

Highways and Transport Resource Planning Update

To: Highways and Transport Committee

Meeting Date: 07 March 2023

From: Executive Director Place and Sustainability.

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: No

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Outcome: To provide committee with an update on resource planning across the Highways and Transport services.

Recommendation: a) to note the ongoing pressures and challenges; and
b) note progress since this was reported to committee in March 2022

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1. Background

- 1.1 A comprehensive resource review and update was presented to Committee on 8th March 2022. This report outlined the pressures and challenges being faced within services across Highways and Transport due to sector wide skill shortages in the relevant disciplines. This report highlighted a reliance on interim appointments particularly within the Project Delivery service area.
- 1.2 The March 2022 committee report presented figures showing the need for 31 Interim appointments. This included the extension of contracts for 10 existing appointments and 21 new appointments.
- 1.3 Since that time work has continued with the support of the Human Resources and Communications teams to recruit permanent staff to reduce the reliance on interim resources, build resilience across the services and review team structures.

2. Main Issues

- 2.1 The skills shortage reported in the previous report continues to affect the Highways and Transport sectors and recruitment challenges continue to affect all H&T services as well as contractors and consultants at a national level.
- 2.2 The challenges at a national scale continue to be influenced by factors including Brexit, and a significant number of large-scale infrastructure projects, including those promoted by Government including HS2, which have been absorbing talent and creating increased pressures within the industry. Although there are challenges across the sector, there is significant pressure in qualified civil engineers, and staff associated with project management, contract management, commercial management and road safety.
- 2.3 The current structures within Highway and Transport services account for 331 people. The actual number of vacancies is fluid as people join and leave the authority, but at the point of writing the total vacancies represent c20% (including covered and uncovered posts), representing a c5% reduction in vacancies since the March 2022 report. Vacancies are as follows:
 - Project Delivery – total vacancies 25
 - Transport Strategy and Network Management - 30
 - Highway Maintenance - 13
- 2.4 Interim and consultant staff covering key vacancies have enabled the county council to secure people with the appropriate skills and experience to facilitate the ongoing delivery of significant capital and revenue programmes of work. Interim appointments also allow a flexibility which enables services to manage longer term funding uncertainties and time limited projects. However, the focus for Project Delivery, Highway Maintenance and Transport Strategy and Network Management has been to address the balance of resources in favour of more permanent appointments.
- 2.5 The current position shows a reduction in the number of interims appointed from the 31 reported in March 2022, with 20 currently (c 6% total H&T Structure/ 30% of total

vacancies) in post as follows (details presented in Appendix 1):

- Project Delivery (PD) – 11 Interims covering substantive positions
- Transport Strategy and Network Management (TS&NM) – 7 Interims covering substantive posts
- Highway Maintenance (HM) – 2 Interims covering substantive posts

- 2.6 In addition to this, 6 consultants are currently engaged providing additional capacity and specialist support in delivering commercial resilience/assurance and road safety auditing (Appendix 1). The Road Safety Auditors have been secured to provide additional capacity in dealing with a large demand in this area and the need for them is reviewed regularly with the intention that they are released as soon as practical. In relation to the Commercial resilience/assurance resource proposals are being developed alongside a new progression scheme for the permanent recruitment of specialists in this area.
- 2.7 There have been a number of successful appointments to permanent roles including the appointment of the Assistant Director for Project Delivery, Mike Williams, who started with the authority in July, replacing Alex Deans, Interim Assistant Director. In addition to this and as a result of the recruitment drive several roles including a Group Manager for Complex Infrastructure, three design engineers and a programme manager will be starting with the authority in April

Benchmarking

- 2.8 The Human Resources team have undertaken a benchmarking exercise across both the public and private sectors for a range of engineering and commercial roles to better understand the remuneration packages offered across the sector. This has illustrated roles where we are offering comparative salary levels, however there are roles where this is less well aligned. H&T are continuing to work with Human Resources to identify opportunities to address these issues. This will include the further development of a recruitment strategy and the offer being made to new employees, looking at elements such as working patterns, training and development programmes and career progression.

Solutions

- 2.9 Work has continued to address these challenges including:
- Development of Apprenticeship Programme – creating a Level 3 Civil Engineering programme for a cohort of 8 to undertake both work and training in this area. This will form an essential element of breaking the long-term cycle of increasing demand for delivery and declining supply of people with appropriate skills and experience. Funding was approved through Full Council for the delivery of this programme and recruitment of apprentices will take place over the following months. It is intended that the programme will start in July/August with qualification training with the learning provider starting in September.
 - Further opportunities for the development of additional apprentice positions across H&T services will continue to be sought and established as appropriate. This will create a constant cycle of apprentice entry and progression.

