

 WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL	Employment Committee 10.12.19	Agenda Item 5
Title	People Strategy Update	
For further information about this report please contact	Tracy Dolphin - HR Manager Tracy.dolphin@warwickdc.gov.uk Tel: 01926456350	
Wards of the District directly affected	None	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?	No	
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number	Sept 19	
Background Papers	None	

Contrary to the policy framework:	Yes/No
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	Yes/No
Key Decision?	Yes/No
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	Yes/No
Equality & Sustainability Impact Assessment Undertaken	Yes/No (If No state why below)

Officer/Councillor Approval		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive	22.11.19	Chris Elliott/Andrew Jones/Bill Hunt
Chief Executive	22.11.19	Chris Elliott
Section 151 Officer	22.11.19	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	22.11.19	Andy Jones
Finance	22.11.19	Mike Snow
Portfolio Holder(s)	22.11.19	Andrew Day
Consultation & Community Engagement		
This is the People Strategy Update for the last quarter and describes highlights discussed at SMT and People Strategy Steering Group prior to Employment Committee. Unions are also consulted to provide any comments.		
Final Decision?	Yes	
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report is an update on progress made on the People Strategy and associated areas as discussed at SMT, JCF, MTU as appropriate, People Strategy Steering group (PSSG) and submitted to Employment Committee.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Employment Committee note the report and feedback any comments.

- 2.2 **Long Service Award** - That Employment Committee note the discretionary award, detailed below agreed at WSG August 2019 to recognise 30 and 40 years' long service in addition to the existing contractual Long Service Award:

- A gift to the value of £370 plus VAT, or
- £370 cash (taxable) which will be paid as part of the salary, or
- a one-off entitlement to two weeks' additional leave

- 2.3 **Code of Conduct** - That Employment Committee recommends to Council the updated Employee Code of Conduct as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

- 2.4 **Flexible Retirement Policy** - That Employment Committee approve the update to the Flexible Retirement Policy as detailed below for exceptional circumstances:

"Exceptional Circumstances

The Local Government Pension Scheme regulations allow employers the discretion to waive the pension reduction. This will only be possible in exceptional circumstances, for example, on compassionate grounds or as an alternative to retirement on grounds of redundancy or efficiency, if there is a strong business case. The Council has adopted the following definition of "compassionate grounds" for waiving pension reductions which is;

- The Council may choose to waive this reduction in exceptional circumstances e.g. where the employee has had to amend their working arrangements to care for a chronically ill partner.
- Ill-health which does not meet the ill-health retirement criteria for an enhanced pension where the reduction in hours is supported by an Independent Occupational Health Adviser."

- 2.5 **Staff Suggestion Scheme** - That Employment Committee approve the withdrawal of the Staff Suggestion Scheme.

- 2.6 That Employment Committee recommends to Council:

- (i) its responsibility is amended so that it is revised to read as follows (italics additions, ~~struckthrough~~ deletions):

To approve *amendments to the staff establishment in respect of Chief Officers of the Council, as defined in Article 12 of the Constitution*, in accordance with the Council's agreed budget.

- (ii) The Chief Executive, as Head of Paid Service, be delegated authority to:

"make all changes to the establishment/structure of the Council below the level of Chief Officers, as defined in Article 12 of the Constitution", in accordance with the Council's agreed budget."

3. **REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 The purpose of the People Strategy is to support the Council's Fit for the Future programme of work. Its aim is to ensure that the approaches to resourcing, learning and development, cultural change and organisational development are designed to deliver the workforce that the Council requires. The People Strategy Action Plan underpins the People Strategy and reports progress to SMT, CMT, People Strategy Steering Group and Employment Committee.

3.2 **Long Service Award** - Warwick District Council currently celebrates 20 years' continuous Warwick District Council employment with a long service award as detailed below:

- A gift to the value of £370 plus VAT, or
- £370 cash (taxed) which will be paid into salary, or
- a one-off entitlement to two weeks' additional leave to be taken within 12 months of the 20-year anniversary date (pro-rata for part-time employees).

Considerable debate, discussion and consultation has taken place with Staff Voice, CMT, SMT, Workforce Steering Group, Joint Communication Forum, and UNISON as to how to recognise the commitment and service given to the District Council by employees. It is proposed to extend the Long Service Award scheme, on a discretionary rather than contractual basis, to also celebrate, reward and recognise the anniversaries of 30 and 40 years continuous Warwick District Council service. In future, each time one of those significant milestones is achieved there will be the same entitlement as 20 years to either the gift, cash or two weeks' paid leave.

