

## HR COMMITTEE – 19 June 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.
<b>Recommendation(s)</b>	<b>That members note the ongoing work within the HR Service</b>
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
Officer Contact	Heleana Aylett Service Manager - Human Resources 02380 285662 Heleana.aylett@nfdc.gov.uk

### 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 April last year this has been expanded to include Health and Safety advice.

### Staff Engagement Survey

3. The draft action plan for the Staff Engagement survey is attached as **Appendix 1.**

4. This has been shared with the Leadership Team, members of the Employee Forum and Employee Side Liaison Panel.
5. There are links which show how several of the outcomes will be picked up through the delivery of the People Strategy – these have been highlighted using our Tree design. Some of the issues raised have already been looked at and actions have been taken to support the implementation or delivery of the outcome.
6. The action plan will also be shared with all staff, ensuring those at the operational depots are also made fully aware of what is included. Further communication will follow to staff to keep them updated on developments and actions taken.

### **Recruitment Update**

7. The Local Government National Recruitment Campaign – Make a difference

Following on from the national campaign run between November 24 – January 25, the LGA contacted us about the way we had incorporated our current branding with the wider campaign in particular our vehicle adverts and our Employer of Choice video, and asked us to present along with one other Council as examples of best practice for their national feedback online meeting. The meeting was attended by over 150 colleagues from across the country, and there was good engagement and questions.

8. Recruitment process review

Our HR admin and Transformation teams continue to work towards refining our internal recruitment processes using 'Power Automate' and 'Lists', as well as what we can stop, start or do differently. Rhiannon is leading on this for HR Admin as a key part of her apprenticeship. We are hoping to be able to test the new functions and after making any adjustments, launch a pilot over the summer. The aim is to make the whole process more efficient and user-friendly for all involved. This is particularly important as the level of vacancies has risen steeply, partly due to the waste roll out changes.

### **Learning**

9. Learning Management System

Saskia is working on adding more optional eLearning modules which can be accessed by all staff, there are now 20 modules available, as detailed below. This includes 8 'Embracing change' modules, which will be part of a blended learning approach to change management,

with in person sessions planned for later in the year. The modules are:

[Stepping Up To Leadership](#)

[Developing Your Leadership Style](#)

[Understanding Your New Team and Their Workload](#)

[Handling Interruptions and Distractions For Managers](#)

[Delivering Professional Presentations](#)

[Climate Change](#)

[Sexual Harassment](#)

[Skills For Leadership](#)

[Understanding Anxiety](#)

[Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation](#)

[Social Media](#)

[Mental Wellbeing at Work](#)

[Embracing Change: 8. Managing Stress Through Change](#)

[Embracing Change: 7. Look After Yourself](#)

[Embracing Change: 6. The Power of Support](#)

[Embracing Change: 5. Taking Control](#)

[Embracing Change: 4. Managing Our Thoughts And Feelings Around Change](#)

[Embracing Change: 3. Reframing Change](#)

[Embracing Change: 2. Reactions to Change](#)

[Embracing Change: 1. Change - What Are We Afraid Of?](#)

## 10. Learning at Work Week

We used learning at work week (12<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> May) to launch the People Strategy. This involved Kate, Zoe and our new recruits Kirsty Farmer (Learning Coordinator, internal promotion) and Becky Rocha (Organisational Development Facilitator), running roadshows across all our main sites including 6am starts at each depot to ensure we were able to engage with all colleagues. We ran early morning sessions on 'Handling Aggression' and 'Inclusive Language' for the whole of the operational Waste Service and had lots of interesting and insightful conversations with operational staff in Grounds and Streetscene as well as plenty of colleagues in our offices and online. We had a guest speaker presenting on 'Crafting Connections' and an online session gave an overview of the people strategy. We asked how colleagues want to grow and connect and asked for feedback on our proposed behaviours framework. We also had a fun picnic with games on the lawn at Appletree Court. We're reflecting on all the feedback we heard and using it to shape what we do next. This is just the beginning of our journey to implement the people strategy. Our first step will be to return to the depots in the next few weeks, joining ICT, HR and Payroll colleagues. The large 'tree' was a good way to promote the week, and it is now up in the 'Comms' corridor with A3 questions sheets.

