



Council Overview Board
5 November 2015

The Human Resources and Organisational Development Service

Purpose of the report:

1. To set out the main services which HR & OD currently provides to the council, its managers and workforce, to enable members to focus in on future areas they would wish to scrutinise in more depth.
- 1.2 To focus at this meeting on three key areas (1) Pay & Reward (2) Agency Staff and (3) Preventing and Handling Conflict.

Background

2 What does the HR and OD Service Do?

- 2.1 The HR and OD Service looks after the interests of managers, staff and the workforce “from hire to retire”. The end result aimed for is happy, skilled people who can give a great service to Surrey’s residents.
- 2.2 The service works to build a high performing workforce as well as to ensure the county council as an employer complies with laws and regulations which affect the employment of people at work.
- 2.3 This service is now part of the Orbis Partnership and so is currently under review. This report, therefore, is based on what HR & OD are currently delivering. Surrey’s HR & OD will become an integrated service with East Sussex County Council. The model of delivery of HR and OD will be considerably different and the overview of this direction is set out in the Orbis Business Plan.

3 Human Resources & Organisational Development does the following:

3.1 Ensure we can attract the best talent to Surrey

- 3.2 Our Recruitment Team links with our partner TMP to ensure we are constantly looking at our employer brand and what people think and feel about Surrey. We want to keep our brand fresh and appealing in order for us to be able to compete with high performing competitors, whatever part of the economy they come from. The current nation-wide recruitment campaign for Children’s social worker Assistant Team Managers is an example of good work between Children’s Services, Surrey HR and TMP.

- 3.3 We are also constantly refreshing our jobs site and making sure it is accessible to people with disabilities. Surrey HR has been working in

collaboration with Surrey Coalition for Disabled People to help make improvements to our application, selection and induction processes to make things easier for people with disabilities to apply to Surrey for work. We also have developed an apprenticeship programme at Surrey and over 350 young people have had apprenticeships with Surrey since it started in May 2009.

4 **Retain Scarce Skills and Develop Talent**

4.1 We have a comprehensive and innovative programme for our senior and middle managers aimed at developing values based, high performing leaders, focusing on both behaviours and skills, namely the Coaching Programme and the High Performance Development Programme. In identifying skills gaps in the areas of empathy, self-awareness and conflict management we are equipping our managers to address challenging situations in an adult, open way. For aspiring managers we offer a range of self directed learning, skills workshops and coaching and mentoring. To compliment the leadership and management programmes our offer ensures that where managers are required to maintain high levels of practitioner skills there are a wide range of blended continuing professional development options to fulfil their regulatory requirements. This allows the managers at all levels to be both a competent practitioner as well as an effective and confident individual.

5 **Look after our People**

5.1 As part of our duty of care, the County Council has a strong focus as a wellbeing employer. Surrey now has a comprehensive employee offer, including ill health prevention programmes, a focus on mental health, a partnership with the Surrey Coalition of Disabled People and Sight for Surrey and a retender, redesign and relaunch of a health and wellbeing Occupational Health, Employee Assistance and Day One Absence Services. The wellbeing offer, combined with targeted HR absence management and Team Wellbeing Assessments, has contributed positively, to sustainable strong performance in low absence. Sickness absence rates have reduced from a high of 13.2 days per FTE (Full Time Equivalent) in 2008 to 6.5 FTE currently. The future challenge is to ensure that long term absence is further reduced.

5.2 To further strengthen the wellbeing programme, the council is working towards attaining the National Workplace Wellbeing Charter, which has been approved by the Health and Wellbeing Board. One of the key strategic areas includes flexible working and work life balance. Over 52% of the Council's workforce work on a part time basis. The County Council promotes flexible benefits in every Job Advert. The council has a good special leave policy e.g. parental leave. Our special leave policy also covers adoptive parents, foster carers and Guardians.

