
To: Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1)

Date: 28th November 2018

Subject: Workforce Strategy update

1 Purpose of Note

- 1.1 The purpose of this note and presentation, is to provide Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) with an update on a number of developments relating to the Council's workforce. Key areas covered include further developments and the implementation of the Council's Workforce Strategy, feedback from the recent Employee Engagement survey and the Council's investment in a range of Leadership Development programmes.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Scrutiny Board (1) are being asked to endorse the work that has been undertaken to date and provide feedback on the content of this report and the progress being made.

3 Background

- 3.1 One of this Council's aims is to create an organisation that has organisational capacity, is fit for the future with a workforce that is appropriately skilled, agile and flexible. We want our employees to feel informed, involved and consulted by creating the right environment and space for innovation and learning, whilst at the same time motivating and empowering employees to deliver the Council's plan and objectives. To achieve our vision we will need to focus on:

- **Leadership** that is visionary, ambitious and effective and the development of leadership skills at all levels.
- **Organisational Change and Development** that is focussed on our employees, their wellbeing and resilience.
- **Skills Development** that is truly innovative and focussed on combining organisational and individual needs.
- **Improved Recruitment and Retention** outcomes based on proper planning and use of best practice techniques.
- **Pay and Reward Systems** that attract and retain talent on the appropriate terms and conditions and which motivates and helps employees throughout their careers.

4 Workforce Strategy

- 4.1 In 2017 the Council launched its three-year Workforce Strategy. The purpose of the strategy is to outline the way forward for our workforce for the next three years. It aims to set out our framework so we can ensure that we have the right people in the right jobs with the right skills and employment policies and practices in place to enable us to deliver services to the citizens of Coventry. We realise that our employees are our most important asset and our biggest investment.

Over the past 12 months we have been able to develop a number of workforce strategy initiatives across the organisation which have included; the review of a number of policies, an updated workforce profile, comprehensive investment in leadership development programmes, the implementation of improved management information and governance arrangements, the introduction of a new workplace car parking scheme, improved HR technology and ICT platform with greater functionality for Council and traded services, an Employee Engagement Survey, 'Let's Talk' sessions with employees and a new agency contract, all of which we believe will contribute to the Council being a modern and flexible 21st Century employer.

5 Employee Engagement 'Your Voice' Survey

- 5.1 Earlier this year the Council commissioned Martin Reddington Associates (MRA) to carry out an employee engagement exercise through an employee survey. The aim of the survey was to enable the Council to gain a better understanding of the following:
- 'The psychological contract of its employees and their feelings of connection to Coventry City Council'.
 - 'The appetite for the workforce to adopt more collaborative and empowering ways of working within a 'One Coventry' philosophy, with a view to moving towards working more effectively with other organisations and the citizens of Coventry.'
 - 'The degree to which the Council is articulating a compelling vision for the future.'
 - 'Recommendations on how best the Council can engage with its employees so they are able to understand, support and become more aligned to the future aspirations of the City'.

The work carried out by MRA included an online employee survey, targeted intervention in hard to reach areas such as Whitley Depot and the facilitation of 5 focus groups. 32 employees participated in 4 employee focus groups and 7 trade union members in 1 focus group.

The overall response rate to the survey was 38% which equates to a total of 1659 responses. Although the number of respondents was lower than we had hoped the Council was able to gather robust statistical analysis and gain an indicator on employee views.

5.2 Findings

Set out below are the headline findings from the employee survey and focus groups.

