Workforce Strategy

Workforce Strategy

<u>Introduction</u>

At a time of continuing austerity with significant financial pressures on all areas of the Council's business, it is vital that the Council clarifies its' aims for the workforce. The Council recognises that its' workforce is a valuable resource and that there must be an effort to attain the best fit from existing resources for both ongoing and future business needs. To complement this, the Strategy also aims to create the workforce needed to support and deliver the overarching Council Plan.

Given the size of the Council's direct workforce, it is appropriate to strive to achieve a multi-disciplined workforce that is flexible and equipped to deliver transformation. Multi-tasking already exists and can help to prevent silos within an organisation.

The Workforce Strategy supports the Council Plan through positive leadership that facilitates:

- Maximising the opportunities for staff involvement;

- Promoting the well-being of employees;

- Providing the opportunity for personal and professional development which meets the organisation's needs; and

- A commitment to fair, equitable and inclusive practices.

The Council continues to operate in a volatile uncertain environment, where the only constant is reducing resources and continuing service demands. High standards of ethics and governance are in place and are observed.

<u>Workforce Planning</u>

Workforce planning is the process of identifying the optimum number of employees with the required skills, employed in the right services, at the right time, in order to deliver an organisation's short and long term objectives. Technically, workforce planning involves a range of activities such as succession planning, flexible working, job design, future demand, skills analysis and many more.

Workforce planning is not formally practiced Council-wide; certain services have operated on this basis and some continue to do so. More commonly, Council services operated on historic staffing structures replacing any leavers on a like-for-like basis. The Budget Strategy 2012-2016 included a comprehensive review of the Council's establishment and introduced the requirement that service managers review all vacancies for the potential to create an apprentice or trainee position,

whether there could be any change in working practices (efficiencies), the job design and best use of existing staffing (a structural review).

In 2017, the Council implemented a comprehensive human resources integrated system and there are elements within the system that will be available to service managers. These elements include details of the service managers' direct reports in terms of work pattern or rota, all types of leave, individuals' training and appraisals. It is anticipated that once this information is available, it will allow the possibility of formal approach to workforce planning across the Council to be assessed. This is a future aim and is not included as a time bound action within this Strategy.

Workforce planning is a key part of any strategic business planning process. Service plans aid departmental workforce planning and allow a corporate picture to be built up.

Achievements

The previous Workforce Strategy successfully introduced appraisals for all employees; this was phased through Management Board and Management Group first. The Business Improvement Team membership was refreshed and new areas of work have been reviewed. The Council agreed an Employer Supported Volunteering Policy and that has been opened to all employees. The Sickness Absence Policy was completely reviewed and introduced more relevant triggers. Regular meetings with the Management Group now take place, with service managers excluding the Management Board meeting as a Managers Forum to discuss the issues for the Group; the Group also take part in workshops for topical issues selected by Management Board. The Executive Director and the Leader of the Council host biannual meetings over a number of days, open to all employees. Staff surveys have been carried out and action plans produced; this is now established biennially.

Any other actions carried over from the previous Strategy's plan are either incorporated again or have been overtaken by other events.

Objectives

The objectives of the Workforce Strategy are:

1. To establish effective communications mechanisms within all services to ensure two-way communication is embedded across the Council. To improve employee engagement by empowering staff to make decisions based on up to date knowledge and experience and, where necessary, appropriate qualifications.

2. To enable employees to have the work/life balance that best suits their needs, given their role within the Council. To listen to employee concerns through individual performance appraisals and group meetings.

3. To develop innovative managers capable of leading teams through periods of significant change. To establish succession plans whereby priority for the filling of senior management roles is given to qualified and experienced internal applicants.

4. To develop a flexible workforce enabled by appropriate technology to deliver value for money across priority services. To foster a culture of continuous improvement by embedding transformation and service redesign within the performance management framework of the Council.

The objectives advance the workforce towards the Council Plan, providing assurance that the plan can be delivered. The gap between the objectives and the current position is set out in two sections; strategic issues and operational issues.

Strategy Workforce Issues

The Management Board of the Council is the strategic level in terms of implementing Council policies and strategies. The Board have an overall view of the Council and its' operations as the Directors and Assistant Directors, between them, represent all services. The Board is chaired by the Executive Director.