## 11. Other learning updates

Kirsty is developing a 'learning hub' on SharePoint, which aims to bring together all learning opportunities in one place. It already has a wealth of information including an array of free learning opportunities. Additionally, we have a new email address for all things learning [learning@nfdc.gov.uk](mailto:learning@nfdc.gov.uk). Now that we have a learning team, this will ensure that all related matters are picked up and actioned efficiently.

### **Management Development Programme**

12. Cohort 3 has now started and will run from April to July. Once this has completed we will take time to review our Management Development offering to staff.

### **HR Service Review 2024/5**

13. The HR service have produced a review of their work for 2024/5. This is attached as **Appendix 2**.
14. Partly this was in response to comments made in the Staff Survey where there was a feeling from some staff in our corporate services that they didn't see how their roles contributed to the corporate plan.

### **LGBT+ Employee Network**

15. The LGBT+ Network continue to meet regularly on a monthly basis, hosting drop ins for staff to grow their network and support 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. The last meeting was held recently on 14 May 2025.
16. The Network contributes directly to the EDI group providing valuable support in this area, as well as continuing to plan how to expand and raise awareness for both groups across the Council.

### **EDI Group**

17. 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 on how best to support colleagues observing religious practice which was published in early 2025. This went alongside the introduction of our 'Away Space' which provides a private and neutral setting to those requiring a designated area for breastfeeding mothers or to pray. Both were rolled out and communicated to all

staff with separate pages available for more information on ForestNet. The feedback from these two initiatives has been very positive.

The next meeting is scheduled for Spring/early Summer 2025 and will focus on reviewing the behaviours framework and equality impact assessment (as part of the People Strategy), the use of pronouns in staff email footers, translation services available at NFDC and action plans for the staff survey results; particularly how these link to the Councils Corporate Equality Objectives.

### **Disability Confident Scheme**

18. We have renewed our registration, and we have received our certificate which confirms that we are remaining at level 2 within the scheme and this is valid for another three years.
19. This entitles us to continue using the Disability Confident logo on our job adverts and associated documents.

### **Corporate Employee Events**

20. In July we are looking forward to having a staff event. As in previous years we are aiming to recognise those that have successfully completed long term training and those that have submitted a corporate suggestion through the staff suggestion scheme.
21. We are also looking to recognise any member of staff who could be nominated for a special recognition award. Details of this have been shared with the Leadership Team and we already have a number of people that have been nominated for this.

### **Brief Bites**

22. We continue to offer the Brief Bite Training to our managers. So far this year we have run sessions on Bullying and Harassment and Sickness Absence.
23. Staff are able to book themselves onto these sessions using the Learning Management System.

### **Case Manager**

24. We have developed a Case Manager system using Power BI to track our reactive cases. This will enable us to have up to date information readily available when we have our monthly catch ups with senior managers about issues within their own teams.

25. It also enables us to have a corporate overview of cases at any point in time.

### **LGPS Annual Return**

26. We have completed the annual returns for both the NPA and NFDC.

27. The NPA return has already been agreed with one point of clarity required. We are waiting for the outcome of the NFDC return.

### **Corporate plan priorities**

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

### **Options appraisal**

29. Not Applicable.

### **Consultation undertaken**

30. Not Applicable

### **Financial and resource implications**

31. None.

### **Legal implications**

32. None.

### **Risk assessment**

33. There are no risks associated with the recommendation.

### **Environmental / Climate and nature implications**

34. None.

### **Equalities implications**

35. None arising from the recommendations.

### **Crime and disorder implications**

36. None.

## **Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications**

37. None.

### **Appendices**

### **Background Papers:**

Appendix 1 - Staff Survey Action Plan      None

Appendix 2 - HR Service Review 24-25