

HR COMMITTEE – 17 MARCH 2022

HR Update

1.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 That the Committee note the contents of this report.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This report gives an update on HR matters since the last HR Committee. These matters are in addition to the reactive caseload which includes job evaluations, restructuring advice, grievances, disciplinaries and sickness absence matters.
- 2.2 We also continue to provide Payroll and HR Advisory services to the National Park Authority.

3.0 RECOGNITION DAYS

- 3.1 February recognised LGBT+ History month. The Pride flag was flown throughout the month at Appletree Court. Information about the aims and objectives of the awareness month were made available to staff including a link to the local resource 'Hampshire LGBT+ Alliance'. This alliance celebrates and supports LGBT+ communities across Hampshire.
- 3.2 1st February marked Chinese New Year. This was highlighted in the HR Newsletter 'engage' with information about the celebrations including what they mean and links to further information.

4.0 APPRENTICESHIPS

- 4.1 From 1st January 2022, we increased our apprenticeship rate from £4.62 to £6.56 per hour in year one (this is the National Minimum Wage for 18 – 20-year-olds), and then the National Living Wage of £8.91 per hour in any subsequent years, (rates will update as national rates change, normally in April each year).
- 4.2 We have subsequently been able to recruit two new apprentices into the Grounds Maintenance team. Last year despite two campaigns we were unable to attract any candidates, which would indicate that the increase in pay has been effective.
- 4.3 Our Accountancy and Legal teams are currently considering recruiting new apprentices.

4.4 We currently have three existing staff undertaking apprenticeships: Chartered Manager Degree, Level 5 Diploma in Management, and Level 3 Improvement Technician.

5. ITRENT UPGRADE

5.1 Since January, we have been testing a significant mandatory system upgrade to the HR Hub. This has involved the whole Service and required in-depth testing across the system - back office, Manager and Employee self-service.

5.2 Testing is now complete, and we will receive our new live version on 2nd March. There are then some considerable essential system tasks to be completed before it can be used, which mean that the system will be down from 2nd March to 8th March. We have communicated this to all staff.

5.3 Many aspects of the upgrade update the payroll ready for the new tax year, but there are also other back-office aspects, and most notably for staff, Employee Self Service has been updated. It will have the same functionality but will look quite different, to improve user experience especially from mobile devices.

5.4 In May we will require a further upgrade to correct current issues with the Performance Management aspect of the system which have not been addressed in the mandatory upgrade. This will require further significant testing and downtime prior to launching, but this will be minimised as much as possible.

5.5 The password and memorable word logins are often raised as a downside to the system by users. We are working with ICT to enable 'single sign-on' for all users and envisage this should be completed by May. If possible, we will combine the launch of the May upgrade with the launch of single sign-on.

6. RECRUITMENT

6.1 As of 23rd February, we had 15 live vacancies.

6.2 During January and to 23rd February we had 24 vacancies, and 20 new starters.

7.0 EXERCISE AND WELLBEING CLASSES

7.1 Following on from the success of the free trial offered to us we have now taken up the exercise and wellbeing classes through our employee assistance programme for the next 12 months.

7.2 These are currently available to all staff and members until the end of December 2022.

7.3 Class options include:

- Low impact cardio
- Anxiety
- Mindfulness
- Pilates (beginners and intermediate)
- Strength and balance
- And much more

7.4 Employees can use work or personal devices to access the courses using the link provided.

8.0 EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

8.1 A procurement exercise is currently underway in relation to the Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contributions relating to pension through a salary sacrifice scheme.

8.2 The next steps relating to this will be to evaluate the responses and award the contract. Once awarded we will work with the supplier to roll out this benefit across the workforce

8.3 We have also relaunched our current benefits which are available through KAARP and the CSSC scheme. This has included communications to employees and posters at our depots.

8.4 KAARP Benefits provide access to exclusive offers and discounts for Local Government staff. This includes discounted theme park entry and days out, savings on shopping (e)gift cards, gifts and flowers and deals on holidays, hotels and airport parking. Their service is free to use with no subscription of individual sign up.

8.5 Under the CSSC scheme, employees can join for £4.25 per month. Members benefit from discounts on family fun experiences, supermarket and shopping, fitness, education, gyms, home entertainment and other exclusive member benefits.

9.0 DEAF AWARENESS TRAINING

9.1 We have organised two online half day deaf awareness training sessions in March. These are delivered by signs4life and aims to support our employees in understanding the barriers and challenges faced by those who are deaf or hard of hearing, how to implement positive methods of communication and offer an equal service as well as applying the finger-spelling alphabet.

9.2 We have a range of employees attending these sessions across most service areas of the Council

10.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY TRAINING

- 10.1 All employees are required to complete Equality and Diversity Training on a two-yearly basis. To support the deployment of this to operational employees an online training video was developed by the HR Team, this focused examples based on the nature of their work.
- 10.2 Supported by operational management over the past three months this training has been delivered to the full operational workforce and is part of the new starter induction programme for operational employees.
- 10.3 Office based employees undertake an e-learning module. Since January, an audit of employees who have missed their renewal for this training have been identified and reminded to complete it. This has resulted in a good response and most employees are now up to date.

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