

HR UPDATE REPORT

1. RECOMMENDATION

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

2. 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. From 1st April this will be expanded to include Health and Safety advice.

3. STRATEGIC DIRECTION

- 3.1 As with most council's we are facing recruitment, retention and workforce challenges and we need to make sure we have a more agile workforce to respond to a changing local government landscape and a digital world. We need to respond to our recruitment challenges in key roles including housing, waste, environmental health, both at manager level and 'on the ground', look at strategic workforce and succession planning to provide skills development and career paths to maintain our workforce.
- 3.2 The transformation strategy has People and Capabilities as one its four key themes. This theme is about how we organise and develop our people and culture, making sure roles, structures, behaviours and skills evolve to meet new service designs and needs.
- 3.3 A key element of delivery and a response to the challenges we face will be the development of a new People Strategy which will ensure we have the capability and capacity to deliver on our employer of choice ambitions, develop skills and grow talent, foster a stronger culture of good leadership and management with a values and behaviours framework enabling individuals, teams and the organisation to perform at the highest level.
- 3.4 The strategy development is a key priority for 2024/25 and it will be informed by the findings and recommendations of the recent HR Peer Review, staff engagement sessions and the views of the leadership team. Delivery of the strategy will be supported by sufficient and appropriate resources including Organisational Development capacity that will be necessary to support significant organisational change.

4. LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

- 4.1 We have been working with Learning Pool to ensure that all the correct data and the correct structures will be available from our go live date.
- 4.2 We are anticipating a go live date at the end of March.

- 4.3 We are finalising demonstration videos and guidance notes and will be doing drop-in sessions at our Depots and ATC.

5. RECRUITMENT UPDATE

- 5.1 We have now attended 8 recruitment events since April 2023, at schools, colleges and job centres.
- 5.2 We have now finalised our new application form, which is streamlined to ask some basic 'tick box' questions, followed by the ability to upload CV and covering letter, or any other document. The aim is to make the process really user friendly, quick and easy to apply, and to allow those who would maybe struggle to complete the full form an effective route to apply.

6. GRADUATE CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

- 6.1 We have mentioned the concept of these opportunities before but are now pleased to be recruiting to two graduate placement opportunities both run by the Local Government Association. Both placements are paid, at approximately £27,000 pa. In return we get the opportunity to build capacity and nurture and develop our own talent and leaders for the future.
- 6.2 The first is the Local Government Development Programme. This is a well-established and highly sought after programme, offering graduates a two-year placement in a local authority. The selected applicant will undertake three placements across the council during this period, to develop skills across a variety of services. Alongside their employment, they will undertake a prestigious learning and development offer provided by the LGA and delivered by Solace – this is a CMI Level 7 qualification in Leadership and Management.
- 6.3 The second is a brand-new programme, Pathways to Planning, offering graduates a three-year placement during which time they'll undertake their MSc in Spatial Planning through Oxford Brookes University, alongside important projects across Development Management and the Policy teams, including working on the Freeport and Local Plan among other projects, mentored by our Senior Planning colleagues.
- 6.4 Both programmes have been advertised directly by the LGA and have now closed. The LGA have a rigorous selection process, and by June, we will be given a shortlist to make final recruitment decisions, and our two new recruits should be in post by Autumn.

7. INSPIRATIONAL WOMEN IN OUR WORKPLACE

- 7.1 Some of you may be aware that 8th March was International Women's Day. We were proud to participate in two events that week, both celebrating the success of some of our female colleagues.

7.2 Young Local Authority of the Year

This is a team competition, and this year Sophie Tuffin (our Greener Housing Delivery Manager) and Kealy Whenray (our Creative & Cultural Development Manager) took part and hoped to bring home a trophy! But it's not all about winning.

The aim of the event was to contribute to the personal and professional development of people in the earlier stages of their careers in local government. There were three key challenges.

An argument paper, an on-the-spot presentation, and a Pride of Place presentation, all relying on spoken word only, with the winning team taking home the coveted award.

7.3 Brockenhurst College careers event

Our HR team represented the council showcasing all our recruitment branding and employer of choice information.

Additionally, there were presentations from motivating and inspiring women in the workplace, and we were pleased that Megan Ward (our Homelessness Team Leader) and Roxie King (our Climate Change Manager) will both presented at the event.

8. BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

8.1 The new policy was presented at the last HR Committee. Since then, four training sessions have been held for managers with a total of 70 staff attending.

8.2 A further session is planned for April. Moving forwards this will become a regular feature of the brief bite suite of training offered by HR.

8.3 All colleagues have been made aware of the updated policy through our internal communications and drop-in sessions at Appletree Court and Marsh Lane Depot. The policy has also been discussed with the Employee Forum and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Staff group.

9. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

9.1 Both cohorts on the Leadership Development Programme have now attended four days for the programme.

9.2 Masterclass sessions have been set up over the next four months, the topics for these are Performance Management, Governance, Finance and Personal Accountability and Procurement / Contract Management.

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Background Papers:

None