

Human Resources Committee

Date of Meeting: 15 February 2023

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

This report provides an update on key areas the HR and Payroll team have been working on during Quarter 3 of 2022/23 (October to December 2022). An update report was not submitted in the November meeting as the previous meeting was held in September. Verbal Updates were given at the November meeting.

2.0 HR Team

Simon O'Hear, Head of HR and OD returned on a phased basis starting 7th November 2022 following a period of 3 months long term sickness absence. The Interim Head of HR & OD; Elly Starling was initially asked to stay on until Xmas (whilst Simon was allocated projects before returning to his main role in mid January 2023). Elly Starling was extended until 10th of February to work specifically on transformation HR support in a number of areas.

3.0 Payroll Service

3.1 Payroll continues to deliver its primary mission of

ensuring all Staff, Councillors and Contractors on Payroll are paid accurately and on a timely basis.

- 3.2 Payroll processed a separate election payroll for the Hunsdon Neighbourhood Plan Referendum.
- 3.3 Payroll successfully uploaded the national fraud initiative reports for East Herts & Returning Officer payroll which is a statutory requirement to SAFS (Shared Anti-Fraud Service) that helps prevent and detect fraud within and between public & private sectors.
- 3.4 Payroll Manager & HR Officer attended the Zellis User Summit in Birmingham which proved very worthwhile because the content was relevant to us along with networking with many other Resource Link users and getting to know our dedicated Customer Support Team from Zellis.
- 3.5 Payroll updated the system parameters for national insurance to reflect the reduction of 1.25% from 6th November 22 as per statutory instruction.
- 3.6 The Pay Award for 2021/22 was received on 1st November 22 detailing the new pay rates from 1st April 2022, this was implemented in December payroll following an extensive process including updating all scale points and elements with the new rates then calculating and inputting the back pay for the period from April to November 2022. This was a successful process with no queries from Staff.
- 3.7 Payroll set up the relevant individuals to process payments to those who took part in the annual electoral registration canvass for 2022 from information provided by Electoral Services.
- 3.8 Payroll Lean Process review confirmed the over reliance on the Payroll Manager, as well as the need to automate

more elements. The HR and Payroll Administrator who can provide back-up has been re-employed on FTC following retirement and discussions are underway to extend this further. The future payroll provision is currently being reviewed as part of the overall transformation programme.

4.0 Learning and Development

- 4.1 The HR Quarterly Management Statistics Report provides the data and details regarding the learning and development events from October to December 2022.
- 4.2 In Quarter 3, we continued delivering Resilience Workshops with the 'Art of Brilliance'. Three sessions took place during the quarter on Mental Health, Self-care and Bounce back ability. A total of 58 people attended the online sessions, the HR&OD Manager is undertaking a review and the video recordings remain available for staff who were unable to attend to watch.
- 4.3 There was first aid at work requalification training for 6 employees. All employees successfully completed the course and retained their certification.
- 4.5 People Safe delivered online training to 20 employees over two sessions on the use of the MySOS Lone worker device. This included familiarisation with the device functionality, alarm receiving centre response, portal administration and general use.
- 4.6 In annual mandatory e-learning training programme is currently being refreshed. Courses will be going live in January 2023 for employees to complete by end of March. HR will be looking for a new e-learning provider or an extension with a the revised provider going forward.

- 4.7 In November 2022, 21 employees attended a Retirement Seminar run by Affinity Connect. The staff who attended were then offered the opportunity to have a personal retirement planning follow up meeting, to discuss their individual circumstances.
- 4.8 Provision of Complaints training has been discussed with the Complaints Manager and Customer Services Manager, and agreement has been reached that training will be revisited when the new CRM system; which was procured in November 2022; is implemented. The new CRM system will replace the current complaints management system.
- 4.9 Future training commissioned for the new year includes RIPA (Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act) training (January) and Commercial Skills training (February) for Leadership Team member and relevant officers.
- 4.10 Management Training
The interim Head of HR & OD has agreed a management development programme with Leadership Team and the Be Agile and Sustainable Transformation group consisting of two elements. The first is called First Step and is aimed at staff who are not in management roles but would like to progress in the future; the second is called Blueprint and is aimed at all existing managers (Team Leaders, Supervisors, Managers to Service Managers). The two elements are being promoted at the quarterly managers session and the staff briefing sessions in February.
- 4.10.1 First Step
Developed by the Interim Head of HR&OD and to be led by the HR&OD Manager. This is aimed at Staff who have

reached a level of competence and confidence in their role and aspire to a career in the management of people and / or resources. Staff have to apply and their manager has to approve their application. Once approved they will attend an opening day run by HR&OD Manager where senior leaders will provide a briefing and they will be allocated a mentor to work with over 12 months.

Delegates will attend the two-day Management Essentials workshop to lay the foundations of good management and leadership practice. Each delegate will need to maintain a portfolio to record their journey and development which will be reviewed at the end of the programme.

Delegates will attend additional planned training and encouraged to look at other opportunities to develop with the support of their mentor and manager. Each delegate will be assigned to an ongoing transformation project or other relevant project, with specific learning objectives agreed.

At the end of the programme, the delegate will write a synopsis of their experiences as part of their portfolio. The overall portfolio will then be assessed, with the process including the delegate having a 'panel interview' with senior managers. The panel will comment on progress and outcomes and recommend next steps.

