

TITLE OF REPORT: Workforce Wellbeing Strategy

REPORT OF: Mike Barker, Strategic Director, Corporate Services&Governance

Purpose of the Report

1. To agree a Workforce Wellbeing Strategy for approval by the Council as set out at Appendix 2 to this report.

Background

2. The Council does not have a workforce wellbeing strategy in place to address how the Council will support the health and wellbeing of its workforce. The strategy is aimed at improving the employee's experience at work through the implementation of activities, ways of working etc. that can enable good health and wellbeing. Wellbeing is a key factor in employee engagement and can impact negatively without a strategy setting out how we will be different and what's important. A workforce who feels that their health and wellbeing is important will impact on the services the Council delivers and the outcomes we want for each other and the residents of Gateshead.
3. The Strategy sets out our vision to create a workforce that is healthy, content, resilient and productive, through the right environment and behaviours, so that individual and organisational wellbeing is embedded in everything we do.
4. The Strategy also supports the Council's commitment to being a Better Health at Work Award employer. The Council have committed to achieving a Bronze status award in 2025.

Proposal

5. This strategy sets out the Council's commitment to being an employer of choice, who cares about employee health and wellbeing and recognises the role wellbeing can play in terms of attracting, engaging, motivating and retaining a healthy workforce and improving performance, productivity and success.

6. It has been designed to ensure that there is a consistent approach across the Council to all areas of wellbeing activity, with a commitment to making wellbeing a shared responsibility and priority.
7. The strategy supports our corporate objectives in relation to Thrive as set out in the Corporate Plan, Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Workforce Strategy.
8. A communication plan will be developed to ensure that all managers and employees are aware of the strategy.
9. The strategy will be underpinned by a delivery plan which will focus on key actions to ensure we meet our commitments.
10. The delivery plan will be developed if the strategy is approved.
11. The strategy and activity to deliver the commitments within it will be included within Corporate Induction.

Recommendations

12. It is recommended that the Workforce Wellbeing Strategy is agreed by Cabinet and referred to the Council for approval at its meeting on 21 November 2024. For the following reason:
 - (i) To ensure that the Council has an appropriate Strategy in place within its human resources framework.

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APPENDIX 1

Policy Context

1. The proposed Workforce Wellbeing Strategy updates the HR framework to enable the Council to manage Wellbeing matters in support of the objectives of the Corporate Plan.

Background

2. The Council has not had a workforce wellbeing strategy in place to address how the Council will approach wellbeing as an organisation to support employees experience good health and wellbeing at work which enables them to deliver great outcomes for each other and the residents of Gateshead.
3. The Strategy sets out our vision to create a workforce that is healthy, content, resilient and productive, through the right environment and behaviours, so that individual and organisational wellbeing is embedded in everything we do.

Consultation

4. The views of the portfolio holder have been sought in drafting this report. The Council's recognised non-teaching Trade Unions (UNISON, Unite and GMB) have also been consulted and the revised policy incorporates some of their proposed amendments.
5. Consultation has also taken place with the following:
 - Public Health
 - Health Advocates
 - CSC Wellbeing Group
 - Human Resources, Occupational Health, Health and Safety and Workforce Development Team
 - Employee Equalities Network

Alternative Options

6. No alternative options have been proposed other than those presented for Cabinet consideration.

Implications of Recommended Option

7. **Resources:**

- a) **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director Resources & Digital confirms that there are no direct financial implications arising from this report.
 - b) **Human Resources Implications** – The Strategy will form part of the Council’s overall human resources policy framework, through which it aims to be an exemplary employer.
 - c) **Property Implications** - there are no property implications arising from the recommendations within this report.
8. **Risk Management Implication** - The Strategy as recommended in the report is not considered to introduce any new risk.
9. **Equality and Diversity Implications** - An Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken to analyse the impact of the proposed Strategy in relation to the nine protected characteristics. Overall, the Strategy will have a positive impact for employees with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, and those beyond this.
10. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – There are no crime and disorder implications.
11. **Health Implications** - The strategy will have a positive impact by supporting employees’ wellbeing.
12. **Climate Emergency and Sustainability Implications** - There are no climate and sustainability implications.
13. **Human Rights Implications** - There are no human rights implications.
14. **Ward Implications** - There are no ward implications.
15. **Background Information:**