

Title: People Strategy 2023 -2027

Lead Officer: Tracy Dolphin tracy.dolphin@warwickdc.gov.uk

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Jody Tracey

Wards of the District directly affected: None

Approvals required	Date	Name
Portfolio Holder	27.2.23	Jody Tracey
Finance	27.2.23	Andrew Rollins
Legal Services		-
Programme Director for Climate Change	27.2.23	Dave Barber
Chief Executive	27.2.23	Chris Elliott
Head of Service(s)	27.2.23	Tracy Dolphin
Section 151 Officer	27.2.23	Andrew Rollins
Monitoring Officer	27.2.23	Andrew Jones
Leadership Co-ordination Group		
Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Cttee / Council?	No	
Contrary to Policy / Budget framework?	No	
Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?	No	
Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?	No	
Accessibility Checked?	Yes	

Summary

The People Strategy sets out the guiding principles within which the council will make decisions that affect its employees. The principles act as a framework which will not only guide the decision making in relation to staffing matters, but impact on the culture of the organisation moving forward. The aims of the People Strategy and the associated actions are set for a four year period and will be reviewed in line with changing organisational needs.

Recommendations

- (1) That Employment Committee supports the proposed People Strategy 2023 – 2027 (Appendix 1/1a) with effect from 14th March 2023.
- (2) That Employment Committee approves the updates to the WDC Flexi-Time and Time Recording Policy (Appendix 2) and the supporting Agile Working Guidance (Appendix 3) with effect from 15.3.23.

1 Reasons for the Recommendations

- 1.1 The purpose of the People Strategy (Appendix 1) is to support the achievement of the Council's corporate objectives. 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.
- 1.2 Following the impact of Covid-19 and the cessation of the merger process the People Strategy and associated actions has been reviewed to ensure that it is fit for purpose to continue the priorities of the Council and workforce planning.
- 1.3 The Council has maintained a People Strategy since 2003 which has been reviewed and updated on a regular basis. The themes from the previous strategy included: Leadership and Organisational Development; Workforce Planning and performance; Equality and Diversity; Learning and Development; Communications, Involvement and Engagement; Employee Well-being, Reward and Recognition

These have now been updated to recognise new themes that are considered a priority for the Council:

- ✓ Smarter Working & the Working Environment
- ✓ People (Workforce) Planning, Organisational Development & Performance
- ✓ People Recruitment, Retention and Brand Identity
- ✓ People Equality Diversity & Inclusion
- ✓ People Learning and Development
- ✓ People Health & Well-being
- ✓ People Communications & Engagement

These themes are aligned with Warwick District Council Business Strategy and operate within the context of budget pressures, increasing expectations from our customers and changing demand from many sources including central government. The themes are constantly evolving and will be reviewed regularly to ensure they are robust.

The underlying progress of the plan is aligned to Year 1 'Build', Year 2 'Strengthen', Year 3 'Consolidate', Year 4 'Review'.

1.4 The People Strategy has contributed to some specific areas highlighted below:

- The HR/Payroll Project has continued to develop to support cultural change, the empowerment of management and staff and our aim to become less reliant on paper processes. With the introduction of 'Your HR' on I-Trent, this online service has enabled managers to monitor absence; annual leave; expenses; learning and development; as well as establishment reports and provide staff with more accessible access.
- Learning and Development has evolved into a much more blended approach with a mixture of both virtual and face to face courses available. We have regularly reviewed and evaluated the impact of these new delivery styles. In most cases the increase in accessibility has enabled more staff to attend. HR workshops have provided training and guidance related to WDC policies, procedures and guidance. Other learning options with an external input include: Coaching; Mentoring and tailored training where required. Partnership Working with West Midlands Employers has allowed us to ensure economies of scale and review return on investment.
- The audit tool 'Meta Compliance' has provided us with a more effective way to ensure staff read and understand essential information and has directly contributed to our transformation agenda relating to 'Ways of Working'.
- The Health Officers Group have been significant in promoting health initiatives across the Council: the health and wellbeing scheme includes 24 hour 'Employee Assistance' relating to support for areas such as financial wellbeing, mental health and bereavement. Over 140 staff have participated in the bite size sessions on 'Working remotely', 'Mental Health for Managers' and 'Health and Wellbeing Resilience'. Other examples include ideas on how to keep warm in the winter; taking regular breaks; access to discounted clubs and exercise and menopause awareness.
- Achievement of the 'Thrive at Work Wellbeing Award (Bronze)'. Thrive offers a holistic approach and practical framework designed to support Warwick District Council in creating a workplace that promotes employee health and wellbeing. It's a blend of organisational and individual wellbeing elements which are broken down into 'modules' such as policy and procedures, mental health, musculoskeletal and promoting healthy lifestyles.
- 'Staff Voice' group continues to represent wider views of staff and provide honest and open feedback to the Transformation Steering Group.
- Ongoing positive engagement with Unison. The branch has been pro-active with working with the employer on input into policies, health and well-being initiatives and many other areas.
- Significant progress on Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) agenda in conjunction with the Equality & Diversity Task & Finish Group. Ethnicity pay gap reporting from 2020; appointment of an EDI Business Partner; updated guidelines for Equality Impact Assessments; ongoing promotions and awareness campaigns include 'Black History Month' and 'Race Equality Week'.
- A review of 'Comensura', the framework providing our Agency staff providing more support for managers who require immediate support for resources.
- The Ways of Working group has evolved throughout the pandemic. Staff surveys and engagement have continued to inform our journey and introduction of 'agile' working. This has been facilitated through training: 'Effectively Managing your Team', 'Virtual Masterclass', 'Motivating and

Managing Teams in a Hybrid World' where over 170 Managers have attended.