The introduction of the 30 and 40 year awards will be effective for all contracted employees in post from 11th December 2019. The award will be backdated for those that have already passed their 30 and 40 year anniversaries, should the leave be chosen it must be taken within a three years' period, by the 10th December 2022.

The monetary value of the award will be increased each year in line with the Local Government Pay Award. All leave is subject to operational requirements and must be agreed by the Line Manager.

3.3 **Code of Conduct** - The Code of Conduct was approved by Council at its meeting in January 2019. During the year the operation of the Code has been monitored carefully and as part of this a number of small grammatical errors have been identified. Officers do not have delegated authority to make these amendments without approval from Council and therefore it is presented to Councillors for their agreement (Appendix 1).

3.4 **Flexible Retirement** - Discussions have taken place with Unison to reflect on what circumstances the Authority would consider waiving, and funding, the reductions to a pension drawn early under the auspices of the Flexible Retirement scheme. In March 2019 it was agreed that requests for early/flexible retirement need not be submitted to Employment Committee for approval which was delegated to CMT. However, any request to fund waiving

early retirement reductions would need to be supported by the Head of Service, reported and approved by the Executive. Currently the Warwick District Council Flexible Retirement Policy states:

"Exceptional Circumstances

The Local Government Pension Scheme regulations allow employers the discretion to waive the pension reduction. This will only be possible in exceptional circumstances, for example, on compassionate grounds or as an alternative to retirement on grounds of redundancy or efficiency, if there is a strong business case. The Council has adopted the following definition of "compassionate grounds" for waiving pension reductions which is;

- Compelling domestic reasons which will affect the ability of the individual to continue with his/her present working arrangements.
- Ill-health which does not meet the ill-health retirement criteria for an enhanced pension."

Both of these criteria are subjective, and have recently been challenged, as:

- what is compelling to one person may not be compelling to another, without more objective criteria it is difficult to draw 'a line'.
- there is a great scale of ill-health that would not meet the criteria for ill health retirement, ranging from a minor temporary incapacity to a longer term condition.

CMT and Unison agree that greater objectivity is required and the following amendment is proposed:

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- The Council may choose to waive this reduction in exceptional circumstances e.g. where the employee has had to amend their working arrangements to care for a chronically ill partner.
- Ill-health which does not meet the ill-health retirement criteria for an enhanced pension where the reduction in hours is supported by an Independent Occupational Health Adviser."

This gives greater objectivity but still the capacity to show compassion in exceptional circumstances.

- 3.5 **Staff Suggestions Scheme** - The current 'Staff Suggestion Scheme' was introduced in 1999, and there is no record available of when the last suggestion was made. Consultation has taken place with Workforce Steering Group and Staff Voice and although ideas and pilots of schemes relating to recognition and reward schemes have been considered, no viable alternatives have been put forward that satisfy all criteria. Increasingly innovation and change is seen as part of 'the day job', the narrow parameters and constraints of the scheme appear to stifle as opposed to encourage innovation. It is proposed to withdraw the scheme and, as the highly successful People and Change workshops have emphasised, support a culture that recognises and celebrates innovation and a mindset of continuous improvement. UNISON have also commented that the

staff suggestion scheme is outdated in a culture of openness and continuous improvement.

- 3.6 **Employment Committee** - The proposed revision to the responsibilities for this Committee in respect of staffing structures will mean that all changes to the establishment/structure of the Council below Chief Officer level (i.e. excluding Heads of Service, Deputy Chief Executives and Chief Executive) will be a decision delegated to the Chief Executive as Head of Paid Service. The decision will be based on recommendation from the relevant Head of Service following an analysis of the needs of the service and full consultation with affected employees and unions. Portfolio and Shadow Portfolio Holders will be kept informed, as at present, as part of their regular briefings with the respective Head of Service. This reflects the Officer Employment Procedure rules, within the Constitution, where Councillors are not involved in any HR matters below Chief Officer. Wider communication to Councillors will be provided through the Members update and group briefings depending on the scale of the changes involved.

The Council/Executive will remain in control of setting the budgets for staffing for the Head of Paid Service to use as appropriate to deliver the service. Overview & Scrutiny and Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committees will oversee any requests for funding and can equally review, after a suitable time period, the impact of the revised structure. This revision will improve the impact on employees at a sensitive time where potential delays would be removed. This will also enhance the work of the Employment Committee, providing greater time and focus on its core responsibility in relation to the consideration and approval of appropriate employment policies and initiatives, for example apprenticeships, health and well-being, knowledge and skills enhancement.

