

East Herts Council Report

Human Resources Committee

Date of Meeting: 24 November 2021

Report by: Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development

Report title: Human Resources and Payroll Team Update

Ward(s) affected: N/A

Summary

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE:

(A) The Human Resources and Payroll Team Update Report be noted.

1.0 Proposal

1.1 This report provides an update on key areas the HR and Payroll team have been working on since Quarter 2 of 2021/22 (July to September 2021) .

2.0 Payroll Service

2.1 Payroll continues to deliver its primary mission of ensuring all Staff, Councillors and Contractors on Payroll are paid accurately and on a timely basis.

2.2 The Payroll Manager and the part-time Payroll and HR Administrator attended Pension Employer Forums via Microsoft Teams. These were on various pension regulation updates and a refresh on information required upon submission of all pension information for Staff including new starters/Leavers/Retirements and Change of hours.

- 2.3 The Payroll Manager attended an HMRC Webinar on SSP to refresh on information which was useful to understand updates currently being tested on our sickness parameters on the HR/Payroll system.
- 2.4 Payroll and HR Administrator started scanning process of payroll information that has been actioned since working from home commenced such as new starters/leavers/change of hours instructions from HR that have an action sheet completed for an audit check follow through on the individuals personal file.
- 2.5 Both the Payroll Manager and the Payroll and HR Administrator (who work 4 days and 3 days respectively) are working to a blended work pattern with up to 50% at home and going into Wallfields to support joined up working which is working well.
- 2.6 The Payroll Manager also supported the recruitment of the new HR and OD Manager (who starts in January) by being part of the selection panel.

3.0 Learning and Development

- 3.1 The HR Quarterly Management Statistics Report provides the data and details regarding the learning and development events from July to September 2021.
- 3.2 Employees continue to complete the revised mandatory e-learning courses.

The OD and HR Co-Ordinator designed an email etiquette e-learning course which was developed as part of the East Herts Together group. This will go live in December 2021 along with a new fire safety course designed by the Health and Safety Officer, and the below revised courses:

- Data Protection Briefing 2021/22
- Annual Health and Safety Refresher 2021/22

- Safeguarding 2021/22
- Diversity and inclusion in the workplace 2021/22
- Lone Working (for selected officers identified as lone workers)

3.3 The corporate induction programme continues to be delivered virtually via Zoom. The course was refreshed in September to ensure it continues to deliver the most relevant information for the new starters and includes the revised corporate plan. The new content and a new support presenter has improved the flow of the course.

3.4 The OD and HR Co-Ordinator continued to support the Environmental Sustainability Co-Ordinator in the delivery of the Bitesize Climate and Carbon Training. The training objective remains to roll out the events to all employees of the council.

3.5 The OD and HR Co-ordinator delivered coping with change sessions as part of the East Herts Transformation Programme. Two sessions were delivered virtually through zoom and thirty nine employees attended. A further two events were delivered in October 2021.

3.6 In September, managers received bitesize employment policy training delivered by the OD and HR Co-Ordinator. The virtual sessions advised managers of policy changes they need to be aware of to ensure the policies are implemented consistently across the council.

3.7 Mental Health first aid refresher training was delivered face to face by Mind in September to refresh trained employees on the importance of wellbeing and how they can support colleagues. Mind also delivered a 2 day Peer support training to train 6 further employees to this role.

3.6 The trainee HR Officer is covering aspects of the HR and OD

Co-ordinator role until the new HR and OD Manager starts which include co-ordinating training and the corporate induction. The trainee (Emily Cordwell) has done an excellent job covering including refining further the e-learning courses.

4.0 Human Resources Update

4.1 East Herts Together (EHT) Development Update

The East Herts Together Group has continued to meet on Zoom due to differing work patterns of group members in terms of home/office days.

- 4.1.1 A Blended Working Offer has been made to all eligible staff of working 50% in the office and 50% at home. Staff were asked to either accept the offer and complete a form showing their working pattern and home/office days or they could reject the offer and return to the office fully. Some staff are in fixed roles that have to be undertaken from the office and so they were not eligible for the offer. There are also some mobile workers who were able to choose from working on site and in the office or on site and a 50/50 mix of home and office for their desk based work. There are some exceptions to the 50/50 requirement which include existing home workers in Revs and Bens who were on pre-existing contractual home working arrangements to attend the office on a rota basis, some medical exceptions and a small group of staff who were recruited during the pandemic and it was agreed at the point of recruitment how much time they would need to spend in the office. HR are collating all of the blended working requests and will be writing to employees shortly.
- 4.1.2 The HR Strategy (which was developed based on staff feedback on our desired culture and East Herts Together provided a clear set of aims has been taken to Leadership Team (9/11) and to the East Herts Together meeting on 15 November. The new HR Strategy has been approved by LT and is being considered by this HRC for approval.

