

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 20 NOVEMBER 2019

REPORT BY THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND  
ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2015 TO 2019 – END OF  
PERIOD REPORT ON KEY ACHIEVEMENTS MADE AND FUTURE  
DEVELOPMENTS/STRATEGY PLANNED

WARD(S) AFFECTED:           None

**Purpose/Summary of Report**

- To note the progress made on the council's Organisational Development (OD) Strategy 2015 to 2019 and the work underway to develop a new HR and OD Strategy and a staff transformation programme with an initial working title of 'East Herts Together – One Team Fit for the Future'.

<b>RECOMMENDATION FOR HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE</b>	
<b>That:</b>	
<b>(A)</b>	<b>To note the key progress made in delivering the council's Organisational Development Strategy 2015 to 2019</b>
<b>(B)</b>	<b>To note the planned works to be undertaken to develop a new HR and OD Strategy and staff transformation programme.</b>

## 1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Organisational Development Strategy 2015 to 2019 was approved by HR Committee in October 2015.
- 1.2 The OD Strategy outlined the council's framework for the delivery of people management over the four year period which ended in September 2019. The OD Strategy set out the council's approach to workforce development, recognising and articulating the essential requirements for ensuring that our workforce was appropriately trained and supported to deliver the range of services provided.
- 1.3 The Strategy was developed in consultation with the services across the council and with Unison (Trade Union) colleagues.
- 1.4 The Strategy had 6 key themes that were identified to enable the council to deliver the overarching Values expected of staff:
- **Here to help,**
  - **We work together** (to support each other) and
  - **We aim high** (to make a difference)

The themes set out were:

1. Supporting transformational change and innovation
  2. Sustaining and improving a skilled, flexible and motivated workforce
  3. Building strong leadership and management
  4. Planning for the future workforce and being an employer of choice
  5. Promoting positive performance
  6. Promoting equality and diversity
- 1.5 The Head of HR and OD began working for the council in early 2019 and commenced a review of policies and procedures identifying areas for development as previously reported (policy, practice and people management development). From

June 2019 the council recruited a new Chief Executive Officer who has also identified the need to review culture, people management practice, workforce development, staff practices to then set out a transformation programme to support future requirements. The programme will aim to ensure the council works together as one team and has the right focus on the core skills and competences required. The programme will support effective, efficient delivery of services to high standard and with a focus on achieving outcomes for our residents.

- 1.6 The Chief Executive has requested that before a HR led review was fully undertaken and then consulted upon/ implemented that a working group from Leadership Team should be created. The working group will review and analyse current council (staffing) culture to ensure full ownership of change/transformation programme which will then follow. The Leadership sub-group comprises of the Head of HR and OD, the Head of Shared Revenues and Benefits, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, the Head of Planning and Building Control and is also supported by the Chief Executive, plans will be developed here and reported back to the full Leadership team and will involve engagement with staff and key stakeholders. The group will be meeting to undertake a review of current culture and to determine the people culture required in order to more effectively support and deliver the emerging corporate plan that members are producing. The analysis will then set out where changes are required and the HR and OD strategy and transformation roadmap that needs to be developed/implemented to achieve this over the next 4 years. The work will include developing a set of staff and management competences and expected behaviours as previously highlighted.
- 1.7 A draft HR and OD strategy has been produced along with a road map which can then be developed to support the cultural, people management, (staff) performance, procedural, policy and workforce development identified by the Leadership sub group and agreed with stakeholders.

## **2.0 Review of Organisational Development (OD) Strategy 2015 to 2019**

The following sections will set out under each theme the key achievements/progress made during the four year period.

### **2.1 Theme 1 - Supporting Transformational Change and Innovation**

#### **2.1.1 Outcomes – What we plan(ned) to achieve**

*We will create a culture where we become even more responsive to our residents and customers, through being here to help. We will create more capacity through improving our productivity.*

#### **Actions - We will deliver this by:**

- Encouraging a culture of empowerment with delegated decision making and innovation to the most appropriate level
- Promoting a programme of learning and development to support transformational change, commercialisation and innovation
- Streamlining and automating processes for both the external and internal customer
- Ensuring our values and behaviours are embedded and at the heart of the way we operate
- Working with our current and future partners to improve how we deliver our services
- Becoming more business like in our approach.
- Knowing who our customer is and maximising the value of the work we do
- Giving back to our communities through volunteering and enhanced partnership working.

#### **2.1.2 Key Achievements Made:**

- LT restructure undertaken by previous Chief Executive to create more empowerment and autonomy for Heads of Service and creation of service manager roles at a senior level.