4.9.2 Blueprint

All line managers (from Team Leader / Supervisor to Service Manager) to attend, to ensure a consistent use of policies and shared EHC management approach. Mandatory unless Head of Service determines not required. This is core line manager training that will cover use of EHC competencies/PDR and core HR

Policies: Probation Policy, Capability Policy, Disciplinary Policy (Code of Conduct) and Managing Absence Policy.

The 5 day programme has been developed by the Head of HR&OD and will be delivered face to face over 1 day at a time. There are approximately 60 managers so this will be delivered initially in two tranches. The Head of HR&OD will deliver the programme with support from the HR&OD Manager.

There are 5 x 1 day modules which will cover the following:

- Recruitment (Running an effective selection process)
- Performance Management Part 1
(Including Appraisal/Motivation/Feedback/Probation)
- Performance Management Part 2
(Including Staff Development/Coaching/Capability)
- Managing Difficult Behaviour (Disciplinary Policy)
- Managing Absence (Managing Absence Policy)

A number of further elements have been agreed that need to be commissioned for the blueprint programme, clarity will first be sought internally and where this cannot be identified it will be commissioned externally. These include:

- Business Skills (Including Bid Writing, Report Writing, Commissioning, Contract monitoring, Measuring Service performance, Complaint Handling) – 2 days
- How to' sessions – expected to be run by our own internal experts:
 - build and monitor / manage a budget
 - political awareness
 - understand the Constitution and governance of EHC
 - understanding and using data to support service planning

- maximising the use of social media and digital platforms.
- Other potential areas of learning:
 - Awareness of Community Diversity e.g. community groups/different cultures in the community – More in-depth Managing and working with Equalities
 - Partnership working
 - Project management disciplines
 - Managing across teams
 - Presentation skills / public speaking / media interviews
 - Coaching qualification
 - Six Sigma
 - Presenting reports at committee, Executive Team and Overview and Scrutiny Panel
 - Attending public meetings to represent the council
 - Representing the council at other meetings
 - Interacting with the press and other media.
- Specific 2 day module for Service Managers to support development into future Heads of Service – commissioned externally by HR.

5.0 Human Resources Update

5.1 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. The group is being reviewed with the Chief Executive expected to take over chairing the meeting to support the join to transformation.

- 5.1.1 The new Core Staff & Management Competencies and redesigned PDR process including the competencies and 360 feedback (for managers only) were rolled out for the 22/23 PDR cycle. Following feedback from managers, a review of the forms is currently underway ahead of the 23/24 PDR cycle (which is expected to run from February until May) and a decision has been made

not to extend 360 feedback to all employees and to adapt the process for managers to gather more meaningful feedback through comments. This will be communicated to managers once approved by Leadership Team along with the revised paperwork.

- 5.1.2 The EHT group agreed and implemented a revised recognition scheme which moved from monthly to quarterly awards with 4 categories covering each of our values and a change champion. This has been very successful with lots of nominations each quarter and an award ceremony is held in the council chamber which both nominees and their nominators are invited to. There will also be an annual awards ceremony in July sponsored by the council's larger contractors.
- 5.1.3 Other current topics of ongoing discussion at EHT are the Terms of Reference and membership of the group and how to improve the 'one team' culture at East Herts.
- 5.1.4 The review period for the blended working arrangements ended in November 2022. Managers and employees were surveyed for their opinions with over 160 responses received. This data is in the final stages of being collated before being presented to Leadership Team for a decision on the future of the scheme.
- 5.1.5 The Transformation Programme is now a regular item on the EHT agenda with the group giving feedback and suggestions as well as supporting some of the actions.

5.2 Recruitment

5.2.1 Planning Campaign

HR are supporting the Planning service in launching a recruitment campaign for all twelve vacant posts. A micro

site has been created which includes a video with management and officers talking about the planning service, current projects, and the benefits of working for East Herts Council. Our key focus is on how we can develop our employees by offering a range of training and career progression. The campaign is set to launch in February.

Applicant Tracking System (ATS)

The ATS has been live since August 2022 and is being used successfully by HR and managers. We are still exploring an alternative name blinding solution with Web Recruit as the system they currently use was causing key data to be lost in the name blinding process. At this point we have chosen not to progress with the onboarding module within the system as it does not meet our needs. This position may change if improvements are made to the system in the future.

5.3 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.

Borough of Broxbourne Council has requested considerable support with case work and a TUPE transfer. The HR&OD Manager, Jane Mackie has provided much of this support.

From December 2022, the East Herts HR Team have been reducing the level of support provided to Broxbourne . One of the Broxbourne HR officers has returned, which means Broxbourne's HR cases/workload has become more manageable. Broxbourne DC has also recruited a HR Manager who is due to start in March 2023. Support for Broxbourne has ended in January 2023 to ensure the EHC team has capacity internally to support transformation especially service reviews and restructuring.

6.0 Casework

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

7.0 HR and Payroll System Development

7.1 The HR Officer has added in an extra day's annual leave pro rata on to the HR System effective from 1 April 2023 following the NJC pay agreement 22/23.

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 some manual processes.

7.3 The HR Officer has continued 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. It is expected that this will be progressed further following a planned review of overtime.

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

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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