

**TITLE OF REPORT:** Case Study – the Workforce Plan  
**REPORT OF:** Mike Barker, Acting Chief Executive

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### **Summary**

The purpose of this report is to seek Committee's views on the progress being made on implementation of the Workforce Plan.

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### **Background**

1. The Council's Workforce Strategy was approved by Council on 16 July 2015. The Workforce Plan that sits behind the Strategy was approved by Cabinet on 6 October 2015 and was refreshed over the summer to reflect the work that had already been undertaken and to ensure it continued to be relevant and appropriate.
2. The Workforce Strategy is based on a number of themes – skills and behaviours, recruitment and retention, pay, reward and recognition, wellbeing and engagement and performance and change. There is a detailed delivery plan for each of the themes within the Workforce Plan. This is to ensure that the right things are put in place, in the right order and that effort is prioritised into activities that will make the most difference.
3. To develop the plan, work was carried out to identify the Council's existing skill base and to assess need going forward. This involved all services completing a questionnaire to provide a council-wide picture of capability, gaps and an assessment of future need.
4. That assessment was critical in shaping the detail and timeframes for the plan as it helped to clarify what the priorities are across services as well as corporately. It also helped to ensure that Human Resources/ Workforce Development and other in-house resources could be focussed on activities where there is greatest need. The plan has also been informed by the results of the last two employee surveys.
5. The aim of the plan over the coming years is to ensure we have a workforce that can support delivery of the sustained transformation necessary to achieve the services our residents want and need – services that are cheaper, fit for purpose, flexible and customer focussed – ultimately a workforce that can deliver on the Council Plan and Vision 2030.
6. The plan, attached as Appendix 1, sets out the projected activity, when and how it will be delivered, who it is targeted at and the resources required to deliver it under each of the five themes. It will be continually developed in order to respond to the future direction and shape of Council groups and services as appropriate.

### **Activity to Date (by theme)**

#### **Skills and Behaviours**

7. All members of the Leadership Team have completed a 360 degree appraisal to identify strengths and areas for development. They have all received their own

- appraisal report and individual feedback sessions have taken place with an external consultant to discuss and interpret appraisal outcomes. Individual development plans will be produced by all members of the Leadership Team in discussion with their line managers and will be worked to over the next 12 months.
8. The external consultant led a workshop with the team on 8 September to collectively identify emerging themes across the groups which might usefully be addressed by the Council as a whole.
  9. A Learning and Development framework has been developed on the Intranet as a one-stop shop for managers and employees to access information on courses and other resources to support their development. A range of refresher training sessions have been developed for managers as part of the Learning and Development Framework. These sessions will be mandatory for managers to attend and will equip them with skills to deal with HR issues such as recruitment and selection, dealing with capability and competency issues, undertaking an investigation and managing sickness absence. Inconsistent and unfair management has been a theme in the last two employee surveys.
  10. We have developed a number of schemes, tools and guidance to support senior managers' ongoing development. These include coaching opportunities, a mentoring scheme and revised guidance on the use of action learning sets.
  11. Opportunities have been created for employees at all levels to learn and develop through participation in projects in the four work streams of the change programme.
  12. Media training workshops have been provided for senior offices who may be required, at times, to appear before the media on behalf of the Council.
  13. Weekly Leadership Team meetings have been initiated enabling the timely sharing of information and learning.
  14. A programme of in-house workshops has been delivered to develop the skills of managers. We have also provided opportunities for development through fully funded accredited distance learning programmes enabling first line and middle managers to achieve a recognised management qualification.
  15. Over 100 of our managers have also acquired development opportunities through the Public Service Academy short courses and master classes programme.
  16. We continue to provide a range of e-learning modules on Knowledge Net to support the development of management skills in areas such as project management, time management, coaching, mentoring, managing change, managing people and performance etc.
  17. We continue to deliver a wide programme of training throughout the Council to address the learning and development needs of our employees. In the last year 12,500 learning and development opportunities were accessed by employees attending training courses.
  18. In addition, over 3,500 learning opportunities were accessed via e-learning.
  19. We continue to promote and enlist employees onto our courses through our learning and development directories (available on the Intranet), promotional flyers, Council Info, target e-mails and the Itrent online booking system.