- Enhancement and promotion of Apprenticeship and training and development opportunities internally to enable career progression and help retain people within the services.
- Development and successful launch of career progression schemes for Designers, Project Managers and Commercial Managers. This provides opportunities for existing people to see longer term career pathways and aid retention as well as being a recruitment tool which helps place people on a grade that reflects their level of skills, knowledge, experience. This has enabled the authority to retain our emerging talent and has attracted increasing interest in the positions. This has re-energised a career path for existing staff and attracted others. This also shows apprentices a route into the organisation after their apprenticeship.
- Promotion and encouragement of flexible working arrangements including working hours, days, part-time, term-time, nine-day fortnight and so on. This delivers greater inclusivity and enables people who require different working patterns due to personal circumstances and responsibilities, such as parents, carers, effectively removing barriers that may be preventing skilled and experienced people from applying for roles.
- Cambridgeshire County Council and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority have been successful in securing funding through Active Travel England to invest in the development of an active travel resource across the CPCA area. This will facilitate the establishment of the Cambridgeshire Centre of Excellence for Active Travel. We expect to create and recruit to several new posts to deliver the Councils priority for the development of an Active Travel Centre of Excellence.
- Enhanced recruitment campaigns. The service now has a live landing page/video/social media running recruitment for 16 posts in Project Delivery, developed with Communications and Human Resources. This is actively managed and updated to ensure it reflects the current situation. This will include an Apprenticeship programme at the point of recruitment.
- Vision Zero Partnership recruitment of Road Safety Manager and Vision Zero Partnership Manager working together with the Police and Crime Commissioner. Posts are being temporarily covered through interim support through safety experts Agilysys.
- Evergreen recruitment process - where roles continue to circulate in the recruitment market until they have been filled.
- Highway Maintenance Restructure, the consultation underway and will conclude on 20th March, implementation planned for early in the new financial year
- Establishment of Consents Team as outlined in the March 2022 report.
- Production of a learning and development matrix supported by the Learning and Development team within Human Resources, ensuring clarity around required training and further supporting and encouraging people to undertake training and development to progress within the organisation

- Regular evaluation of workloads and capacity to release Interim staff as soon as appropriate, recognising that for some areas or work and programmes there will be a need to operate a mixed economy workforce, bringing in consultant and interim workers and specialist support when required
- Working with partners across the supply chain, including Milestone, Atkins and WSP to identify future opportunities to share training and development opportunities across the organisations.

It is anticipated that the challenges in this area will continue for some time. It is therefore essential that we continue to support these activities to attract, develop and retain people with the skills and experience needed to deliver the extensive work programmes of the Highways and Transport services. The Director and Assistant Directors continue to work on the further development of these initiatives and interventions.

3. Alignment with corporate priorities

3.1 Environment and Sustainability

There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.2 Health and Care

There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.3 Places and Communities

There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.4 Children and Young People

Potential employment opportunities for young people through permanent recruitments and apprenticeship programme. The recruitment process for apprentices will ensure that children looked after, children leaving care and NEETS will be encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities.

3.5 Transport

The proactive work being done to attract and retain people within the Highways and Transport services will ensure an ongoing resilience and ability within services to deliver transport priorities

4. Significant Implications

4.1 Resource Implications

The intention is to recruit permanently into vacant positions across Highways and Transport services. It is recognised through the report that this is challenging within the current market and contingency arrangements will be put in place to manage delivery pressures through the engagement of interim staff and consultancy support where required. The costs associated with the engagement of interims is higher than permanent appointments and this has resource implications. However, interims do bring the benefit of providing a flexibility in capacity and specialism which will continue to support services moving forward. This will enable the management of risks associated with uncertainty around funding or project pipelines creating the ability to respond quickly to changing situations.

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

Recruitment will be undertaken aligned with the Council's recruitment policy. Appointment of interim workers and consultancy services will be undertaken compliant with rules and policy, and/or compliant with framework and contractual requirements.

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

There are no significant implications

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

Recruitment of permanent staff or interim workers will be compliant with Council policy. Interventions brought in to address resource issues have been designed to remove barriers for people wanting to enter the organisation, this includes building in a flexibility around working patterns to support people who may need alternatives to the traditional model.

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

The development of effective communication channels, including social media, are key to successful recruitment campaigns and on-going promotion of the services. Campaigns and communication materials will continue to be developed collaboratively with Communications and Human Resources.

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

N/A

4.7 Public Health Implications

N/A

4.8 Climate Change and Environment Implications on Priority Areas:

4.8.1 Implication 1: Energy efficient, low carbon buildings.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral

Explanation:

- 4.8.2 Implication 2: Low carbon transport.
Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral
Explanation:
- 4.8.3 Implication 3: Green spaces, peatland, afforestation, habitats and land management.
Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral
Explanation:
- 4.8.4 Implication 4: Waste Management and Tackling Plastic Pollution.
Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral
Explanation:
- 4.8.5 Implication 5: Water use, availability and management:
Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral
Explanation:
- 4.8.6 Implication 6: Air Pollution.
Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral
Explanation:
- 4.8.7 Implication 7: Resilience of our services and infrastructure, and supporting vulnerable people to cope with climate change.
Positive/neutral/negative Status:
Explanation:

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? Yes
Name of Financial Officer: Sarah Heywood

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the Head of Procurement and Commercial? Yes or No
Name of Officer: Clare Ellis

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or Pathfinder Law? Yes
Name of Legal Officer: Linda Walker

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your EqIA Super User?
Yes
Name of Officer: Sue Procter

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?
Yes
Name of Officer: Sarah Silk

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes
Name of Officer: Sue Procter

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health?

Yes

Name of Officer: Iain Green

If a Key decision, have any Climate Change and Environment implications been cleared by the Climate Change Officer? n/a

:

5. Source documents guidance

5.1 Source documents

Report to Highways and Transport Committee 8th March 2022 – Highways and Transport Service Resource Update

5.2 Location

[Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\)](#)

Appendix 1