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# Workforce Strategy 2019-2023 – Supporting Information

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## 1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 The Council has decided to produce a Workforce Strategy to set alongside the Council Strategy. The Workforce Strategy 2019-2023 is attached as Appendix D.
- 1.2 The Workforce Strategy may be changed before March 2020 to include a section on reintroducing scoring for performance at appraisals. Operation Board will consider a report from the Head of HR on 5th December on the pros and cons of reintroducing scoring for appraisals which will include views from managers, staff and unions as well as a review of what other local authorities do. This report will also consider the option of training approved at appraisal to be contingent on the employee having an up to date record on all mandatory training. If OB decide to recommend the reintroduction of scoring in appraisals this will go to Personnel Committee for final approval.

## 2. Supporting Information

- 2.1 The Workforce Strategy contains information on what the Council plans to do in five key areas over the four year period July 2019 to July 2023. The five areas are:
  - (1) Apprenticeships and skills development;
  - (2) Leadership;
  - (3) Recruitment & retention;
  - (4) Organisational development;
  - (5) Employee wellbeing
- 2.2 There is an action plan in the Workforce Strategy which is explained below. Some actions are subject to increased capacity in HR.

## 3. Proposals

- 3.1 HR to support implementation of new top tier management structure including at Tier 4. Support to begin in summer 2019. Progress will be reviewed annually.
- 3.2 Introduce HR workshops for new managers on the leadership competency framework in the corporate appraisal form; and to discuss how to use the Council's values of Customer Focus, Integrity and Fairness in their decision making. To start in April 2020. The challenge of ensuring that managers act consistently in how they manage their employees is on-going as new managers are appointed.

- 3.3 Commercialisation skills training funded from the Corporate Programme for managers with an interest in generating more income for the Council, to start in summer 2019. A training provider has been identified.
- 3.4 ASC and C&FS to continue with support from the HR Services team, to build the 'non-pay benefits' message of working for the Council as part of their recruitment campaigns. More work on this topic is planned for autumn 2019.
- 3.5 HR to hold an "Improving Recruitment through social media" day for recruiting managers, HR staff and digital experts in autumn 2019. This may lead to proposed changes to some HR policies.
- 3.6 All vacancies up to Grade F to be considered for apprenticeships from September 2019. The 'default' will be to assume vacancy can be linked to an apprenticeship and this will be discussed with the recruiting manager by HR.
- 3.7 HR to introduce a new Volunteer and Work Experience policy in July 2019. This will act as a 'stepping stone' to help disadvantaged applicants to access apprenticeship vacancies.
- 3.8 HR to organise a cohort of five to seven 'Tier 4' managers to undertake the Masters course in Strategic Leadership and Management funded by the apprenticeship levy. The cohort will be identified by March 2020 and the course will start in September 2020. The cohort will be mentored and coached by Corporate Board. The HR Manager for HR Services will attend the course from September 2019 to help with the launch in 2020.
- 3.9 HR to present a report to Corporate Board in autumn 2019, considering the pros and cons of introducing an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) in April 2020 to assist in the area of Employee Wellbeing. An EAP would require a successful budget bid (submitted August 2020).
- 3.10 HR to arrange and hold Let's Chat workshops for staff employees in autumn 2020 and spring 2022. Subject to be determined by Strategy Board – initial proposal from the Including Everyone Board is to focus on Equalities in 2020.
- 3.11 Hold an Employee Attitude Survey (EAS) in June 2021 and analyse and act on the results. WBC will need to source a new provider or do the EAS in-house (because the current provider has ceased to do this type of work).
- 3.12 Finance and HR to produce a report in autumn 2019 on each service's training budget and the amount of training expenditure per employee and report to CB. This analysis will allow CB to determine whether access to training and development is fair across the Council (an issue raised by staff at the Let's Chat workshops in spring 2019).
- 3.13 HR to run an internal 'brokerage' service from April 2020 to match employees seeking career development with services offering shadowing and secondments. HR to find mentors from different parts of the Council for employees who are seconded. Issue raised by staff at the Let's Chat workshops in spring 2019.
- 3.14 HR will ensure from summer 2019 that all employees have access to the content of on-line learning, by providing bespoke face to face training where required to meet the needs of employees with disabilities. The e-learning will not be changed

(because that is a disproportionate response). The important thing is that access to the learning is available to all employees.

- 3.15 HR to procure a training provider to provide high quality training on Coaching Skills in autumn 2020, including follow up support. This is subject to a successful pressure bid (submitted August 2020).
- 3.16 HR to work with digital service colleagues to provide OD activities to support the successful introduction of the 'Three Tier Working' model where this is a recommendation coming out of a New Ways of Working (NWOW) review of a service.
- 3.17 Re-introduce workshops for managers on using the Sickness Absence Policy from autumn 2019.
- 3.18 Further actions may be added during the lifetime of the Workforce Strategy.

#### **4. Conclusion**

- 4.1 The final draft of the Workforce Strategy 2019-2023 is presented for approval to Personnel Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

#### **5. Consultation and Engagement**

- 5.1 Heads of Service have been consulted. HR staff have been consulted.
- 5.2 The trade unions have been consulted – a summary of the comments received from Unison are as follows:
  - (1) The Council should have a policy to in-source staff.
  - (2) Staff do go the 'extra mile' but this goodwill is finite.
  - (3) Unison support management consistency training for new managers
  - (4) Concern that building employee resilience is hiding a lack of resources.
  - (5) Unison support e-learning flexibility for disabled staff.
  - (6) Unison support the review of fairness of service training budgets and suggest a TU role in allocating training budgets.
  - (7) Concern re extra work for Tier 4 managers in new senior management structure.
  - (8) Unison seek a benchmarking exercise on pay of all staff rather than relying on low turnover as an indicator of pay being at an acceptable level.
  - (9) Unison oppose the possible use of market supplements. Prefer increase in base pay.
  - (10) Concerned that the constructive role of the trade unions is underplayed in Workforce Strategy (e.g. union role in job evaluation).

- (11) Unison oppose 'Let's Chat' sessions because the agenda is set by management and not staff.
- (12) Unison oppose the "Three Tier Working" concept because it failed in Wokingham BC and there is no evidence to support it.
- (13) Agree that HR will need more resources to do everything in the Workforce Strategy.
- (14) Seek more analysis on the main reason for sickness absence of "stress/depression/anxiety".
- (15) Support training workshops for managers on use of Sickness Absence Policy and offer TU support at workshops.
- (16) Support bid for an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)
- (17) Note that the gender pay gap is not mentioned.

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**Background Papers:**

None

**Subject to Call-In:**

Yes:  No:

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**Wards affected:**

All

**Strategic Aims and Priorities Supported:**

The proposals will help achieve the following Council Strategy aim(s):

**MEC – Become an even more effective Council**

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the following Council Strategy priority:

**MEC1 – Become an even more effective Council**

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Strategy aims and priorities by \*(add text)

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