- ILM programme for managers, coaching and mentoring development for managers, bite size management development sessions on key people management areas e.g. recruitment, dealing with conflict etc.
- The council's E-learning platform was relaunched and a mandatory training programme was implemented.
- Digital East Herts Programme delivered across the council to make greater use of digital services and software and create efficiencies and savings. This has improved customer service especially in terms of greater level of online access, e-forms etc. HR have also been part of this with the development of MyView which provides staff and managers with a self-service portal into the HR system and has also made some HR processes more efficient – with some reduction in HR admin staffing achieved.
- Values and behaviours have been embedded into the PDR process. The staff recognition scheme is assessed based on demonstration of the council's values.
- There have been several examples of partnership working including the North Herts shared waste service, the Citizen Advice Bureau moving into Wallfields, HR's continued relationship with Stevenage Borough Council regarding the shared HR system, and joint procurement (e.g. the employee assistance programme was procured through the HCC framework agreement).
- Employee volunteering programme was launched which gives employees 1 paid day volunteering per year.

## **2.2 Theme 2 – Sustaining a Skilled, Flexible and Motivated Workforce**

### **2.2.1 Outcomes – What we plan(ned) to achieve**

*Our workforce will be trained, qualified and experienced, to deliver quality services which meet current and anticipated service needs.*

**Actions – The key areas we will focus on:**

- Reviewing and strengthening our 121 and Performance Development Review (PDR) process to ensure all employees have relevant performance development plans in place and an opportunity to access development opportunities
- Reviewing and improving our employee engagement, communication and reward/recognition arrangements including celebrating success
- Valuing, recognising and rewarding our workforce. Exploring how we can get more from our reward and benefit packages that give choice to our workforce and support work life balance
- Strengthening the connection between training needs identified through PDRs and training programmes and outcomes
- Developing a culture of lifelong learning with an emphasis on work based learning
- Investing in ourselves through a wide range of learning tools - access to online learning resources including e-learning, webinars and a range of books
- Ensuring that the learning and development resources that we use are consistent, high quality, transferable and meet the future needs of the organisation
- Working closely with our partners to maximise opportunities for shared learning and development
- Exploring further new ways of working and learning, using technology to ensure flexible and effective practices
- Developing talent for the future through “Growing Our Own”
- Supporting and enabling secondments, job shadowing and networking opportunities
- Cross service working to increase knowledge of what others do, working better together and improving our services

### **2.1.2 Key Achievements Made**

- The PDR process and forms have been revised and simplified. A section on career aspirations has been added to the form to aid succession planning. Moved to one PDR meeting per year with regular 1-1s (previously also had mid-year review). HR Officers have been working with service managers regarding Personal Development Plans for employees exceeding expectations in their PDR. This group have been identified as the council's 'talent pool' and are being developed to aid succession planning.
- The staff recognition scheme was launched which is assessed based on demonstration of the council's values. The staff survey was carried out in 2017 and the 'You said, We did' project regularly informed staff what actions had been taken based on the results of the staff survey. The staff suggestion scheme was launched and then implemented through the staff forum. Heads of Service give face-to-face feedback briefings from LT to staff in their service areas. Staff achievements and lessons learnt are a standing agenda item at the staff forum to both celebrate and recognise success as well as sharing best practice across the council.
- MyRewards was introduced which gives employees discounts at high street retailers. The wellbeing programme was launched which includes sessions on mindfulness, reflexology taster sessions, mental health first aid support, health screening, and flu jabs.
- PDRs continue to be analysed to ensure the corporate Learning and Development Plan is fit for purpose.
- Skillsbuild e-learning platform relaunched, mandatory e-learning training programme launched, bitesize training sessions led by different service areas.
- Sell training places to other councils and buy places on other council's training courses to maximise value for money and economies of scale.
- The council has been retaining apprentices where possible, expanding career graded roles at lower levels and offers professional development .

- External secondments to Hertfordshire County Council, Hertford Town Council etc have been encouraged and taken up. Incoming external secondments from other councils have also been utilised (e.g. emergency planning supported by 2 days per week from HCC)

## **2.3 Theme 3 - Building Leadership and Management Capacity**

### **2.3.1 Outcomes – What we plan(ned) to achieve**

*Our managers will lead, motivate, energise, and encourage innovation and will be viewed as role models, be highly effective, supportive and approachable.*

#### **Actions – The key areas we will focus on:**

- Developing our ‘future leaders’ with the right skills and knowledge and experiences so they are well equipped to become the leaders of the future
- Developing a leadership and management development framework
- Developing our approach to mentoring and coaching
- Encouraging our managers and employees to build upon their professional networks and fulfilling their continual professional development requirements
- Giving our managers and employees the opportunities and space to be creative
- Develop our managers to model the values and behaviours of the Council

### **2.3.2 Key Achievements Made**

- Management development programme was run for tier 2 managers.
- Informal and formal mentoring and coaching opportunities have been offered and accepted internally and externally.
- Management development programme designed around the needs of our management team and their requirements.



- The council sent teams to the annual LA Challenges and participated in the Apprentice Challenge.

