

# HR COMMITTEE – 9 June 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. This has been agreed through a Service Level Agreement for another year.

### 3.0 LEARNING AT WORK WEEK

3.1 Learning at work week took place 16 – 20<sup>th</sup> May. We supported the week with publicity, and promotion of learning activities, such as:

- The chance to find out what colleagues from our enforcement team learnt on the army activity day, including winching vehicles, wearing wetsuits and holding weapons, and whet your appetite for getting involved in the future.
- Learning a quick and simple technique to help with our mental health.
- Uncovering learning by trying some of the ideas in these links provided by the Campaign for Learning especially for Learning at Work Week
- Reminder of the ability to develop wellbeing or fitness by trying a free online class
- Team videos to learn about what other teams are up to and who's who (particularly important now we are working in a hybrid way and will also be shared with new starters to enhance their joining experience).

3.2 Supported by our Chief Executive, we also encouraged leaders and aspiring leaders across the council to join the Solace 'Learning Uncovered' leadership sessions which ran across the week. We had 30 employees sign up to the programme, which can be downloaded and watched for a further month.

### 4.0 MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK

4.1 In celebration of Mental Health Awareness Week 9<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> May we promoted the Employee Support Line newsletter focussed on Combating Loneliness, the theme of the week. This included some helpful tips on avoiding loneliness as well as spotting signs and supporting our colleagues and teams.

- 4.2 We also updated our Mental Health page with new tips and ensure our resources are up to date.
- 4.3 Our Mental Health First Aiders meet quarterly, and having refreshed our training earlier in the year, we are now using fictitious case studies to talk through together at our meetings to ensure we keep our skills current and share approaches.

## **5. ITRENT UPGRADE**

- 5.1 As advised at the last HR Committee we are currently testing an upgrade to correct current issues with the Performance Management aspect of the system which have not been addressed in the mandatory upgrade. This has required further significant testing, and we will go live 27<sup>th</sup> May with minimal downtime that day.
- 5.2 Unfortunately to date the Performance Management current issues have not been resolved, but this has been raised as an urgent priority with iTrent directly. Now that the upgrade has taken place, the aim is still to have this matter resolved before July for the start of the new performance management cycle.
- 5.3 The password and memorable word logins are often raised as a downside to the system by users, and we had over 450 requests to reset within the last 6 months. We are working with ICT to enable 'single sign-on' for all users and envisage this should be completed by July.
- 5.4 Our iTrent contract is due for renewal in July 2022, and we are working on a direct award with ICT and iTrent.

## **6. RECRUITMENT**

- 6.1 As of 20<sup>th</sup> May, we had 10 live vacancies.
- 6.2 During between 24<sup>th</sup> February and 20<sup>th</sup> May, we had 25 vacancies, and 24 new starters. 5 vacancies during this period were not filled first time.

## **7.0 INFINISTATS**

- 7.1 We have joined South East Employers Infinistats. This is a data collection, benchmarking and reporting tool for organisations within the southeast region.
- 7.2 Information is collated on a range of data including HR Metrics (including workforce make up and sickness statistics), TU Membership and Facility Time, Gender Pay Gap, Terms and Conditions and Pay and Benefits including Chief Officer pay and benefits.

- 7.3 Salary benchmarking across a wide range of roles is available including office based and operational roles.
- 7.4 Data is collated and uploaded by the HR Team periodically throughout the year as surveys become available. We are in the process of uploading our information over the coming months.
- 7.5 We will use Infinistats to benchmark our performance against the range of data collated and will report this in future committees.

## **8.0 DISABILITY CONFIDENT**

- 8.1 In May 2022 our Disability Confident Employer status was extended for a further three years. This means that we:
- remove discrimination against any employee or applicant in their access to employment, training, working conditions, promotion or dismissal
  - ensure our recruitment process is inclusive and accessible
  - communicate and promote our vacancies in methods accessible for all
  - offer interviews to any disabled person who meets the essential criteria for the role
  - anticipate and make reasonable adjustments for staff and candidates, as required
  - support existing employees who acquire a disability or long-term health condition.
- 8.2 The disability confident logo is displayed on our website and all our adverts to encourage a culture of support, inclusion and early conversation so that employees and candidates with health conditions are supported in the right way for them.

## **9.0 EMPLOYEE BENEFITS UPDATE**

- 9.1 A contract to AVC Wise has been awarded enabling Shared Cost AVCs (Additional Voluntary Contributions) to be rolled out to our employees in the coming months. We anticipate this to be available from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022.
- 9.2 The benefits of KAARP, CSSC (Civil Service Sports Council) Scheme and discounted membership to Freedom Leisure centres continues to be promoted to employees. This includes communications to employees, use of Forestnet and posters at our depots. CSSC did a presentation to employees covering the offers and discounts available to employees in April.
- 9.3 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.
- 9.4 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.

9.5 We are currently reviewing our full benefits package and considering different benefits we can provide to support our full workforce.

## **10.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY TRAINING**

10.1 As discussed at the last HR Cttee, the link for the online equality training has now been provided to all members.

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