- Based on the responses provided in the survey the Council showed a [moderate](#) score overall with some room for improvement.
- The results of the survey also showed a high score for [employee contribution](#) – this means that there was a strong desire for employees to ‘want to do their best’ and that there was a strong believe in wanting to build a better City for the residents of Coventry.
- With regard to whether the Council has a [supportive culture](#), the results show a perception of a moderately supportive culture strengthened by comments of feeling supported by colleagues as one of the best things about working for Coventry.
- Focus groups were dominated by discussions about requiring [better conversational](#) practice across the Council and externally. Employees conveyed that they wanted better relationships with other services, recognising and understanding what each other does, moving away from Silo working and delivering priorities as ‘One Council’.
- [Job pressure](#) was scored at a high to moderate level within the survey. Examples of job pressure were related to time pressures, available resources, workload clarity with regard to priorities and firefighting. Where job pressure is high reference has been made to high levels of stress which could have implications for employee health and wellbeing.
- Employees were asked to score to what degree the Council was *conversational, innovative, capable trustworthy, supportive and directive*. The most dominant score was the Council is a [‘Capable’](#) employer.
- With regard to whether the Council is seen as a [‘fair employer’](#), there were many positive comments regarding terms and conditions of employment, working conditions, flexibility, opportunities for development and valuing employees.
- There was a strength of feeling expressed in the focus groups and through the statistical analysis relating to how Friargate is perceived in comparison to other sites. For example employees at Friargate scored more favourably on a range of survey items in comparison to other locations. Comments included ‘*a location for the privileged*’, ‘*superior IT*’, and ‘*intimidating*’. There was a sense of [Friargate vs the rest](#).
- The focus groups highlighted a requirement for a compelling vision for the Council, improved communication and further clarity on what the [Council vision](#), purpose and plan is, all of which could be increased by the visibility of senior leaders.

5.3 A statistical technique known as *key driver analysis* has been used to help focus on features of the employment deal that have the greatest impact on how employees contribute at work. The top six items that have the most impact on employee contribution are listed below:

- *I feel able to strongly influence my performance objectives*
- *My line manager encourages conversations within my team about creating solutions to work-related problems*
- *I understand the support available to enable me to get my job done*
- *I constantly experience excessive pressure in my job*
- *I have a clear understanding about the council’s responsibilities to me*
- *My line manager encourages conversations that enable the team to be more effective in achieving its performance goals*

5.4 In addition, the survey also highlighted the best thing about working at Coventry City Council and the biggest challenges in the workplace:

The Best Thing	The Biggest Challenge
Job satisfaction – making a difference	Lack of resources (including staffing)
Working successfully as a team	Volume of work
Organisation support – job security, culture, IT and structure*	Job pressure
Training	Management – senior managers having challenging expectations
Flexibility – work life balance	Quality of service
Pay and benefits	Restructure
Job security	Technology and process
Environment (mainly those in Friargate)	Training and progression
	Pay and benefits

6 Leadership Development Investment

6.1 The Council aims to create a culture whereby leaders and managers at all levels across the organisation are able to deliver the outcomes within our Council Plan and Workforce Strategy and perform their existing roles as highly capable individuals and team members. The leadership paradigm is changing, gone are the days of the heroic leader – the command and control managerial model where you instruct employees and they follow. It is clear from the research carried out as part of the “21st Century Public Servant” that leaders whether they be existing, future, aspiring or emerging will need a different skills set if they are to be successful in delivering the outcomes for their citizens

As the Council continues to develop new and innovative approaches to service delivery, by creating new income streams and adopting a more commercial and customer focused approach, it will also need to ensure that it has the right leadership and management capabilities which will create the right environment and space for innovation and learning, whilst at the same time motivating and empowering employees to deliver the Council’s vision and objectives.

In 2017 Coventry City Council launched its Leadership Development Framework. The framework is designed to establish an organisational ‘DNA’ for leaders and managers both emerging and future, which will build capacity to respond to a new and challenging local government whilst embracing thoughts on what it means to be a 21st Century Public Servant. Skilled leaders and managers are the key to success and this framework is underpinned by the following principles that will develop their skills and abilities. The following leadership development programmes are currently being delivered across the Council. The programmes are targeted at both existing, aspiring, future and senior leaders across the workforce.

- Leading an Empowered Organisation (LEO)
- Licence to Practice (facilitated by members of the HR team)
- Chartered Management Institute (CMI) Level 3 (funded through the Apprenticeship Levy)
- Chartered Management Institute (CMI) Level 5 (funded through the Apprenticeship Levy)
- First Line Managers programme
- Masters’ Degree – Public Sector Leadership (funded through the Apprenticeship Levy)

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