The workforce issues identified at the strategic level are:

Issue	Concern	Resolution
A. Skills and qualifications	Scientific, technical, engineering and maths disciplines are generally difficult to recruit.	Apprentices/trainee positions allow the Council to 'grow our own' local government specific skills. Training of non-technical employees into technical roles is identified through the appraisal process.
B. Complex knowledge	Creating the opportunity for long serving employees to pass on their knowledge to others.	Apprentices/trainees where added to the establishment. Back-fill posts where necessary to allow skills transfer; to other existing employees or upon leaving. Developmental training for managers.

Issue	Concern	Resolution
C. Succession planning	Service continuity would be best achieved with internal applicants moving through the organisation. Age profile of the organisation.	Deputy managers in place for key services. Manager and supervisor training identified through the appraisal process. Apprentices and development posts in key areas.
D. Changing career patterns and expectations	As the options offered to employees increase workforce planning, even at a team level, becomes more demanding.	Job fulfilment balanced against the job design (or job description). Flexible employment; enhanced flexi scheme, purchased annual leave, temporary or permanent reductions in working hours. Smoother transition into retirement; flexible retirement options.

Operational Workforce Issues

The Council's Management Group participated in a workshop designed to identify operational issues that the Workforce Strategy should incorporate and address. There were four themes and these are set out below along with the issues that were raised. The issues were given priority scores and those at the top of the poll are presented in order of priority within each theme.

Communications

1.1. Information/decision fact sheet setting out responsibilities of Council, Executive Committee, Management Board and other groups.
1.2. Encourage 'informal' communications between departments.
1.3. Restructure Management Board agendas; allow more engagement from departments in policy issues.
1.4. Better identification of corporate issues before they are considered by Management Board.
1.5. Service Plans produced by departments as means of engaging staff.

Health and Wellbeing

2.1. Staff room.
2.2. Shower facility.
2.3. Health fair/health checks.

Leadership Development

3.1. Apprentice/trainee programme and succession planning.
3.2. Manager/senior manager delegation/decision making power.
3.3. Manager training/expected skills to be provided.
3.4. Cross department meetings.

Transformation and Change

4.1. Generating ideas - create a culture of trust to allow staff to brainstorm ideas without managers; departmental or slice groups.
4.2. Implementing ideas - provide skills and empower managers to deliver change.
4.3. Encourage internal and external peer networking.

Benefits

The benefits to delivering the Workforce Strategy are:

- Assurance that the Council Plan can be delivered;

- Better alignment of resources to operations;

- Reduce or remove any skills gap;

- Retained complex knowledge;

- Services continue to be delivered at the required standards; and

- Greater workforce engagement and retention, and lower levels of stress.

The Council will measure the implementation and impact of the Workforce Strategy annually. The annual review will consider progress against the Action Plan and the following data:

- Staff turnover;

- Staff sickness;

- Success of recruitment;

- Staff appraisals completed;

- Staff attendance;

- Training successes; and

- Staff satisfaction from biennial survey.

Action Plan

Issue	Development	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
A	Skills and qualifications	11 permanent apprentices/trainee positions already agreed/created. Further positions reviewed as vacancies arise or work practices change.		
B	Complex knowledge	Appraisal scheme established; skills transfer considered by service managers. Relevant training considered through appraisal scheme.		
C	Succession planning	Investigate the feasibility of public sector training and development partnership. Establish a programmed policy review.		
D	Changing career patterns and expectations	Job details reviewed through the appraisal scheme; service managers are mindful of the responsibility placed on the positions as graded. Enhanced flexi scheme to be reviewed in 2017. Flexible retirement applications considered in line with Council policy.		
1.1	Governance briefing	Management Board to facilitate a Management Group workshop		
1.2	Inter-departmental communications	Assigned to the Managers Forum		
1.3	Review Management Board agenda structure	Completed and key policy issues presented to the Managers Forum		
1.4	Discussion of corporate issues	Part of quarterly Management Group		
1.5	Departmental service plans		To be assigned to the Managers Forum	
2.1	Establish staff room in the Town Hall	Room identified by Management Board and to be implemented by Management Group volunteer		
2.2	Create shower facility in the Town Hall		To be considered by Management Board	
2.3	Source health and wellbeing events		To be reviewed by the HR Department	

Issue	Development	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
3.1	Establish succession planning policy			To be considered by Management Board
3.2	Reminder of the scheme of delegation	Management Board to facilitate a Management Group workshop		
3.3	Manager competency review		Options to be reviewed by Management Board	
3.4	Cross department meetings	Assigned to the Managers Forum		
4.1	Idea generation		To be assigned to the Managers Forum	
4.2	Idea implementation		To be assigned to the Managers Forum	
4.3	Peer networking			To be reviewed by Management Group