

HR COMMITTEE – 5 SEPTEMBER 2024

HR Update Report

Purpose	For information
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	The report provides an overview of the work undertaken within the HR Service over and above the re-active casework.
Recommendation(s)	That members note the ongoing work within the HR Service
Reasons for recommendation(s)	Much of the work supports the council ambition to be an Employer of Choice and the corporate LEAF values
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Jeremy Heron
Strategic Director(s)	Alan Bethune – Strategic Director Corporate Service
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Introduction

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. We also continue to provide Payroll and HR Advisory services to the National Park Authority. From 1st April this has been expanded to include Health and Safety advice.

Staff Engagement Survey

3. This year's staff engagement survey has now been launched and will remain open until 9th September.

4. We are working with South East Employers this year. They will capture the results and from that they will feedback to us anonymous results and also their recommendations as to what we should include when we are considering the development of our People Strategy.
5. The last employee survey had a response rate of just over 41%. We are hoping that we can significantly increase the return rate this time.

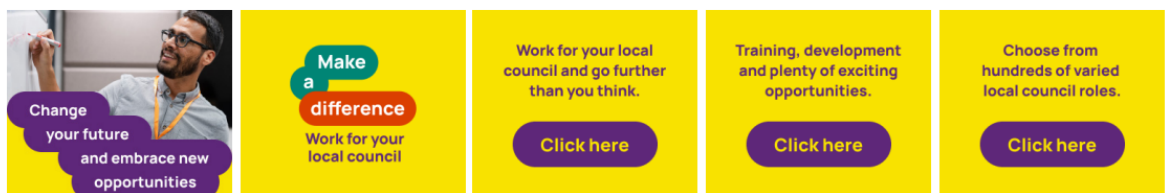
Recruitment Update

6. We updated you earlier in the year, that we had made significant changes to our recruitment application form. Since then, we've listened to feedback from colleagues, and made some further changes our recruitment process:
 - We've now launched a further application form for Operational roles – we've removed the requirement for a mandatory CV and replaced it with a simple box to detail skills/knowledge/experience relevant to the role. We've actioned this as feedback from Operational Services at our Ignite session, and hope this helps relevant candidates apply.
 - We've updated our new application form to include 'most recent job and salary' – so that this can be considered by recruiting managers
 - We've added to our standard mandatory filtering questions and the way we word these – we introduced these to ensure only those with relevant essential skills for the role are able to submit applications, and over the first few months we've learnt some valuable lessons of how we could develop these
 - We've developed a video, created by colleagues explaining why they feel NFDC is an employer of choice. This is now linked (alongside our Candidate Pack) on all vacancies.
7. Additionally, to build positively on new recruits onboarding:
 - We've also added a check-in with new recruits mid-way between their contract issue and start date, to keep them onboard and engaged with their new employment with us, asking if they have any questions prior to starting we can help with.
 - We've been noticing some regular queries cropping up soon after employees join. These are covered in our induction, but of course there's a lot to take in at that time. A month after joining, we also send them a new starter reminder email with hints, tips and reminders, and offer our assistance should it be required.

8. Coming soon

The LGA has successfully piloted a generic recruitment campaign across some authorities in the north east, and after taking stock and developing the campaign further working with local authorities (including us), the campaign will be live across the UK between November '24 and January '25. The campaign will have common messages and, working with other councils across our region, we'll aim to blend this with our current recruitment tools. As we get to November, you may well see some of the generic campaign images and hear radio adverts. We all know that attracting the right people to work in local government is vital if we are to deliver the best service to the people who live and work in our communities, so the aim is to overcome barriers and preconceptions about working in local government and encourage an awareness and interest in the range of career.

A taster of the type of themes is given below.



Learning Management System

9. Our Learning Management System is well embedded across our office-based teams, and all mandatory eLearning is due for completion by the end of September. We continue to work with our colleagues across operational and housing maintenance teams to build the system to meet their needs.
10. Some service areas have been considering how technical training can be delivered, and we are working with these teams to build bespoke suitable modules, for example on Asbestos and Climate Change. ICT are working to build all mandatory ICT training in the LMS.
11. We are also now looking at optional eLearning modules that we can load into our system as supplementary development for our colleagues and hope to publish these in the new year.

Learning & Development Update

12. We now have 14 employees undertaking apprenticeships, an all time high! This includes new employees recruited as apprentices, trainee roles, and as training for existing established employees. This means we are utilising much more of the

apprenticeship levy we pay each month. We do still have some surplus levy which would go back to the government.

13. Instead of this, we have pledged £50,000 to be available for SME's in the district (who do not pay the levy and do not have budget to fund apprenticeship training). We are working with the Solent Business & Skills Solutions 'Apprenticeships & Skills Hub' team to facilitate this, and have just linked with Bluebird Care, to give them £32,000 to fund 8 apprenticeships in their frontline care and administration teams – these new staff will work across Bluebird franchises in Lymington, Totton and Ringwood – directly benefiting our district.
14. After very successful interview processes, our two new graduate placement recruits will start on 16th September, one corporate working on three projects across services and one based in the Place Development teams. Both Hannah and Ros are as keen as the teams they will be working in to get up and running. We've worked to ensure real engagement with them over the summer, and have developed detailed, tailored induction programmes ready for when they start, taking them through the length of their studies.
15. We are linking with a Hampshire County Council new 'Supported Internship Programme' for young people with additional needs, for those close to the jobs market but just need a bit more time to build up their confidence and employability skills.
16. We will be taking two students this autumn in our Grounds Maintenance Teams on unpaid placements, building up from one day a week over the next 12 months. Our Grounds team have continuous apprentices on a rolling programme and are very keen to support this new Programme.
17. When the Kickstart programme was in place during covid, we took on Lewis in the Grounds team, and he now has a permanent role with us. Lewis is a highly valued member of the team, which often has recruitment challenges, so we are hopeful this is another two-way win for all parties longer term if possible.

Management Development Programme

18. Following on from the success of the Leadership Development programme we are now organising our Management Development Programme.
19. This is aimed primarily at those staff on Band 8 and 9 that report directly to a member of the Leadership Team and have staffing responsibility.

20. Three cohorts have been organised with 20 employees on each. Two cohorts start in September, and one will start in April.
21. The programme will consist of five days of taught training with Avie Consultancy and will be supported by in a range of in house training in areas such as Recruitment, Performance Management and Absence Management.

LGBT+ Employee Network

22. During June, the LGBT+ Network was launched. The aims of the network are to connect colleagues, support peers, share knowledge and experience and contribute to improving services.
23. The HR team attended all operational toolbox talks during June to introduce the network in consultation with the Councils culture. This has included all operational teams across Housing Maintenance, Waste and Recycling, Streetscene and Open Spaces. Drop ins have happened at Appletree Court, Marsh Lane Depot and Claymeadow depot with the support of existing network members as well as promotion through our intranet and physical posters.
24. Since then the group have arranged further meetings and drop ins to continue their work and support the workforce.

Corporate plan priorities

25. Much of the work undertaken by the HR Service supports the council's ambition to be an employer of choice

Options appraisal

26. Not Applicable

Consultation undertaken

27. Not Applicable

Financial and resource implications

28. None.

Legal implications

29. None.

Risk assessment

30. There are no risks associated with the recommendation.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

31. None.

Equalities implications

32. None arising from the recommendations.

Crime and disorder implications

33. None.

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

34. None.

Appendices

None

Background Papers:

None