- How we communicate is regularly reviewed. They are ongoing and well-received through the intranet messages and the weekly "5 things" email. In addition, there are regular staff briefings and Managers' Forums dedicated to updating all staff and managers on any developments.
- The 'Applause Box' launched in August 2022 recognised the hard work of staff throughout a challenging few years together with a standing ovation from Councillors at a Council meeting. The scheme offered staff access to initiatives including mental and physical wellbeing; personal and professional development; team 'belonging'; recruitment promotion of 'refer a friend'.
- As of October 2022, since its launch in 2018 the Corporate Apprentice Scheme has funded opportunities for 23 apprenticeships. To date 10 have secured alternative employment with the Council.

1.5 Future Plans

The People Strategy 2023 - 2027 supports the corporate values and objectives of the Council, through achieving the following priorities:

- The 'Recruitment, Retention and Remuneration' Project began in 2022 following the dissolution of the merger. Themes were identified to ensure targeted resources for specific priorities to be reviewed including pay benchmarking, the way we recruit and a full review of our successful apprenticeship scheme. Further work is ongoing for 2023 – 2024 including proposed implementation of job families to support more effective job profiling; updates to our recruitment processes include branding, effective marketing and advertising; evaluation of our training offering and how we utilise a blended approach to delivery as well as utilising coaching and mentoring.
- Planned launch of the 'new' WDC Intranet to support our 'People Communications and Engagement' theme within the People Strategy. Communicating and engaging with people in honest and accessible ways, considering the importance of workplace behaviours, that allow everyone to understand what the Council is trying to achieve and how to play their part in it.
- The new Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Business Partner is progressing this agenda further with plans to highlight immediate priorities and longer term actions and awareness of EDI throughout the organisation: EDI awareness session for Councillors will take place on the 16th March; work with the Elections Team on ensuring that voters are not disadvantaged regarding facilities and the new photo ID change; work with the Learning & Development Officer to scope and provide training on 'LGBT+ awareness', 'Workplace Behaviours', 'Disability Awareness' and 'Microaggressions'; ensuring EDI is representative in all training and policies.
- We need to build on our employment benefits package by developing a 'total reward package', which will create a stronger employment brand, supporting our aim to become an 'employer of choice'. This will link to the launch of the of the 'Applause Box' (Part 2) based on the success of the 'Applause Box' launched in August 2022.
- The ways of working group will continue to review how we can evolve as an organisation and will be a key link in the Relocation project and smarter ways of working linking to our Climate Change agenda.
- Training and developing employees to embrace change both within their current jobs and in future ways of working and delivering services.

Supporting the 'Change Programme' and link to the Digital Transformation agenda to support our people processes. Leading organisational change and development in an open, transparent and engaging way.

- The Wellbeing Strategy 2023 -2027 (Appendix 4) consolidates and proposes the themes for wellbeing to progress our existing remit.

1.6 The People Strategy Workplan (Appendix 1a) will be developed and monitored through the Transformation Steering Group, Senior Leadership Team, Joint Communication Forum, Members Trades Union Panel and Programme Advisory Board with regular updates to all Councillors as part of the quarterly 'Workforce Update'.

1.7 As identified in some of the significant areas achieved in 1.4, training and support have been a constant to ensure Managers and staff have been able to adapt to our new ways of working.

1.8 The 'Flexi-Time and Time Recording Policy' (Appendix 2) has been updated to remove set working hours around 'office' opening times where roles allow and provides further clarity on our agile working model through the 'Agile Working Guidance' (Appendix 3). This follows on from the Ways of Working Managers Guide to consolidate these key areas.

2 Alternative Options

2.1 Benchmarking with other organisations were considered to ensure the WDC People Strategy is both tailored and fit for purpose based on the challenges the Council faces both in the short term and long term.

3 Legal Implications

None

4 Financial

4.1 Should there be initiatives identified above and beyond the existing budgets then a case can be made for further funding.

5 Business Strategy

5.1 Warwick District Council has adopted a Business Strategy which sets out key areas for service delivery. The proposal will assist the Council to better achieve these outcomes by enhancing its capacity and co-ordination of activity together with ensuring effective workforce planning.

6 Environmental/Climate Change Implications

6.1 A key theme in the People Strategy is the 'Smarter Working and the working Environment'. This links to the updated Ways of Working in WDC and approach to Agile Working (Appendix 3). This has been supported through briefings and support for Managers.

7 Analysis of the effects on Equality

7.1 Equalities Diversity and Inclusion is one of the key themes of the People Strategy, work is progressing following the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group and appointment of the EDI Business Partner. Updates will be provided via the Workforce Updates and Programme Advisory Board.

8 Data Protection

8.1 There are no employee data protection implications of this proposal.

9 Health and Wellbeing

9.1 A priority of the People Strategy is the Health and Well-being of our staff and identified as one of the key themes. The Health and Well-being Strategy (Appendix 4) and associated action plan has been devised following achievement of 'Thrive' Bronze award.

10 Risk Assessment

The risk of not implementing the People Strategy will impact on the agreed strategic direction of workforce of the Council.

11 Consultation

Consultation and engagement has taken place with Unison, Staff Voice, Ways of Working Group, Senior Leadership Team and the Transformation Portfolio Holder.

Background papers:

None

Supporting documents:

None