4. **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

4.1 **Policy Framework**

Fit for the Future (FFF)

The Council’s FFF Strategy is designed to deliver the Vision for the District of making it a Great Place to Live, Work and Visit. To that end amongst other things the FFF Strategy contains several Key projects. The actions from the People Strategy are one of those key projects.

The FFF Strategy has 3 strands – People, Services and Money and each has an external and internal element to it. The table below illustrates the impact of this proposal if any in relation to the Council’s FFF Strategy.

FFF Strands		
People	Services	Money
External		
Health, Homes, Communities	Green, Clean, Safe	Infrastructure, Enterprise, Employment
<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Improved health for all Housing needs for all met	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Area has well looked after public spaces All communities have	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Dynamic and diverse local economy Vibrant town centres

Impressive cultural and sports activities Cohesive and active communities	access to decent open space Improved air quality Low levels of crime and ASB	Improved performance/productivity of local economy Increased employment and income levels
Impacts of Proposal		
The proposal considers areas to support health and well-being together with engagement and communications	Link to our customers and the recognition of how we impact on our communities through our people.	The proposal considers areas to support employment e.g. apprenticeships
Internal		
Effective Staff	Maintain or Improve Services	Firm Financial Footing over the Longer Term
<u>Intended outcomes:</u> All staff are properly trained All staff have the appropriate tools All staff are engaged, empowered and supported The right people are in the right job with the right skills and right behaviours	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Focusing on our customers' needs Continuously improve our processes Increase the digital provision of services	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Better return/use of our assets Full Cost accounting Continued cost management Maximise income earning opportunities Seek best value for money
Impacts of Proposal		
The themes from the strategy support training engagement and skills. Policies are updated to reflect ongoing legislation and the changes in the organisation.	Constant improvement in our through digital provision. Monitoring of MI information to review data trends	Value for money in how we attract procure training and deliver through different channels.

4.2 Supporting Strategies

Each strand of the FFF Strategy has several supporting strategies and the relevant ones for this proposal are explained here.

4.2.1 People Strategy

The People Strategy outlines the future needs of our workforce to enable us to attract, recruit and retain the right people; provide the development they need to allow them to grow and progress; manage potential and plan for the future. The way in which we lead and support our people is key to the successful delivery of quality services.

5. **BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK**

5.1 Should there be initiatives identified beyond the existing budgets then a case will be made for further funding to support.

6. **ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S) CONSIDERED**

6.1 None considered

7. **RISKS**

7.1 There is significant risk to the delivery of the Council's FFF programme by not reviewing the areas highlighted in the People Strategy.

8. **BACKGROUND**

8.1 The People Strategy Steering Group comprises of Members - Cllr Falp, Cllr Wright, Cllr Mangat, Cllr Margrave, Cllr Gifford supported by the Chief Executive, Heads of Service from Culture, Neighbourhood Services, Housing, the HR Manager and HR Senior Business Partners.

8.2 The People Strategy Steering Group meets quarterly prior to Employment Committee/SMT and reviews successful work completion, plans in progress and areas to highlight for discussion.

8.3 Areas of success/highlights within the agreed People Strategy themes for the last quarter are:

8.3.1 **Leadership and Organisational Development**

HR continues to support organisational redesigns across the Council

8.3.2 **Workforce Planning and Performance**

Apprenticeship Update: 3 apprentices have successfully secured employment with the District Council in the last quarter.

The 10 apprentices funded from the Corporate Programme are detailed below:

Title	Qualification undertaken	Service Area	Cost	Training Duration
2018 Apprentices				
Digital Marketing Apprentice	L3 Diploma in Digital Marketing	Chief Executive	£4,000	18 months
Finance Apprentice	L3 Bus Admin	Finance	£5,000	18 months
Data Analyst Apprentice	L4 Data Analyst	Chief Executive	£15,000	24 months
Business Admin in Neighbourhood	L2 Bus Admin	Neighbourhood Services	£5,000	18 months
Arts Development Apprentice	L3 Community Arts Management	Cultural Services	£2,500	18 months
Building Control Apprentice	L3 Business Admin	Development Services	£5,000	24 months

