

East Herts Council Report

Human Resources Committee

Date of Meeting: 15 February 2022

Report by: Head of HR and Organisational Development

Report title: HR and Payroll Team Update Report

Ward(s) affected: N/A

Summary

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR (Human Resources Committee):

(a) To note the HR and Payroll Team Update Report

1.0 Proposal

- 1.1 This report provides an update on key areas the HR and Payroll team have been working on since Quarter 3 of 2021/22 (October to December 2021).

2.0 Payroll Service and Staffing Update for HR&OD 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 attended the Annual 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 has been supporting the external finance audit and along with the Head of HR &OD is

working with SIAS to do an audit of payroll this year but as an assurance mapping focused process based on the previous strong results.

2.4 Staffing Changes in the HR&OD Service

As previously reported, a new post of HR&OD Manager was created to replace the L&D co-ordinator/HR Officer (HF) who left in September to focus on her business, a second resignation was then received by one of the two remaining HR Officers (VD) who left in November.

Jane Mackie started working for East Herts on the 4th of January as HR&OD Manager (4 days/34 hours per week) and is settling in well and is leading on implementing the new PDR forms and process/ Core Competences. Jane is now managing the 2 HR Officers and the full-time HR and Payroll Administrator as well as supporting services and external customers.

Emily Cordwell who was our Trainee HR Officer was given an honorarium for taking on parts of the L&D Coordinator and the HR Officer role. This led to a 3 month assessment by the Head of HR & OD which was deemed satisfactory and in line with the recruitment policy a ring fenced interview was then offered for a full-time HR Officer role to replace the HR Officer (VD). This was held with both the Head and the HR&OD Manager and was successful with Emily starting as full HR Officer on 17th January 2022. This is very pleasing as our trainee role has led to full officer appointment and East Herts get to benefit from the development for longer which will help especially with the HR system work.

Unfortunately there has been a 3rd resignation from the team, this was however expected as Carmela Bavaro has retired as our 3 day per week HR & Payroll Administrator. Carmela left on 31 January after 8 years service and we thank her for all her efforts and excellent

handover notes. The Payroll Manager (who manages the role) is reviewing the role with the Head and HR&OD Manager especially in relation to on-boarding changes coming in and current admin processes before seeking a replacement. The goal is try to attract a suitable Payroll Administrator that can be developed and can fulfil more Administration duties to support both service managers. The trainee role will not be replaced and saving to salaries is being made.

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 October to December 2021.

3.2 Employees continue to complete the revised mandatory e-learning courses that went live in December 2021:

- Data Protection Briefing 2021/22
- Fire Safety 2021/22
- Email Etiquette 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 roll out of the in-house Corporate Sustainability and Climate Change Training continued. David Thorogood, Environmental Sustainability Co-Ordinator, led the presentations. In Quarter 3, two sessions were delivered virtually through Zoom and twenty six employees attended the event.

- 3.4 The HR & OD Co-ordinator, delivered Coping with Change sessions as part of the East Herts Transformation Programme. Two sessions were delivered virtually through zoom and fifty four employees attended.
- 3.5 The Information Governance and Data Protection Manager, Tyron Suddes delivered training to employees on updates to the Data Protection Policy. Three sessions were held in quarter 3, and one hundred and seventeen employees attended.
- 3.6 Our Corporate Induction took place in November 2021. The event was delivered virtually through Zoom by the trainee HR Officer and included revised and updated content. The trainee officer has since been promoted to HR Officer and has again delivered induction in January 2022.
- 3.7 First Aid face to face training was delivered, over 3 days by Pegasus training. Five employees attended and are now qualified as first aiders, with all three caretakers now trained increasing resilience and coverage.
- 3.8 RIPA and CPIA training was delivered in February virtually through zoom by PFL Training. Fourteen employees attended in total.

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 The majority of staff have been written to confirming their blended working patterns, with only a few queries outstanding. Some staff are in fixed roles that have to be undertaken from the office and so they were not eligible for the offer. A small number of staff also chose not to take up the offer and instead returned to the office 100% of the time. 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 & Bens who were on pre-existing 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. Staff who previously had a home working allowance have been given notice of this ending in March 2022 as agreed with Unison. The blended working arrangements commenced on 15 November 2021 but were paused due to government guidelines to work from home where possible. Now that the guidelines have been lifted staff have resumed their blended working patterns.
- 4.1.2 The HR Strategy has been approved and the associated action plan is being developed by the Head of HR&OD with support from the new HR & OD Manager and will then be considered by LT and will be presented to the next HRC for approval (it had been hoped to bring this to this meeting but team changes and absences have delayed the work being presented to LT).
- 4.1.3 The Core Staff & Management Competencies have been agreed and finalised. The PDR form has been redesigned to include the competencies and 360

feedback (for managers only) ready for the 22/23 PDR cycle. Communications have designed the associated guidance documents which will be published on the intranet. Training will take place in February and March and the Appraisal period has been extended until May 2022 to allow the new process to be implemented and for year end processes to be completed.

4.1.2 The one page plan is being updated for 22/23 and will be shared with the next HRC.

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. The timeline has been slightly delayed due to the time it takes to set up a standalone careers site through which applicants can view our vacancies and apply via the ATS. This is currently being built and we hope to be live within 4-6 weeks. We have already used some of 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.). The team are currently supporting

Ware Town Council with some complex casework.

Hertford Town Council have quarterly manager surgeries and are being supported under the revised offer. The HR team have supported HTC with a variety of queries.

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. Two Parish Councils have expressed interest and this will be followed up in due course.

4.4 COVID Update

The Head of HR & 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 staff continue to be required to book desks so that activity can be managed and monitored.

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

6.1 The council's employee wellbeing programme, Live Well, Work Well, promoted and delivered the following sessions during October - December 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.
- 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. Around 40 employees have chosen to have a voucher, funding has been secured again from HCC public health.
- Various activities are planned for quarter 4 as staff return to the office including more walks, health checks and resilience training

7.0 HR and Payroll System Development

7.1 The HR Officer is finalising sickness absence on the system to ensure it is recorded and managed in hours rather than days. There have been delays with this going live due to sickness absence with the Zellis support required in ensuring the sickness absence report works efficiently.

7.2 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.

7.3 The latest upgrade, release 27, has been placed onto the system to improve efficiency and resolve system errors,

this was followed by testing of each module to ensure they are working as required.

7.4 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.

8.0 Options

N/A

9.0 Risks

N/A

10.0 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

11.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

N/A

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