

CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL PEOPLE STRATEGY

To: **Staffing and Appeals Committee**

Date: **28th November 2019**

From: **Martin Cox, HR Director**

Purpose: **To provide Committee with an update on progress with the People Strategy action plan.**

Recommendations: **The Committee is asked to take note of the information contained in the report.**

<i>Officer contact:</i>	<i>Member contact</i>
Name: Martin Cox	Name: Councillor Joshua Schumann
Post: HR Director	Portfolio: Chairman of the Staffing and Appeals Committee
e-mail: mcox@northamptonshire.gov.uk	e-mail: Joshua.Schumann@hotmail.co.uk
Tel: 07921 092743	Tel: 01223 706398

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The People Strategy was approved by Full Council in May 2019. Since this time, significant progress has been made to develop and implement the aspirations outlined in the strategy, starting with the establishment of an officer led governance board to lead and monitor people strategy related actions. The monthly People Strategy Implementation Board (PSIB) is chaired by Sue Grace, Director of Corporate and Customer Services and attended by Directors and Assistant Directors from across the Council.
- 1.2 An action plan has been drafted and this has been merged with the already existing Gender Pay Gap, and employee engagement action plans to ensure a coherent, joined up approach to all people and workforce related activities. The actions will continue to be shaped with input planned from employees later this year.
- 1.3 A series of project teams have been set up to lead on the actions. Despite it being the start of the journey towards the aims of the People Strategy, the positive impact of this work is already evident. The good attendance at focus groups and enthusiasm from employees to engage in changes that have a real impact across the Council is a great sign that we are on track to achieve the 2021 workforce described in the People Strategy. Progress to date is summarised below under the five strategy themes of:
- Skills Development and Behaviours
 - Wellbeing
 - Resourcing
 - Employee Engagement
 - Reward and Recognition

2.0 SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND BEHAVIOURS

- 2.1 A priority for this theme is the development of a new appraisal process for Cambridgeshire. This piece of work is being developed alongside Peterborough City Council to implement an overarching performance management framework in place for April 2020. Feedback from employee focus groups has had a direct influence over the proposed new model which will focus much more on robust and regular conversations, rather than a reliance on a burdensome annual process.
- 2.2 A new behaviours framework is being developed, with senior managers having already been involved to help shape this. A set of new behaviours will be launched in April 2020 and will be fully integrated into the new performance management framework as well as other people related processes and policies such as recruitment and induction.
- 2.3 There are currently 55 employees undertaking an apprenticeship qualification in a variety of professions and across a wide range of apprenticeship levels. A lot of effort has been made to encourage our employees to develop themselves through apprenticeships, and whenever possible we reiterate that apprenticeships are available for all employees, regardless of age. It is great to be able to report that our current apprentices range in age between 18 and 57.
- 2.4 A new agile working policy has been launched that will significantly change the way in which we all work. The move to a Hub and Spoke model will support this new way of working, but in the meantime training is being

developed and teams are already starting to work in a more agile and flexible way.

3.0 WELLBEING

- 3.1 A thorough review of the Respect at Work Policy has taken place to assess its impact across the Council since it was introduced in 2017. Two focus groups were held with attendees from across the organisation. As a result of feedback received we are increasing the communications about the policy, and developing an e-learning module on Respect at Work and plan to make this mandatory training for all employees. The role of the respect at work contacts has been a particular success of the new approach, so the policy is being updated with case-studies to show how these roles support the process.
- 3.2 All Executive and Service Directors as well as the Chief Executive have recently attended comprehensive mental health awareness training. Training is now being rolled out to all Heads of Service across the Council to cover both awareness and the management of mental health and general employee wellbeing.
- 3.3 LGSS have recently agreed a contract with a financial wellbeing provider and will soon be able to offer salary-linked loans and savings accounts, as well as a wide range of financial education and support to employees.
- 3.4 An audit of current wellbeing initiatives has taken place and this has identified areas for improvements, and a need for a dedicated space on the intranet to publicise and promote wellbeing initiatives. It is expected that this site will be live within the next month.

