

Corporate and Scrutiny and Management Committee 15 July 2013

Report of the Assistant Director, Customers & Employees

MONITORING THE WORKFORCE STRATEGY 2012-15

Summary

1. To provide Members with a progress report on the Workforce Strategy 2012-15 since the last report to this committee in January this year. This update is a report of related work in the six months, from January to June 2013.

Background

2. The Workforce Strategy 2012-15 was approved at a meeting of Cabinet in April 2012 and was launched to staff in May 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. The Workforce Strategy Steering Group oversees the delivery of the Workforce Strategy action plan, and is chaired by an Assistant Director from City & Environmental Services. The group which is made up of senior managers from across the council meets quarterly to set and review progress against the action plan.

Progress January – June 2013

Skills and Behaviours Development

5. The 'From Service to City' programme was launched in July 2012, aimed at developing the leadership skills of senior managers. The programme is supported with action learning sets, mentoring and a volunteering programme and 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 delivered internally and at very low cost making use of free venues and speakers and working across professional networks.
6. The programme concludes in July 2013, when a formal evaluation will be undertaken and plans are already in place for Phase Two of the programme. These include a Master Class programme which has been developed in partnership with Local Government (LGYH), the setting up of a city wide mentoring scheme (in partnership with the University of York St. John) and an extended Corporate Leadership Group seminar programme with city partners from the public, community and private sectors.

7. As part of the Council's wider approach to Skills and Behaviours Development, in April 2013 a new core training offer was launched to staff through the council's Workforce Development Unit (based in Adults, Children & Education Services). Courses include, Equality and Diversity, Health and Safety, Customer Care, and IT based skills, as well as courses specifically aimed at managers and more specialist training.
8. Aligned to this is work is the development of a behavioural competency framework. The new framework sets out the behaviours the Council expects staff to work to, and to support the key values of the organisation, such as promoting a positive customer experience. The new behavioural competencies will sit beside and support the performance management framework already in place to help managers motivate staff to improve their personal performance. The framework is currently being piloted across the Council for implementation.

Recruitment and Retention

9. The Council has refreshed its apprenticeships programme. From April 2013 the Council agreed to pay apprentices an enhanced training allowance, and from September this year, all council vacancies will be considered for apprenticeships, thereby creating a proper career path and an opportunity for progression.
10. The Council is also partnering a number of schools in the city, and has successfully increased the number of work experience placements for young people in Year 10 from 20 in 2011-2012, to 48 in 2012-2013.

Wellbeing and Engagement

Wellbeing

11. The Health, Safety & Wellbeing Team has worked closely with the Active Leisure Team in designing a wellbeing portal that signposts employees to suitable organisations/advice to help improve their wellbeing. This was launched in February 2013 and has proved very popular with employees.
12. Human Resources (HR) has also developed guidance for managers to support staff who are victims of domestic violence in response to an increase in reported incidents to the Police.
13. Both HR and the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team also continue to post health and wellbeing messages to staff through the year including

recent messages to raise awareness about Heart Disease and Glaucoma.

Engagement

14. The Council has hosted a very successful Volunteering Fair in June 2013. HR worked in partnership with the Communities and Equalities Team and hosted the fair at West Offices, which attracted a variety of charity exhibitors and 150+ staff attended. There are plans to host a second event at Hazel Court later in the year.
15. Consultation with the trade unions on a new Engagement Framework is well underway, and should conclude with a new agreed framework in the next few months.
16. HR has worked with the Chief Executive's Office on a series of Staff Roadshows designed to engage staff on cultural change, a report on the events is being prepared by postgraduate students of Human Resources Management from the University of York, who are evaluating the events on behalf of the Council as part of their coursework. Finally, a council wide staff survey is underway, as part of the commitment to survey staff opinions every two years, the analysis of the results of which should be known by August.

Pay and Reward

Pay & Reward

17. The Council adopted the Living Wage of £7.45 per hour from April 2013. The council, along with the University of York St John and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation are all taking part in research by the University of York Economics department into the impact of Living Wage on in-work poverty.
18. The Equal Pay Audit that was reported in the last update, concluded that there is no discrimination in the way in which the Council pays people, a summary of the report will be made available online.
19. A number of staff discounts from the Micklegate Retailers have been secured, following the move to West Offices, and HR are in the process of selecting a provider for a nationwide staff discount scheme, designed to help employees to make their salaries go further. The new scheme will be in place for September 2013, funded by the staff lottery in line with its constitution.

Performance and Change

Management of Change

20. As well as developing stronger links with major employers across the city meetings with HR Directors are continuing, on a number of topics of interest across the different sectors. The next meeting takes place in mid July looking at Building Organisational Resilience and how to combat workplace stress.
21. At a regional level the council is helping to lead with other Local Government Yorkshire & Humber authorities in implementing a Workforce Strategy for the region called 'Local Authorities as a Progressive Employer'. A set of common priorities has been identified and collaborative work with other Councils in the region started, commencing with the Master Class programme mentioned earlier in this report.

Equalities

22. A review of the Staff Equalities Reference Group (SERG) has been completed, and new governance arrangements set in place which will more strongly align the work of the group to Workforce Strategy priorities. The Group will start reporting formally to the Workforce Strategy Steering Group and to the Council Management Team annually.
23. A women only development day was held in March to mark International Women's Day which was very popular with staff and there are plans afoot to partner FERA (based in Sand Hutton) on running a women only Springboard Programme designed to improve the numbers of women in middle management roles.

New Priorities

24. Work has commenced to review and refresh the actions needed to deliver remaining priorities within the current strategy and where the council should be concentrating its efforts. A consultation meeting was recently held with service managers to obtain their views which will feed into a report for CMT in the Autumn. Whilst further work needs to be completed to take account of feedback from staff engagement events and the staff survey, this early work has identified three areas for focus:
 - **Managing Change** - helping the organisation through transition and change, building resilience and helping to create flexible and robust workforce.

- **Managing Performance** - rewarding talent, ensuring that staff understand and model the right behaviours and dealing effectively with poor performance including poor attendance at work. It includes the development of a talent management strategy which links strong delivery to reward structures and removes any obstacles which prevent managers from doing good performance management.
- **Skills Development** - developing skills which help to future-proof services, skills such as business development, financial management and commercial acumen. Helping staff to future-proof their careers, by investing in their training and development, and demonstrating their employability to other employers both within and outside the public sector.

Implications

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

Risk Management

29. 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 future transformation and efficiency programmes and to 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

30. Members are asked to:
 - a. note progress made against the Workforce Strategy in the six months, January to June 2013;

- b. agree a six monthly update in December 2013 which will include a review of achievements and details of the agreed 2013-15 priorities going forward.

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

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Date

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