2019 Apprentices				
Democratic Services Apprentice	L3 Business Admin	Democratic Services	£5,000	18 months
Construction and Surveying Apprentice	L4 Construction and Surveying	Chief Executive	£9,000	24 months
Construction and Surveying Apprentice	L3 Construction and Surveying	Chief Executive	£9,000	24 months
AAT Apprentice	L2 & 3 AAT	Finance	£8,000	36 months

Apprentices funded by Service Areas

Title	Qualification undertaken	Service Area	Cost	Training Duration
Theatre Technician Apprentice	L3 Advanced Certificate in Technical Theatre: Sound Light & Stage	Cultural Services	£9,000	12 - 18 months
Customer Service Apprentice	L2 Customer Service Practitioner	Finance	£4,000	18 months
Customer Service Apprentice	L2 Customer Service Practitioner	Finance	£4,000	18 months
Revenue Apprentice	L3 Business Admin	Finance	£5,000	18 months
Revenue Apprentice	L3 Business Admin	Finance	£5,000	18 months

Current Recruitment

Three further apprentices are currently being recruited into Arts, Licensing and Community Partnership teams

Apprenticeship Training Funded by Government Levy

Post Title	Training	Service Area	Cost	Duration
Training Building Control Consultant	L3 Construction and Building Control	Development Services	£9,000	24 months
Procurement Business Partner	L4 Procurement Practices	Finance	£9,000	12 months
Principal Accountant (Housing)	L7 CIMA	Finance	£20,200	24 months
Discharge of Conditions Officer	L7 Planning Degree University of Birmingham	Development Services	£20,000	36 months
Assistant Planner	L7 Planning Degree University of Birmingham	Development Services	£20,000	36 months
Development Monitoring Officer	L7 Planning Degree University of Birmingham	Development Services	£20,000	36 months
Assistant Building Consultant	L7 Building Control Degree Wolverhampton University	Development Services	£24,000	36 months

Note we receive £55,000 of Levy Training funding each year but the Government tops up any excess costs by 95%. Costs above may be spread up to 3 years.

End of Apprenticeship Four apprentices will end their training contract in the next four months, where we are actively engaging with them to offer support.

Public Sector Apprenticeship target

Public sector bodies with 250 or more staff in England have a target to employ an average of at least 2.3% of their staff as new apprentices within the period of 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2021.

- The percentage of new apprenticeship (both new and existing employees) as a proportion of new starters between 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019 was 16.09%.

- The percentage of total headcount that were apprentices on 31 March 2019 was 2.79%.

- The percentage of apprenticeship starts (both new and existing employees who started an apprenticeship) between 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2019 was 2.90%.

8.3.3 Equality & Diversity

We continue to update with Warwickshire County Council specialist on EQIA refresher training and review the priorities of our 3-year plan

8.3.4 Learning & Development

The People and Change workshops have now launched to support all employees to identify the changes that occur both in and out of work, recognise how change affects us and provide some practical ideas and skills to help manage change positively.

Managers training continues for 'HR for non HR Managers' workshop (84 attended to date) and the new 'Absence Management' workshop (41 attended to date) in conjunction with Unison. This is an ongoing programme to ensure all managers are confident with the WDC policies and processes.

The MetaCompliance ELearning continues continued to be utilised to support all employees understanding of 'GDPR' and 'Data handling requirements'.

As part of our quality control relating to Appraisal 'How's Work' meetings' and associated performance management, Service Areas Managers will be interviewing a selection of staff from across the organisation, chosen at random, to review the Appraisal process. The completed (logged) figure for 2019 appraisals is 93.49%

8.3.5 Communications, Involvement and Engagement

Key external initiatives this quarter:

- Support of the next phase in the development of Kenilworth's Leisure centres.
- Promotion of Heritage Open Days
- Housing Services "100 years for 100 tenants" event
- A how to guide for new parking meters and electoral registrations
- Chapel tours for Oakley Wood crematorium, which we are helping them to share via their newly created social media channels.
- Over 1000 residents have signed up to receive the Friday newsletter.

Work Perks employee discount scheme has over 160 users for both employees and councillors for money back and discounts on a range of products and services.

Social media continues to grow as a platform with over 150 new followers on Facebook and our Twitter account still has as many followers (10,000) as the Courier's distribution.

8.3.6 Employee Well-being, Reward and Recognition

58% of employees have joined the Health and Well-being (Bupa) Cash Plan membership scheme with over £2,000 per month back for treatments. We have now rolled this out to Members as part of the new Council administration.

In July 2019 we launched the WDC Health & Wellbeing survey to all staff in conjunction with Unison, the results are being analysed to brief at SMT/Employment Committee.