

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 the last report to this committee in January this year. This update is a report of related work in the eight months between January and August 2014.

Background

2. The Workforce Strategy 2012-15 was approved at a meeting of Cabinet in April 2012, it 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:

Skills and Behaviours Development – we want to encourage our managers to be visionary and ambitious, to lead, develop, and motivate their teams. These are very challenging times and we want to be seen to be valuing flexibility, innovation, and sound decision-making and at all times excellent customer service.

Recruitment and Retention – we need to recruit and retain a workforce with the skills and values we need, to promote the council, as a “progressive employer” and identify, develop and motivate our staff. We are committed to promoting equality and diversity and to actively challenging and addressing accessibility barriers and eliminating any discrimination or harassment in the workplace.

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

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

Governance Arrangements

3. The Workforce Strategy Steering Group (WSSG) oversees the delivery of the Workforce Strategy action plan, and is chaired by the Assistant Director for Customers and Employees. The group which is made up of senior managers from across the council meets every two months to set and review progress against an agreed action plan.

Progress from January – August 2014

Skills and Behaviours Development

4. Phase Two of the 'From Service to City' leadership programme was launched in October 2013 with five Master Classes and was well received by the cohort. Phase Three of the Master Class programme has just started to be delivered with classes such as "Turning a Service into a Business" and "Asset Based Community Development." It's aimed at senior managers in the organisation.
5. City of York Council has helped to relaunch the Yorkshire Accord mentoring scheme. We hosted an information giving event on February 3rd for other employers in the city about the scheme which provides mentors for our staff. We currently have ten staff matched with mentors through the scheme.
6. The Workforce Development Unit (WDU) moved to Human Resources in April this year from Children's Services and following the consolidation of all training budgets we have developed a corporate learning and development offer for staff. Members will recall that in January, they expressed concern that all staff should have equal access to opportunities for learning and development, and this has been remedied now as staff can access training based on their developmental need rather than available local

funding. New courses include “An introduction to Coaching”, “Having Effective Conversations”, and “Building Personal Resilience”.

7. The council’s new Behavioural Standards Framework was launched in April to coincide with the launch of the new HR system module on Performance Management. Most staff are now able to complete their performance reviews online, and for the first time through this process staff have been subject to performance ratings. We can now identify our “high performers” and those who need more support for their development.
8. The council has run two more “Springboard” programmes; Springboard is a development programme aimed at women at junior and middle management roles. It is very popular amongst staff and we received 37 applications for the 15 places on the last course. We run the course in partnership with the Food and Environmental Research Agency (FERA).

Recruitment and Retention

9. Through our partnership with Higher York we have recently established a training allowance for both student and graduate interns (£6.50 per hour for student interns and £7.65 per hour, which is the Living Wage, for graduate interns). This was welcomed by both universities.

Wellbeing and Engagement

10. The Health and Safety Manager post in the council has recently become vacant and work is now in progress to recruit a new Shared Head of Service with NYCC. This will help to attract the right calibre of candidate, and reap the benefits of sharing best practice whilst also achieving required efficiencies for 2015/16. We expect to have a new manager in post early in the New Year. In the meantime, we have an interim manager in role.
11. The Health and Safety Team played a key role in supporting staff who worked over the weekend of the Tour de France.
12. The council signed a new Occupational Health Contract including an Employee Assistance Programme with Healthcare Management Ltd. Figures on the first quarter’s usage on both elements of the scheme has been shared with Directorate Management Teams. A new programme of Health Surveillance just been rolled out, around 260 staff are subject to health surveillance in the council.

Pay, Reward and Recognition

13. The council has just concluded its review of the Terms and Conditions of Craft Workers, the remaining key staff group are to be moved onto the council's pay and grading scheme established in 2008.
14. Human Resources is now leading this years eXtra Factor staff recognition awards, which will take place in early December, at the Park Inn Hotel. The event is fully funded each year by external sponsors.

Performance and Change

Management of Change

15. At a regional level, Human Resources is helping to lead other Local Government Yorkshire & Humber (LGYH) authorities on a collaborative project on Talent and Performance Management, developing a common set of shared principles. As part of this we have developed a nine box talent matrix for assessing employees' performance and motivation. We are due to report on this work to the LGYH Chief Executive's meeting on September 26th 2014. We have also been asked by Aberdeen City Council to share the work we have done on Performance Management.
16. There has been a lot of work done to promote innovation and creativity, including a set of lunchtime learning sessions and a three day Entrepreneurship and Innovation Leadership Course run by the University of York's Continuing Professional Development Unit. The latter event is aimed at senior managers, and starts later this month.
17. We have just launched an 18 month 'Support through Change' programme for staff. We have partnered with a provider to deliver the programme which includes a mix of small workshops and online training which will be available to any member of staff who needs help coping with change. Workshops include help with CVs, interviews, networking, working with recruitment consultants and moving from the public to the private sector.

Equalities

18. The Staff Equalities Experts (SEE) group and Human Resources worked closely with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation to host a half day event to mark Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) History Month at the University of York St John in February and another staff event in March to mark International Women's Day. Both events helped to raise the profile of diversity and inclusion at the council.
19. The council has also worked with partners in the city to establish a city wide Equality and Diversity Practitioners Group which meets every

quarter to share information and good practice. Its members include a range of public and private sector organisations across the city and interest is growing.

Future Priorities

20. Human Resources is supporting the Rewiring programme with a detailed plan to help staff engage with new ways of working. There is a wide programme of activities planned for the next year including the Support through Change programme, opportunities for coaching and mentoring, Council Management Team (CMT) road shows, a new approach to community engagement and improvements to our customer service delivery. Progress against last years Staff Survey is being reported to CMT in October 2014 and plans for the next survey will start in earnest in the New Year.
21. New salary sacrifice schemes are under development and by the year end we will have developed a Total Rewards strategy which sets out how employee's salaries are enhanced by a range of shopping discounts and other benefits working for City of York Council. Over the next few months the council will also be focused on launching new Trade Union Engagement arrangements, and this year's annual staff awards, which take place in December.
22. Finally, the council is starting to think about drafting the next workforce strategy for 2015-18. Work will start this autumn, on consulting with staff, managers, partners, community groups and trade unions, and Members of this committee will be invited to provide their thoughts and feedback on how the strategy is developing at an early stage. The strategy will underpin the work we do over the next three years to reshape and skill the workforce of the future.

Implications

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

Risk Management

27. Failure to produce a Workforce Strategy and monitor the outcomes of its action plan could result in:

- 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;
- Inability to achieve the 'Core Capabilities' priorities in the Council Plan 2011-15;
- Failure to meet equalities legislation;
- Failure to respond to changing customer service needs;
- Failure to meet Excellent status under the Equality Framework for Local Government.

Recommendations

28. Members are asked to:

- a. note progress made against the Workforce Strategy in the months between January and August 2014;
- b. agree that a report should be brought back to this committee in six months time, which will include a review of all the achievements of the current Strategy which comes to an end in March 2015.

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

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Wards Affected: All

For further information please contact the authors of the report

Background Papers: None

Annexes: None