resourcing within Human Resources (HR), who joined the council in May 2012 from the Senior Civil Service and she has set up a Workforce Strategy Steering Group. This group oversees the delivery of the Workforce Strategy action plans, and is chaired by an Assistant Director in City & Environmental Services. The group which is made up of senior managers from across the council has now met twice since September to set priorities and to review progress against plans.

Progress to Date

Skills and Behaviours Development

5. We launched the 'Service to City' programme in July 2012, this is a collaborative project between Human Resources and the Office of the Chief Executive, a modular programme on a variety of priority topic areas aimed at developing the leadership skills of Heads of Service. The programme is supported with Action Learning Sets, Mentoring and a Volunteering Programme. It is intended to challenge managers to think differently, to be more open to different ways of working, to innovate and be creative in their approach to problem solving. The programme is low cost due to innovative use of free use of venues and speakers, working across professional networks, use of internal expertise and with the future potential to share the programme across a number of local public sector employers in the region.

6. As part of our wider approach to Skills and Behaviours Development, we have also undertaken a review of all learning and development activity within the council, and are developing a new core offer to staff through the council's Workforce Development Unit (based in Adults, Children & Education Services), which will be in place from April 2013. Central to this offer will be courses available to all staff on Equality and Diversity, Health and Safety, Customer Care, and IT based skills, as well as courses specifically aimed at managers such as the new course on Promoting Dignity at Work, which supports the new HR Policy on this subject, and more specialist training such as Hate Crime or First Aid training.
7. In addition we have an ambition in the Strategy which states 'We are committed to driving up basic levels of attainment in essential skills (literacy, numeracy & IT) in the council...'. This need is being recognised and addressed through the development of a City Skills Strategy which seeks to maximise, co-ordinate and target council resources (including those that the council commissions) for adult learners across the city, which includes the council's employees.
8. Aligned to the work on staff development is the work we have been undertaking in developing a behavioural competency framework, which will be launched in May 2013. This new framework sets out the behaviours we expect staff to work to, and to support the key values of the organisation, such as promoting a positive customer experience. We used focus groups to engage staff on what values and behaviours they viewed as important to create a productive and confident working environment, and our report outlining the new framework was approved by the Council Management Team in December 2012. The new behavioural competencies will sit beside and support the performance management framework we already have in place to help managers motivate staff to improve their personal performance.

Recruitment and Retention

Young People

9. The council recruited 35 apprentices in 2012 and there are currently 57 apprentices in post. We have sought mentors for our apprentices from amongst senior managers and we have highlighted the difficulties faced by care leavers looking for work. We are also partnering a number of schools in the city to extend our offer to young people in Year 10 looking for a work experience placement, and worked with York Training Centre to secure 10 pre-apprenticeship placement opportunities. We are also piloting a Graduate Internship programme

with the University of York in January 2013, aimed at helping 12 unemployed recent graduates gain work experience.

10. In January 2013 we are also hosting a meeting of HR Directors in the city, to encourage other employers locally to consider their training and employment of the under 24s, and internally we are starting work on developing an offer for Higher Apprenticeships for 2013.

Redundancy and Redeployment

11. Between January 1st and October 31st 2012, 149 people were placed at risk of redundancy, 60 of this number have been successfully redeployed and 89 people have left the council. As a result of terms and conditions negotiations finalised in 2012 with Trade Unions, improved redeployment processes have been put in place together with regional redeployment protocols between local authorities. We are looking to create stronger links with other employers within the city to ensure our employees have the very best chance to secure onward employment within the local area.
12. Our Supporting Staff workshops are designed to help staff under risk of redundancy prepare for applying for jobs with other employers, assist with welfare benefits and planning for retraining or setting up their own businesses.

Flexible Working Practices

13. A significant amount of work has been undertaken to review flexi-time arrangements and a full range of flexible/ smart working policies and practices in preparation for the new ways of working at West Offices and Hazel Court. This has included working with staff and Trade Unions in the development of the toolkits, involvement in the training of managers in their use and in staff roadshows.

Wellbeing and Engagement

Wellbeing

14. Council and directorate wellbeing action plans were produced following the last staff survey in summer 2011, which included identifying actions required such as the revised Dignity at Work Policy (launched November 2012) as well as the provision of manager training in promoting good mental health. The Health & Safety Team has worked closely with the Active Leisure Team in designing a wellbeing portal that will act to signpost employees to suitable organisations/advice to help improve their wellbeing. This will be launched in January 2013. The Team continue to post health and wellbeing messages to staff

through the year including recent messages to mark World Aids Day on December 1st 2012.