## **2.4 Theme 4 – Planning for the Workforce of the Future and being the Employer of Choice**

### **2.4.1 Outcomes – What we plan(ned) to achieve**

*Our workforce will have the skills, abilities and confidence to meet the needs of services for the future and will embrace new ways of working*

#### **Actions – The key areas we will focus on:**

- Build on our Investors in People Standard, raising the profile of East Herts as an employer of choice
- Adopting innovative ways of recruiting new talent
- Developing our approach to talent management
- Creating employment and training opportunities for people in the community by exploring graduate and training schemes and developing apprenticeships
- Ensuring effective workforce and succession planning processes and policies are in place by continuing to provide frameworks for the up-skilling/re-skilling of employees
- Ensuring skills and abilities are identified to meet the needs of services for the future and that they are incorporated into learning and development plans
- Encouraging and supporting employees to work flexibly to support the business need
- Providing and developing employee engagement opportunities for improving service delivery and organisation performance, celebrating our successes – Here to Help programme

### **2.4.2 Key Achievements Made**

- Initiatives to become an employer of choice such as updating the job advert template to include more focus on the benefits of working for the council, increased

presence on social media, e.g. LinkedIn, MyRewards staff discounts programme introduced, launch of wellbeing programme and staff recognition scheme.

- Explored different ways of filling difficult to recruit posts such as inviting CVs only for the first sift and making golden hello payments in Planning. The HR team have also negotiated job advertising credits to ensure coverage over the main online job boards with value for money being achieved.
- HR Officers have been working with service managers regarding Personal Development Plans for employees exceeding expectations in their PDR. This group have been identified as the council's 'talent pool' and are being developed to aid succession planning.
- The development of the apprenticeship programme.
- Being part of the NGDP programme - have retained graduate from NGDP in a career graded role. Sandwich year placements are offered in Planning. The council takes part in the work experience programme run by Youth Connexions.
- Re-skilling existing staff by funding qualifications allowing them to reskill for hard to recruit posts (e.g. Environmental Health).
- Various acting up and honorarium opportunities to help employees develop ready for the next level in their career.
- Wide range of flexible working options available- flexi-time scheme, part-time working, compressed hours, home working, mobile working. Better IT infrastructure has meant that ad hoc home working is much more accessible for employees.
- The staff recognition scheme was launched which celebrates employee successes.

## **2.5 Theme 5 – Promoting Positive Performance**

### **2.5.1 Outcomes – What we plan(ned) to achieve**

*Our managers will have the skills, abilities and confidence to*

*manage and promote the expected standard of performance.*

**Actions – The key areas we will focus on:**

- Implementing a new HR and Payroll system, to provide accurate, easily accessible management information and launch self-service to support the work of our services
- Developing and refining the current suite of management information measures to ensure they add value and evaluate outcomes
- Providing regular, accurate monthly management information on a service by service basis
- Develop staff forum group to support employee engagement
- Assisting managers to identify above and below target levels and improve poor levels of performance
- Ensuring our communications are clear, consistent and two way so that employees are engaged in what we do
- Ensuring our policies and processes are constructed fairly and applied consistently
- Enhanced Engagement with our trade union and employee forums

**2.5.2 Key Achievements Made**

- New HR system has been implemented and self-service launched for employees and managers through MyView.
- Managers have access to reporting tools through MyView for sickness, annual leave and flexi leave.
- HR Officers hold quarterly 1-1s with service managers to discuss HR issues in their service areas.
- The staff forum was set up and terms of reference were created. Items discussed include lessons learnt, staff successes and barriers.
- HR support managers with performance management cases and effectively utilise the probation procedure.
- Communications with staff include quarterly staff briefings, weekly Connect email, monthly Team Update e-

magazine, 1-1s, team meetings and LT feedback meetings.

- Policies have been developed in line with legislation and best practice. Training has been delivered to managers to ensure a consistent message. HR monitor and review.
- More informal engagement with Unison.

## **2.6 Theme 6 – Promoting Equality, Diversity, Health and Wellbeing**

### **2.6.1 Outcomes – What we plan(ned) to achieve**

*We will enhance our work with community partners to promote equality, diversity, health and wellbeing; and ensure our employees, customers and partners are treated fairly and with respect at all times.*

#### **Actions – The key areas we will focus on:**

- Working with the Employee Equality Forum to ensure we promote equality and diversity in our processes
- Delivering our Equality and Diversity outcomes
- Gathering and using employee information to promote equality of opportunity
- Promoting equality of opportunity and diversity in employment and training
- Actively promoting and encouraging healthy lifestyles and wellbeing programmes for the workforce, supporting the Health and Wellbeing workplan.
- Working in partnership with Health and Safety to support the commitment, achievement and evaluation of the Corporate Health and Safety plan.

### **2.6.2 Key Achievements Made**

- The council has achieved Disability Confident status.
- Equality and diversity training is part of the mandatory training programme.
- Equality Impact Assessments are completed for policies and projects, e.g. restructures.

- The equalities report is completed annually and published on the council's website. This includes workforce data on ethnic group, gender, disability and age, religion and sexual orientation. Equalities data is also reported each quarter to HR Committee.
- Wellbeing programme has been promoted and delivered, e.g. lunchtime health walks, flu jabs, NHS health checks.
- New EAP including face to face counselling.

### 3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

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