4.1.3 The Core Staff and Management Competencies have also been taken to Leadership Team (9/11) and to the East Herts Together meeting on 15 November. The newly developed competencies (which staff were consulted upon in 2020 before the development) have been agreed in principle by LT and they are attached as Appendix 1 (Staff) and Appendix 2 (Management) then reported to HRC. The PDR form is being redesigned in word with various version to make them easier to use and shared with LT on 23rd November to include the competencies and seeking 360 feedback from Peers, Customers and Direct reports ready for the 22/23 PDR cycle.

4.1.4 The one page plan has also been updated at the meeting, with further action being considered for EHC branding at the next meeting.

4.2 Recruitment

4.2.1 Indeed online Job Board

EHC continue to use Indeed to advertise posts however we will move to advertising on multiple online job boards using the Applicant Tracking System (ATS) (see below) once it is implemented.

4.2.2 Improved Job Application Form/Applicant Tracking System (ATS)

HR are continuing to implement the ATS system with Webrecruit which will provide name blind recruitment and hope to be live within the next month. We have already used some their advertising credits for the online job boards for a couple of posts despite the system not being live yet.

4.3 HR Services provided to external organisations

The HR team continue to support HBC and Ware Town Council with a variety of development work (audit, policies, revised

contract etc.).

Hertford Town Council have had manager surgeries and are being supported under the revised offer. HR have recently supported HTC with a restructure process and a complicated piece of casework which required some legal support.

The HR team are currently supporting Sawbridgeworth Town Council with a job evaluation exercise.

In line with budget reviews HR are now providing an increased income target to reflect to work being generated and to support HR staff costs.

4.4 COVID Update

The Head of HR and OD with support from the team has further revised the Office Protocols for staff and members as well as updating the Wallfields risk assessment and reporting symptoms or a positive test. The protocols continue to include twice weekly Lateral Flow Testing with resources in place. Blended working is being implemented and Officers continue to be required to book desks so that activity can be managed and monitored.

- 4.5 The HR team has seen some change, with Vicki David HR Officer (4 days/32hours) resigning and leaving on 21/11. The Head of HR would like to thank Vicki for all of her service, efforts, support and in particular for the contributions she has made to the Wellbeing Programme. A new experienced HR and OD Manager has been recruited on a 4 day basis and starts on 4/1/2022. The HR Officer role will be recruited to in the new year and it will be recruited internally as the trainee is nearing completion of their CIPD qualification and is expected to move into the full Officer role and continue to develop the HR system as well as provide HR Officer support. The new HR Manager will manage the 2 HR Officers as well as the full-time

HR and Payroll Administrator. Some savings will be made to the salary budget as part of this restructure.

5.0 Casework

5.1 Support has been provided by HR on a number of cases in terms of disciplinary, absence and capability.

6.0 Wellbeing Support

Live Well Work Well events promoted/held

7.1 The council's employee wellbeing programme, Live Well, Work Well, promoted and delivered the following sessions during July - September 2021:

- Further NHS Health Check sessions by Hertfordshire Health Improvement Service held at Wallfields. It is a health check-up for adults in England aged 40 to 74. It's designed to spot early signs of stroke, kidney disease, heart disease, type 2 diabetes or dementia. Must have no pre-existing condition and have not had one in the last 5 years.
- Partnered with British Cycling to offer a fun, free bike ride for EHC ladies of all abilities in August. The ride was a 4 to 6 mile gentle cycle.
- Lunchtime Wellbeing Walks every Wednesday from Wallfields
- Flu vaccines: We have purchased a small number of vouchers from Boots to offer to those employees who wish to receive the flu vaccine this year. These are being offered at no cost to employees. 11 employees have chosen to have a voucher, funding has been secured again from HCC public health.

8.0 HR and Payroll System Development

- 8.1 The Trainee HR officer is continuing to work with system provider Zellis to review sickness absence and reporting tools to ensure all absences as well as leave are managed in hours and correctly pro-rata. This is due to go live in December 2021.
- 8.2 IT have been liaising with Zellis on installing BAM (Business alert manager) which allows for date triggered notifications and emails which will improve efficiency and stop the need for manual processes.
- 8.3 The Head of HR has also secured refunds on H&S and L&D modules which were not fit for purpose. The Head has also negotiated 5 days of consultancy (without charge) to provide a license and portal for data to be taken out of the ATS and put into Resource Link re new starters, this will also this to self-service in terms of some of the set up.
- 8.4 The Trainee HR Officer is working with the provider on developing the overtime module on My View to allow employees to submit claims through the online portal which will cease the paper process.

9.0 Options

N/A

10.0 Risks

N/A

11.0 Implications/Consultations

Community Safety

No

Data Protection

No

Equalities

No

Environmental Sustainability

No

Financial

No expect for budget issues in relation to recruitment systems and purchasing an ATS.

Health and Safety

No

Human Resources

Yes – as described in the report

Human Rights

No

Legal

No

Specific Wards

No

12.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

Attached are **Appendices 1 and 2** which contain the staff competencies and management competencies respectively.

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