15. Officers in HR including the Health & Safety Team have assisted on the Sickness Absence Scrutiny review and task group which will inform new HR policy in this area.
16. Occupational Health developments include the introduction of an occupational Health Nurse on site three days a week to advise staff and managers on local health issues and absences.
17. It is a commitment of the council to provide a safe working environment, and there have been significantly fewer reported incidents in 2011/12 than in 2010/11 (493 versus 774). There were 50 incidents reportable under RIDDOR to the HSE, higher than the 43 in 2010/11. Slips trips and falls remains CYC main cause of injury followed by musculoskeletal disorders (MSD), these alone account for almost half of all reported incidents and are being prioritised for focussed action in 2013.
18. The Health & Safety Team have also been supporting the preparations for the opening of West Offices in assisting with the development of the flexible and smart working policies and practices, and working with Facilities Management Team to ensure that the health and safety standards and implications have been considered throughout the process. This has included carrying out in excess of 150 personal needs assessments.

Engagement

19. We have developed an Employer Supported Volunteer programme which is designed to encourage more staff to give time to volunteer with community projects in York. The council will support staff in undertaking volunteering tasks as part of their personal development activities and the programme has attracted interest from other councils.
20. We are about to commence a review of our collective engagement mechanisms for Trade Unions and staff due to be completed by the end of March 2013.
21. Other work in enhancing staff engagement activity includes the development of team briefings and the work badged as 'Operation Reach', which looks at improving accessibility for all staff to all forms of communication.

Pay, Reward and Recognition

Pay & Reward

22. HR have completed all the pay modelling and developed plans to implement the Cabinet's decision to adopt the Living Wage of £7.45 per hour from 1st April 2013. As part of this work the minimum wage paid to apprentices will also be reviewed.
23. An Equal Pay Audit is currently being undertaken to ensure that there is no discrimination in the way in which we pay people, and this will be reported at the end of March 2013 to officers and Trade Unions.
24. A further area of development is to develop a total reward approach to pay and benefits including widening of salary sacrifice schemes and other staff benefits building on the staff discounts and benefits schemes we already have in place.

Recognition

25. In December 2012, we celebrated the second year of the fully sponsored annual eXtra Factor Customer Service awards to recognise individual and team achievements in this area. The Employee of the Month Awards also commenced in June 2012. It is anticipated that the annual award categories will be reviewed this year to widen the scope of recognition to look at, for example, achievements by volunteers and developments in innovation.

Performance and Change

Management of Change

26. As a responsible employer we recognise that the level of change in the council brings about uncertainty and is unsettling for our employees. We have reviewed our policies for managing change such as restructuring and service delivery changes and we have worked hard with Trade Unions to ensure these are fit for purpose, fair and can be understood and navigated through by all managers and staff.
27. As well as developing stronger links with major employers across the city we are working with other Local Government Yorkshire & Humber authorities in implementing a Workforce Strategy for the region called 'Local Authorities as a Progressive Employer'. We are currently benchmarking ourselves against the standards set within that strategy and that will assist us when we review the council's Workforce Strategy in a few months time.

Performance Management

28. Through the implementation of the iTrent HR system we will be able to finally bring about a consistent and measurable mechanism for managing performance through staff appraisal clearly linked to not only service planning objectives but also behavioural competencies as described in paragraph 8 above.

Equalities

29. The Staff Equalities Reference Group (SERG) continues to work closely with HR on policy development and the priorities set down in the Workforce Strategy through its workshops. The purpose and format of the Group is under current review as it has existed in its current format for several years and it was felt that it needed to be refreshed and relaunched.
30. Our key HR policies are currently being reviewed to ensure they are equality compliant and we are working to provide more up to date Equality and Diversity training for council staff as part of our core Learning & Development offer.
31. As part of our ongoing commitment to develop women leaders, we have launched a Women's Leadership Programme as a subset of the Service to City programme.

Implications

32. **Financial** – there are none for this report, all costs are managed within existing budgets.
33. **Human Resources (HR)** – as described in the report.
34. **Equalities** – as described in the report
35. There are no specific legal, crime and disorder, IT or property implications.

Risk Management

36. Failure to produce a Workforce Strategy and monitor the outcomes of its action plan could result in:
 - a. Failure to prepare the workforce to deliver the transformation and efficiency programme and be able to respond to current spending and government policy change;

- b. Inability to achieve the 'Core Capabilities' priorities in the Council Plan 2011-15;
- c. Failure to meet equalities legislation;
- d. Failure to respond to changing customer service needs.

Recommendations

37. Members are asked to:
- a. note progress made against the Workforce Strategy in the eight months, May 2012 to December 2012; and
 - b. agree a six monthly update in July 2013 which will include a review of achievements and a Strategy refresh in terms of future direction.

Reason: To ensure Members are kept informed of progress against the Workforce Strategy 2012-15 .

Contact Details

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		Report Approved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Date 3 January 2013
Specialist Implications Officer(s)			
Wards Affected: List wards or tick box to indicate all			All <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None

Annexes: None