

Decision maker:	Cabinet Member Finance and Corporate Services
Decision date:	12 January 2021
Title of report:	Workforce and OD Strategy
Report by:	Organisation Development Business Partner

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose and summary

To seek agreement to the workforce and organisation development strategy covering the period 2021-2024.

The strategy being presented is designed to capture at a high level the context and priorities for developing our workforce so that it is engaged, agile and resilient in pursuit of the organisation's agenda.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) **The workforce and organisation strategy is approved as presented.**

Alternative options

1. There are no alternative options. The organisation needs a workforce strategy to provide people internally and externally with clarity and confidence in relation to workforce and

organisation development activity and to provide a clear and transparent means of tracking progress.

Key considerations

2. The Workforce and Organisation Development Strategy was originally produced in draft form in 2019 to outline the strategic context and broad themes that would shape our workforce and organisation development for the following four years. In 2020 the Coronavirus pandemic crisis resulted in an unprecedented rapid transformation of our workforce and working practices, as we urgently adapted to the requirements of working from home and carrying out our activities in new, Covid-safe ways.
3. Following the initial period of lockdown over the spring and early summer of 2020, it became apparent that the 'new normal' would endure – partly as a practical response to maintaining Covid safety, but also due to a fundamental shift in working culture as the opportunities arising from a more agile, flexible and virtual approach to work were acknowledged. The Workforce and Organisation Development Strategy has therefore been revised to reflect and respond to the changing context in which our staff now live, work and deliver services in Herefordshire.
4. The updated strategy sets out our ambition and agenda, and articulates the behaviours we are looking to develop in our workforce in order to achieve our overall aim – to develop an engaged, agile and resilient workforce. It is structured around a model of six areas of activity, at the centre of which is our culture. We will use the strategy to allocate resource and, where appropriate, shape business plans. Actions in our annual plans will deliver the activities that are described at a high level in the strategy.
5. The strategy also includes our approaches to employee wellbeing and employee engagement as these are fundamental to delivering our ambitions set out in the strategy and achieving our overall aim of developing an engaged, agile and resilient workforce.

Community impact

6. Delivering the aims set out in the strategy will result in a workforce that is better able to deliver the corporate objectives as prescribed in the County Plan 2020 - 2024 as well as to respond to future challenges and organisational changes, and ultimately better serve the residents and businesses of Herefordshire.
7. The corporate delivery plan also notes the council's commitment to continue to invest in activities that ensure we attract and retain a highly skilled workforce and develops people appropriately and supports their continued wellbeing.
8. **Environment impact** - Our strategy of enabling more flexible and agile working practices supports the council's environmental policy commitments by reducing the potential number of vehicular commuter journeys and providing more opportunity for staff to travel outside of peak travel times, thus reducing carbon and particulate emissions.

Equality duty

9. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
10. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. The strategy in question supports our equality duty through a number of ways, for example setting out an approach to recruitment that looks beyond our current channels and catchment; and proposing a more agile, flexible approach to work that will attract and benefit a more diverse workforce.
 11. The strategy reiterates our recognition of the value that diverse perspectives bring: harnessing that as we develop our culture will ultimately improve the services we provide to our community.

Resource implications

12. There is no requirement for direct additional funding. The strategy captures at a high level the context and priorities for developing our workforce and it is anticipated that most activities which support the strategy will be resourced through existing teams and budgets. The strategy enables appropriate allocation of existing resources.
13. Any additional projects which are subsequently identified to support the strategy and require additional funding will be subject to their own business case.

Legal implications

14. The Workforce and Organisation Development Strategy will need to have regard to all legislation related to employment and workplace legislation.

Risk management

15. The strategy will provide clarity and confidence in relation to workforce and organisation development activity, and builds on the approach we are already taking.
16. It sets out our intentions at a high level and is intended to provide an agenda that can adapt to changes such as regulatory pressures, budget revisions or unexpected crisis events without needing to re-write the strategy.
17. The strategy not being accepted would result in less clarity or focus of activity in our organisation development agenda. It would also risk our ambition of an engaged, agile and resilient workforce not being achieved.

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
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Significant changes in budget or council priorities may result in elements of the strategy not being delivered as expected	The strategy focuses on organisational culture and has been developed so that the overall approach can remain even if certain supporting initiatives need to change. Actions and detail are held at delivery plan level.
Changes to the way we are working, such as more flexible and agile working arrangements, present both risks and opportunities for the council's ability to deliver	Successful implementation of the strategy will result in a workforce which is more agile and resilient to change, and will foster a culture of managing delivery by outcomes. It will also enable us to embrace the opportunities of agile working such as improving recruitment and retention outcomes.

Consultees

18. Considerable consultation was undertaken to develop the core aspects of the strategy on which this revised version is based, such as the development of the 8 behaviours, which emerged from initiatives such as our Better Ways Of Working programme (BWOW) , CPiP (Continuous Performance Improvement Programme), employee survey outputs and peer challenge findings, and were subsequently tested with senior leaders in the organisation. The revised version has been circulated with senior leaders and members of Management Board, and their input incorporated during the drafting process.

Appendices

- A. Workforce and Organisation Development Strategy

Background papers

None identified