### **Recruitment and Retention**

20. A Talent Management and Succession Planning framework has been developed. This will be launched in October and will be linked to the current Appraisal and Development process.
21. The Council's approach to recruitment and retention allowances has been reviewed and reflected in the current corporate Pay Policy.

22. The Council's Recruitment Policy is being revised to ensure the appropriate and timely recruitment of staff.

### **Pay, Reward and Recognition**

23. A revised grading structure was implemented from 1 April 2016 to address the implementation of the National Living Wage (NLW), and move further towards the UK Living Wage.
24. A review of terms and conditions is ongoing to ensure our approach is fair but also in keeping with what is happening elsewhere in the public sector and ensuring we are competitive in the market.
25. Cabinet approval will be sought in October in relation to:
- Removal of essential car user status from all employees from February 2017 with the exception of children's social workers and domiciliary care evening workers.
  - Removing the protected working week of 35 hours 50 minutes and moving all employees onto a 37 hour or pro rata working week from February 2017.
  - Reducing the current pay protection period of 4 years to 2 years from 1 January 2017 and to 1 year from 1 January 2018
26. Further consideration will be given to the removal of essential car user status for children's social workers and domiciliary care evening workers with a view to giving notice to remove this allowance in its entirety by April 2017.
27. Negotiations with the trade unions in relation to the removal or reduction of premium rates of pay are ongoing. The trade unions are resistant to a blanket approach but do support operational changes that will remove or reduce the reliance on premium rates of pay. They may also be open to reviewing terms and conditions where this would secure or retain business or would make a service more competitive. They will, however, only commence negotiations if the Council guarantees that the affected services will remain in-house and that there will be no compulsory redundancies.
28. Service directors have been asked to provide detailed business cases outlining the terms and conditions which would support them in becoming more sustainable and competitive within their proposed future delivery models. Once developed legal advice will be sought relating to these changes to identify potential equal pay risks and whether these can be mitigated.
29. Work is ongoing to broaden the range of employee benefits available including implementation of further salary sacrifice schemes for GO leisure membership and a car leasing scheme; Club Nissan giving employees up to 24% discount off new Nissan cars and the introduction of the Civic Service Sports College (GSSC) Staff Offers Scheme where employees can access a range of discount offers for leisure and sport activities, shopping and tourist attractions.
30. An employee benefits market place event took place in September 2016 which promoted the full range of employee benefits available.
31. An Employee Recognition Framework to recognise and celebrate the often outstanding work of our employees is under development.

### **Wellbeing and Engagement**

32. The 2016 employee survey has taken place. The turnout was slightly increased from last year with 41% of the workforce completing the survey. An initial analysis has highlighted some positive trends and some areas that require further

improvement. Service directors have received the results relevant to their service areas and they and their managers are now working on action plans to positively engage employees and address areas of concern.

33. A Council-wide employee forum will be launched in the autumn of 2016 to further improve employee communication and engagement.
34. The summer conference was held on 29 June 2016 with a focus on the change programme in order to increase senior managers' buy-in to change and facilitate a greater knowledge of and contribution to the change programme.
35. A range of courses have been delivered across the Council to ensure that the prioritised health and safety training needs of employees are met.
36. We have delivered a series of stress management courses for managers and stress buster sessions for employees to promote awareness of stress and how to deal with it.
37. We published a Stress Toolkit on the Intranet as a valuable information resource to provide managers and employees with guidance on how to deal with stress and promote wellbeing.
38. Courses were also provided for managers on managing and supporting employees with mental health issues and on managing employees' health and wellbeing.
39. We have developed a network of health advocates to promote health and wellbeing initiatives across the Council and delivered a range of information and briefing sessions to address issues around healthy eating, stress, smoking, drug and alcohol; misuse and physical activity.
40. We have developed a pool of Workplace Contacts to act as a point of contact for any employees suffering from a mental health problem affecting their work or anyone who feels that they are a victim of bullying and harassment in the workplace.
41. We will shortly reintroduce, on a trial basis, the provision of holistic therapies including Swedish massage, sports massage, reflexology and Indian head massage as part of the wellbeing at work agenda.
42. The Council's lead counsellor, Danny Halpin provided four sessions of mindfulness training to reinforce support that had been received by employees through the counselling service.

