

East Herts Council Report

Human Resources Committee

Date of Meeting: 25 May 2022

Report by: Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development

Report title: Human Resources 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 during Quarter 4 of 2021/22 (January to March 2022).

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 supported the external finance

audit. This year the SIAS audit of payroll was an assurance mapping focused process, partly due to the previous strong results not justifying a more extensive 10 day audit. Please see Appendix A for the draft audit report and draft management response. The report is still to be finalised. The key result is that the audit assurance level has been determined as 'Reasonable' when it has always previously been 'Significant' this is partly due to the timing of the audit in terms of staffing but also because unlike previous audits SIAS are now requesting an independent check as well stronger back-up notes etc. The Head of HR and OD will perform this check on a monthly basis from the June Payroll (as the post holder is not involved in processing Payroll and was always willing to perform this check having previously raised this in the past.

HR & Payroll are confident that we will return to 'Significant' in the next audit and wish to remind Member that no issues were found in terms of payroll and payroll accuracy.

2.4 Staffing Changes in the HR & OD Service

Update on staff changes previously reported in terms of the part-time 3 day per week Payroll and HR Administrator. Carmela Bavaro retired as our 3 day per week HR & Payroll Administrator. Carmela left on 31 January after 8 years service. The Payroll Manager (who manages the role) has been 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. However, the volume of year end payroll work needed supporting including the new pension return, Carmela Bavaro was in discussion with the payroll manager and agreed to return on a 3 month basis to assist with the year end work and allow further time to recruit a replacement. Carmela therefore returned on 26/4/2022 and will

complete a 3 month fixed term contract to assist the team which we are very grateful for. The goal is still to try to attract a suitable Payroll Administrator that can be developed and can fulfil more Administration duties to support both service managers.

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 January to March 2022.
- 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 Jane Mackie, the HR & OD Manager, along with Simon O'Hear, Head of HR&OD delivered PDR training to both staff and managers. The sessions went over the new and updated form which included competencies and 360 feedback forms. In quarter 4, six sessions were delivered virtually through zoom and two hundred and fifty five employees attended.
- 3.4 The Information Governance and Data Protection Manager, Tyron Suddes delivered training to employees on Data breach. Three sessions were held in quarter 4, and eighty nine employees attended.

- 3.5 Our Corporate Induction took place in January 2022. The event was delivered virtually through Zoom by Emily Cordwell, HR Officer and included revised and updated content. Seven employees attended.
- 3.6 In Quarter 4, training was delivered on an introduction to procurement, how to manage the tender process and understanding contract management. This was delivered by the Corporate Procurement Manager and 19 employees attended.
- 3.7 Accessibility Training was delivered by the Digital Content Manager to ensure we comply with new government legislation. 40 employees attended over 3 sessions.

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 HR Strategy has been approved and the associated action plan is coming to this meeting for approval (please see separate report).
- 4.1.2 The Core Staff & Management Competencies and redesigned PDR process including the competencies and 360 feedback (for managers only) has been rolled out ready for the 22/23 PDR cycle. Guidance documents have been published on the intranet and training has been given to staff and managers. The appraisal period has been extended until the end of June 2022 to allow the new process to be implemented and for year end processes to be completed.
- 4.1.3 The one page plan has been updated for 22/23.

4.1.4 A sub-group of the EHT group are looking at the council's recognition scheme with the intention of moving towards quarterly awards (currently monthly) with more categories that will be announced at staff briefings as well as an annual awards ceremony sponsored by the council's larger contractors.

4.1.5 The corporate style guide has been updated by Communications to be more user friendly with easy to use templates and instructions as well as guidelines on accessibility. This was shared with EHT for feedback before it progressed to LT for approval.

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 an IT issue obtaining a certificate which enables the ATS to use the eastherts.gov.uk URL. This has now been resolved and it is hoped that the careers site through which applicants can view our vacancies and apply via the ATS will be live by the end of May/early June with training rolled out to all managers at the same time. We are using Webrecruit's advertising credits for the online job boards despite the system not being live yet.

4.3 HR Services provided to external organisations

The HR team continue to provide HR support to Hertford and Ware Town Councils. 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 has been followed up (as yet no take up).

Pricing has been reviewed and significantly increased in time to take on a new customer: Borough of Broxbourne Council (District Council) who have asked to receive pay as you go HR services from the team and Payroll advice following the resignation of their HR Manager.

4.4 COVID Update

See Health and Safety Q4 report for the revised Office Protocols.

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

6.1 See Employee Health and Wellbeing report for 21/22 which has been provided to this HRC meeting.

7.0 HR and Payroll System Development

7.1 The HR Officer is still 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, 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 HR Officer began 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. This did not unfortunately progress as hoped so has been paused until further updates can be provided and also as LT want to review Overtime as covered in the Annual HR & OD Plan.

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

Appendix A – Draft Internal Audit report – Payroll (Assurance Mapping) 2021/22.

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