4.0 RESOURCING

- 4.1 A new work experience and intern policy has been developed and piloted and will be shortly launched across the Council. Through the piloting of this policy, we have started to build our relationships with local education establishments and hope that by offering work experience and internship opportunities we can raise the profile of careers in local government to young people, and proactively promote careers and opportunities in areas where we have skills shortages.
- 4.2 One of the big changes proposed through our People Strategy is encouraging managers to think differently when recruiting to roles. Two recent recruitment campaigns have demonstrated significant success with this:
 - The See the Difference campaign aimed to recruit 40 permanent employees to the re-ablement team – a team that had been struggling to recruit due to local and national skills shortages. Face-to-face interviews with existing re-ablement workers took place to understand their motivation, route into the industry and view of their role. This led to changes in the way and places advertised, and the campaign resulted in 52 employees being employed. The Council received two gold accolades at the Chartered Institute of Public Relations Pride Awards 2019 for this work.
 - The 'We Love Social Work' launched in adult social care this year used social media to appeal to potential candidates and again changed the

focus of the advertising campaign to appeal to the motivations of potential candidates. By way of illustration, 48 applications for social worker roles were received in 2018, compared to 262 applications to date in 2019, taking adult social worker vacancies down from 33 in December 2018, to 13 in October 2019. In addition, the number of agency workers in this area has reduced from 28 to 16.

- 4.3 The resourcing strand of the people strategy also aims to improve our appeal as an employer in the local and national employment market. In order for us to promote ourselves as a good employer, we have developed a dedicated recruitment page that has recently gone live. This will give potential applicants direct access to live vacancies from our internet site, and positively sells the benefits of working for Cambridgeshire.
- 4.4 Work has taken place with the Equality and Diversity Network and Action Group to develop a policy statement for diversity in employment. This statement summarises our commitment to providing equal opportunities for all, and details how we put our commitment into practice. This, alongside our Disability Confident national status will be promoted on the new recruitment page of the internet.

5.0 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

- 5.1 As demonstrated above, the work underway has already involved a number of focus groups and significant engagement with employees. This has been incredibly welcomed by employees, and the enthusiasm and positivity demonstrated during these sessions has been really pleasing. Two workshops have been booked for December to gain employee input into the People Plan, and widespread communications will promote the launch of the strategy and plan.
- 5.2 The manager's newsletter, InVision, is now sent to over 160 managers every month. This gives senior managers across the organisation a 'helicopter view' of corporate priorities, initiatives and events. It has also helped encourage participation in areas such as mandatory cyber-security training, enrolment in the pension scheme and awareness of the EU Settlement Scheme.
- 5.3 The weekly staff newsletter, Friday Focus, is now over a year old is proving to be a key communications channel with over 40% of staff interacting with it on a weekly basis. Analysis is showing that staff are engaging with a wide range of issues and information, such as Cambs2020 updates and our 'We Love Social Workers' campaign. Particularly high engagement has been received with features on data security and recycling.
- 5.4 In early 2020 we are rolling out Office365, and with it Microsoft Teams and Yammer. We are also rebuilding our staff intranet, Camweb, on an entirely new platform. Both pieces of work will provide us with new two-way communications and collaboration platforms, making it easier for staff to interact with us and each other.
- 5.5 Extensive engagement on the Cambs2020 project has started and this will continue until all moves have taken place.
- 5.6 We pride ourselves on our good working relationships with trade unions. In addition to the monthly Corporate Joint Panel meeting, we engage trade

unions in all people related activity and have had trade union attendance at all of the recent focus groups.

6.0 REWARD AND RECOGNITION

- 6.1 The appraisal review will involve developing a new pay mechanism to progress employees through the Cambridgeshire pay scales, whilst retaining the performance related element of progression. Alongside this, consideration of additional non-consolidated and non-financial rewards will be developed, and existing mechanisms more positively promoted.
- 6.2 Work continues towards reducing our gender pay gap, starting with a full review of the actions and themes identified in the research presented to Committee last year. A separate paper outlining progress towards this is being presented.
- 6.3 A relaunch of our employee discount scheme has taken place. This scheme offers discount on a large range of shopping and restaurant establishments as well as competitively priced health care and lease cars. The scheme has been well received by employees.

7.0 NEXT STEPS

- 7.1 Priorities for the next six months will see the launch of the new performance appraisal scheme alongside the new behaviours framework. There is a review of our change management processes planned to ensure that we deal with change in a sensitive and streamlined way, and wide scale communications will take place to ensure employees know about our People Strategy, and that they are engaged in helping to develop, and deliver, the actions and aspirations outlined within it.

8.0 SUMMARY

- 8.1 Whilst only being six months into our journey towards the aspirations of the People Strategy, it is pleasing to be able to demonstrate that significant progress is already being made.
- 8.2 The next year brings more challenges for our people including a greater move to agile working and the forthcoming move to a hub and spoke location model. However, by continuing to ensure that our people activity is coordinated and joined up, our workforce is engaged, and employee wellbeing remains a priority throughout this period, our people will be moving in the direction aligned to the priorities of our Council.

Source Documents	Location
Council – 14 May 2019	https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccclive/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/918/Committee/20/Default.aspx