

HR COMMITTEE – 13 MARCH 2025

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. Members of the Leadership team have now been given the results for their own areas and are being asked to discuss these within their teams and provide feedback using a form developed so that the actions can be recorded.
4. Once all the information is collated, we will be considering the best way to feedback to staff the outcomes from the survey.
5. This is likely to include an action plan so that we can demonstrate to staff how we have taken on board their comments and what we have done to address their issues / concerns.
6. The action plan will be shared with all staff, ensuring those at the operational depots are also made fully aware of what is included.

RECRUITMENT UPDATE

7. The Local Government National Recruitment Campaign

The official campaign closed at the end of January, and we have provided our statistics to the Local Government Association (LGA). We hope to hear back in March from the LGA in terms of how successful and impactful the campaign was nationally and regionally. Our statistics initially show that we had just over double the number of new visitors to our jobs home page, rising from circa 4,500 to circa 9,000.

8. Teams background 'nfdc jobs'

We have recently identified that we could promote our vacancies with a Teams background and worked with our Communications team to get the design, shown below. The HR team will adopt this as their background, and ICT will also make it available to all to add if they wish to do so and this will be highlighted in a Comms email so that all staff can add it if they wish to.

9. Recruitment process review

Over the past couple of years, we have made some major improvements to our recruitment branding, application process, candidate pack and 'employer of choice' video. This year the focus on the team is to work on improving our processes – the steps our team undertake for each campaign, and the process for managers. We have been looking to undertake this for some years, but now with the skills of our colleagues in the Transformation team, we are able to look at how we can refine our processes but also utilise 'Power Automate', a relatively new tool in the microsoft suite, to automate our very manual and repetitive processes. This is very timely, as our team grow ever busier and find challenges with completing tasks effectively in reasonable timescales. This will take some time over the next year or so to work through, but we aim to make the whole process more efficient and user-friendly for all involved.

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

10. We shared an update with EMT on module completion, which is was over 80% at the end of January 2025. We have given a 'shout out' to those that have completed their mandatory modules, as well as encouraging the remaining colleagues to get these completed. We continue to monitor and support those still yet to complete them. consider completion figures as well as the range of eLearning required for different staff groups and how we can enable the most effective route forward to ensure appropriate and suitable learning is provided to the relevant audiences.

EMT also reviewed the mandatory eLearning modules, and gave recommendations of some that could be made optional. These alterations have been made.

Much of our LMS administrator time has been spent on Operational staff records and ensuring these are accurate in terms of training needs and training completed. It is hoped this is concluded by the end of March. The focus will then move to continuing to develop further modules, both bespoke and 'off the shelf' as optional units. EMT have asked to consider any requests for further mandatory modules, and will consider if they could be optional, or if they are mandatory for a smaller section of the organisation – to ensure we are targeting these in the right way.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

11. We are continuing to explore appropriate learning and development opportunities across the organisation to support all employees. The focus moving forward will be more strategic and aligned to the People Strategy action plan. With the additional resources set to be agreed as part of this, it is hoped that we can better support all colleagues to be the best they can be and in turn deliver excellent services to our communities.

MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

12. We are looking forward to starting Cohort 3, having considered the feedback from the first 2 cohorts. This will run from April to July, and we'll take stock and report back once all are complete. There is also a further 'Senior Leadership' cohort for those new to our senior team, which runs from March – July following a very similar format to the previous leadership training.

LGBT+ EMPLOYEE NETWORK

- 11 The LGBT+ Network continue to meet regularly, hosting drop ins for staff and growing their network and support to the workforce. The group have a chair, vice chair and secretary who support the group to agree discussion topics and focus for any drop in sessions that are organised.
12. The Network contributes directly to the EDI group providing valuable support in this area.

AMENDMENT TO THE EQUALITY ACT 2010

13. As of October 2024 there was an amendment to the Equality Act 2010 resulting in a preventative duty on employers to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace.

The HR Advisory Team have recently reviewed our bullying and harassment policy and implemented a simpler, resolution focussed

policy. Since October a risk assessment has been completed to identify any areas where we can support our workforce, and which will be implemented throughout 2025. These include updated employee and manager training, an anonymous reporting tool to report incidents, guidance on personal relationships in the workplace and guidance on work organised social events involving alcohol.

EDI GROUP

14. The EDI group continue to meet regularly, discussing various work issues, commenting on policy and contributing to upcoming initiatives that support our inclusive culture.
The group have recently discussed guidance proposed by the HR team support colleagues observing religious practice which will be published in early 2025.

The next meeting scheduled for early 2025 and will focus on reviewing the staff survey results, particularly how these link to the Councils Corporate Equality Objectives.

BUY AND SELL ANNUAL LEAVE POLICY

15. The new policy has now been launched with applications welcome from those who have a leave year which starts from April. Due to requests from employees whose leave year started from January this year we have now made a concession that they can also be included for this year.

The aim of this policy is to allow all colleagues more flexibility on their amount of leave to support their personal circumstances, whilst encouraging rest and time away from work to support employee wellbeing.

CORPORATE EMPLOYEE EVENTS

16. In the past couple of months, we have been pleased to support the running of the long service awards (celebrating the long service of those colleagues with over 20 years' service) and our recognition awards (celebrating long term training and employee suggestions). Both events were well attended and found really valuable by those colleagues that attended.

Corporate plan priorities

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

Options appraisal

18. Not Applicable

Consultation undertaken

19. Not Applicable

Financial and resource implications

20. None

Legal implications

21. None

Risk assessment

22. There are no risks associated with the recommendation.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

23. None

Equalities implications

24. None arising from the recommendations.

Crime and disorder implications

25. None

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

26. None

Appendices

None

Background Papers:

None