### **Performance and Change**

43. Work has been undertaken to review the Appraisal and Development process to include a performance management element. The recent employee survey reinforced the need for stronger performance management across the Council. The revised scheme has been presented to Leadership Team and will now be discussed with trade unions with a view to implementation as soon as possible. I-trent has been developed with the functionality to record and report on the completion rates of Appraisal and Development sessions.
44. The Change Team continues to promote and support change initiatives across the Council.

### **Key Challenges to Delivery of Outcomes**

45. The most significant challenge is progressing negotiations in relation to changes to terms and conditions. In some services sustainability of new delivery models without a change to terms and conditions may not be viable. It is difficult however, to make progress with proposals that will inevitably see the earnings of lower paid

workers reduced. An addition challenge is developing options for changing terms and conditions that limit any potential for equal pay claims.

46. The process of embedding an effective performance management culture Council-wide in order to deliver on objectives provides a range of challenges around ensuring consistency alongside flexibility to empower managers to manage.
47. How we capture the workforce requirements across other groups, services and work streams as a result of change needs to be clearly identified and those requirements effectively reflected in the plan.

## **Next Steps/Benefits**

### **Skills and Behaviours**

48. Having developed and worked upon their personal development plans, the Leadership Team will complete a follow up 360 degree appraisal in the autumn of 2017. The results should demonstrate an improvement in leadership skills and identify areas of focus for the following year to ensure the team continues to develop to meet the Council's diverse and changing needs.
49. The Learning and Development Framework ensures that all development opportunities and resources are available in one place and are easy to access. We will monitor the number of employees attending courses as one means of determining the effectiveness of the framework.
50. We will utilise course feedback to continually develop our courses to ensure they are of maximum benefit.
51. The effectiveness of our learning and development resources will also be monitored through the employee survey question 'I am able to access the right learning and development opportunities when I need them' ~ (57% agreed in the 2016 survey).
52. Specific areas of learning and development will be monitored to continually assess effectiveness including:
  - Health and safety training – accidents/incidents statistics should reflect a reduction.
  - ICT training – numbers of security breaches should fall.
  - Training of managers in relation to HR processes – sickness absence should fall, investigations should be progressed more rapidly and there should be fewer grievances etc.
53. We will monitor the use of coaching and mentoring schemes alongside the employee survey question 'There are opportunities to develop my career at the Council' (37% agreed in the 2016 survey).

### **Recruitment and Retention**

54. Employee turnover rates and information received from exit interviews will be continually analysed and themes will be addressed as they emerge.
55. We will monitor the effectiveness of the new talent management and succession planning framework to ensure that employees are being supported to develop into higher level roles.

### **Pay, Reward and Recognition**

56. The use of the employee benefits scheme (including salary sacrifice schemes) will be reviewed and feedback from employees sought in order to continually improve the benefits available.

## **Wellbeing and Engagement**

57. Action plans developed to address issues from the 2016 employee survey will be analysed to identify and address recurring themes.
58. We will monitor sickness absence levels due to stress alongside the employee survey question “Stress at work is affecting my home life” (24% agreed in the 2016 survey) with a view to seeing a reduction due to the improved stress toolkit and accessibility of materials.

## **Performance and Change**

59. We expect to see an increase in the number of people who have received an Employee Performance and Development Review through monitoring completion rates through iTrent and next year’s employee survey question, “have you had an A&D in the last 6 months” (53% said they had in the 2016 survey).
60. Following the introduction of the revised learning and development framework and the new Employee Performance and Development Review we expect to see poor performance being effectively managed and an increase in employees receiving constructive feedback from their manager. We will monitor the employee survey questions: “Poor performance is effectively addressed in my team” (45% agreed in the 2016 survey) and “I receive useful and constructive feedback from my manager” (69% agreed in the 2016 survey).
61. The workforce plan will be reviewed annually in order to respond to the changing landscape of the Council and meet the goals and objectives as set out in the Workforce Strategy.

## **Recommendations**

The OSC is asked to

- (a) Give its views on the initial progress made in implementing actions from the Workforce Plan and its effectiveness in delivering the aims of the Workforce Strategy.
- (b) Consider further updates on progress on an annual basis.

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