

Public
Key Decision - No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: HDC Workforce Strategy and Action Plan

Meeting/Date: Employment Committee – 26 June 2024

Executive Portfolio: Cllr Lara Davenport Ray (LDR)

Report by: Strategic HR Manager (NB)

Ward(s) affected: N/A

Executive Summary:

Further to the April 2024 Employment Committee where we shared the second Pillar of the Workforce Strategy, we are pleased to present the full workforce strategy that includes the final Pillar (which focuses on Well-being) to you.

Employees across HDC have once again had the opportunity to contribute to the strategy. Through testing our preliminary ideas on the workforce strategy content and conducting interactive workshops across the three pillars, we have achieved a high level of employee engagement in shaping the workforce strategy. With over **73%** of the staff, which amounts to **472** employees participating in both online and in-person engagement sessions, there is a strong collective effort in forming the recommendations and driving the strategy forward.

The involvement of senior leaders, ERG groups, elected members, and the integration of external networking and research further enriches the process, ensuring that the strategy aligns with best practices and industry standards.

Overall, this strategy is:

1. Working to achieve one of the actions under priority three of the Corporate Plan that is focused on 'Doing our core work well' and 'Delivering good quality, high value-for money services with good control and compliance with statutory obligations.'
2. Meeting one of the agreed actions from the Corporate Plan 'Complete the remaining elements of the Workforce Strategy to prepare the Council for the changing skills needed in our future workforce and ensure we can continue to attract, retain and nurture talent.'

From the feedback from the engagement sessions we have also created a draft action plan, which is also presented to you today. There is still work to be done on the prioritisation of the plan but this will demonstrate the scope of the activities that will be explored.

Recommendation(s):

The Committee is asked to:

- a) consider and endorse the full Workforce Strategy, and
- b) recommend the Council to approve the Strategy at its meeting on 17th July 2024.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The report draws Committee attention to the Workforce Strategy and asks for endorsement to implement the use of it.

2.1 WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND

- 2.2 Under Priority 3, 'Deliver good quality, high value-for-money services with good control and compliance for statutory obligations', of HDC's Corporate Plan one of the identified actions was to "Deliver a renewed Workforce Strategy to prepare the Council for the changing skills needed in our future workforce and to ensure that we can continue to attract, retain and nurture talent."
- 2.3 To achieve this action a project was initiated to understand what the workforce strategy needed to be and then to engage with our workforce to ensure that the strategy is truly collaborative and reflective of our staff views.
- 2.4 As presented at the November 2023 Employment Committee, various engagement activities have been taken to launch the project. The final area completed is the engagement on the third "pillar" Well-being.

2.5 KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

- a. The world of work is changing at a faster rate than ever before and HDC needs to be ready for these changes. This strategy will give us the framework and direction to ensure we are ready to meet the challenges of now and in the future. The strategy will impact across our entire workforce and whilst not all actions will impact everyone, some will impact everyone. This is why we have dedicated time to our engagement work to ensure we have captured as much feedback and ideas as possible, and whilst it may not be possible to implement all of the ideas either immediately, or at all, we will ensure feedback is given on the reasons for this.

2.6 WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- a. The implementation for the strategy is in a three-stage approach, as we will launch each "pillar" following each engagement piece.
- b. The timetable for this means that Pillar 3, Well-being, is being presented alongside the full strategy and supporting action plan. The action plan shows what we expect to do as a Council to achieve the strategy.
- c. **HDC Workforce Strategy Action Plan**
The workforce analysis and planning framework forms the foundation of our comprehensive workforce strategy action plan. Developed through extensive staff engagement and external research, the framework identifies the key focus areas we must address to align our workforce capacity and capabilities with HDC's strategic objectives.

Central to this plan is projecting our future workforce needs based on service delivery plans and budget forecasts. By thoroughly assessing our current workforce, demographics, skills, and gaps, we can then develop targeted recruitment, retention, and reskilling strategies. Underpinning the entire plan is a commitment to fostering an engaged, high-performing, and inclusive, organisational culture. Below is a brief summary of the proposed action plan for the workforce strategy:

Attraction and Retention

- Develop strategies to attract and recruit talent while promoting HDC's employer brand, delivering on our employee value proposition (EVP).
- Implement initiatives to retain skilled and experienced staff, such as career development opportunities, competitive compensation, and a framework for employee well-being.

Workforce Planning

- Align workforce capacity and capability with HDC's strategic objectives.
- Implement succession planning for critical roles.
- Up-skill and re-skill the existing workforce.

Organisational Design

- Review of the council's organisational structure and job roles.
- Identify opportunities to improve efficiency, flexibility, and responsiveness.

Employee Engagement and Culture

- Initiatives to foster a positive and inclusive environment.
- Strategies to improve employee satisfaction, motivation, and productivity.

Performance Management

- Developing robust performance management systems.
- Linking individual objectives to overall Council priorities.

Learning and Development

- Invest in training and continuous professional development.
- Address identified skills gaps.

Workforce Diversity and Inclusion

- Promote equal opportunities and diversity in the workforce.
- Address any under-representation or barriers to employment.

Digital Transformation

- Leverage technology to enhance workforce productivity and efficiency.
- Upskill the workforce for digital ways of working.

Partnership and Collaboration

- Explore internal opportunities for shared services or joint working with other public sector organisations.
- Engage with external stakeholders to understand their workforce needs.

d. Whilst the action plan has been developed, our officers are already working on and launching some of the recommended priorities.

Here is what we have achieved so far:

- Upgrade to the Learning Management System.
- Changes to our Recruitment System.
- The Launch of our Planning Recruitment video.
- Corporate Narrative Sessions - employee voice.

2.7 LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

(See Corporate Plan)

- a. This is a direct action of the Corporate Plan under Priority 3: Delivery good quality, high value-for-money services with good control and compliance for statutory obligations.

2.8 CONSULTATION

- a. All staff have had the opportunity to give feedback and ideas into what we do well and how we can better attract and retain employees, promote employee engagement and well-being, and what we need to do as a council to ensure we are fit for our workforce now and in the future. A total of **333** employees attended these sessions, which were held at most HDC sites and conducted both online and in person.
- b. The process of engaging the workforce to develop the renewed workforce strategy has been carefully structured to ensure that a wide range of perspectives has been captured and incorporated by using a variety of engagement channels to reach a broad cross-section of employees including:
 - Conducting a staff-wide survey to collect employee input and feedback on our preliminary ideas.
 - Holding employee engagement sessions from different departments, levels, and backgrounds.
 - Organising town hall meetings to present the draft strategy proposals and gather additional input.

The project team communicated the engagement process, shared findings, and explained how employee input influenced the final workforce strategy. This transparency has built trust and accountability.

By using this multi-faceted approach, we have gained a comprehensive understanding of the workforce's needs and priorities. This has led to the development of a truly collaborative workforce strategy for HDC.

- c. In addition, we have engaged with the Senior leadership Team, UNISON and ERG to gain their feedback and we have held two sessions for this Committee to provide input.

2.9 REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- a. Adoption of the strategy will ensure we are working towards what our employees need now and what they will need in the future, and we will be achieving one of the actions to support the Corporate Plan.

2.10 LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – HDC Workforce Strategy (Pillars 1, 2, & 3)

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