5.3 To move towards flexible working and becoming more "family friendly", Surrey has:

- **ENGAGEMENT** - facilitated 100s of Smarter Working team conversations and training sessions, to identify work styles and grow Smarter Working cultures across the council
- **EQUIPMENT** - supported a refresh of 5500 laptops and 3300 Blackberry Devices
- **LOCATIONS** - supported office relocations and made efficiencies by moving out of four head-quarters buildings and rationalised to more efficient work spaces. This has resulted in a reduction in desk ratios, from 1:1 to 3:5
- **PROMOTION** - widely and actively promote Smarter Working

- 5.4 Currently, the Council has also issued 850 iPads and 150 iPhones as part of extending the provision and meeting increasing demand. This will rise to over 1000 iPads and 3300 iPhones to replace our Blackberries. These are the necessary tools to enable people to work in a smarter more flexible way.
- 5.6 The Council's corporate Health, Safety and Well-being functions sit within the HR & OD Service. The council believes that the promotion of health, safety and welfare is a benefit to everyone affected by the Council's undertakings, including service users, contractors and members of the community.
- 5.7 The Council recognises and will meet its statutory and common law health, safety and welfare duties, as required by the **Health & Safety at Work Act 1974** and subordinate legislation such as **The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999** and **The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1999**. The Council promotes and adopts high standards and safe working practices through its health and safety management system, whilst continuously monitoring, reviewing and improving upon health and safety performance.

6 Develop a Values based, High Performing Culture – Surrey; One Team

- 6.1 As part of our wider leadership programme, we are supporting Managers in engaging with their teams with issues which traditionally would have been 'solved' by senior managers. Our Leading with Confidence programme allows for managers across the organisation to network on common issues and challenges, allowing teams to come up with their own solutions and listening to views and discussions. These events will ensure that our managers reconnect with our organisational values and customer promise and take ownership, resulting in a less hierarchal, more empowering culture.

7 Workforce Planning - Efficient and Effective Resourcing & Organisational Design

- 7.1 This function is aimed at ensuring the council and its services have the right number of people with the right skills in the right place at the right time to deliver short and long term organisational objectives.
- 7.2 This function also looks at organisational design. The "Doing Change Better" programme of work looks at how we can support managers to co-design services with residents, staff, partners and Members at the heart. In challenging people to really think about the tasks being undertaken and by whom and working with our internal partners in a networked approach, we can create a flatter more networked organisation which encourages autonomy and clarity of accountability.

8 Positive Employee Relations and Employee Engagement

- 8.1 We positively support and promote partnership working with our trades unions. Surrey recognises the value of effective trades union relationships and the benefits to staff of which membership of a union can bring. Through regular engagement and active involvement trades unions contribute to the policies, practices and experiences of staff working for the local authority.

9 Ensure We Reward Staff Fairly

- 9.1 Surrey offers a broad range of financial and non-financial benefits to staff as part of a package of rewards. Human Resources continues to innovate the

reward package, finding ways to 'stretch' the employee pound and to provide benefits that are valued by our staff. Having fair rewards means we maintain pay systems which are transparent and provide equal pay for work of equal value. It is vital for the recruitment, retention and motivation of staff that our pay stays in touch with the changes affecting pay in the employment market.

10 **Temporary Resourcing**

10.1 Surrey needs to be able to respond to uncertain and variable demand for services and frequently where competition for staffing may be fierce. We need access to flexible staffing resources to maintain services in this context. Surrey maintains and develops the most effective methods of working with a multitude of suppliers where it may not be possible or appropriate to recruit permanent staff, e.g. where skills are scarce, reacting to immediate demands or during transition to new models of delivery.

11 **What Happens When Things go Wrong – Effective Prevention and Handling of Conflict**

11.1 Thankfully, the majority of staff will never experience being bullied at work, or feeling aggrieved or suffer harassment or be treated badly by another colleague or their manager. However, people do and can fall out with each other at work and can underperform and treat others in a way which does not accord with our organisation's values of Listen, Responsible, Trust & Respect. HR is focused on both trying to help prevent conflict happening - the HR Restorative Approach (see paragraph below). Where serious conflict or misconduct does happen, the HR Advisory team has the professional expertise, supported by a set of formal policies, for dealing with difficult conduct and behaviour at work. This team also provides the expertise to help managers to manage change effectively and to stay within the law when doing so.

12 **Restorative H.R Approach**

12.1 Since late 2013, HR has led a culture change programme of work on supporting the resolution of employee relations issues across services via a restorative approach.

12.2 The work was part of a wider Changing Culture Programme and one of the work streams focussed on Restorative HR Practice

12.3 The principles came from the restorative justice approach in Services for Young People which takes a positive, non-punitive approach to resolving conflict with young offenders

12.4 The approach was adapted by HR and involved encouraging staff to resolve conflict at work in a more informal manner. This was as alternative to going through an adversarial employee relations approach which has a focus on process, policy and apportioning blame and sanction rather than enabling honest conversations and an opportunity for people to make changes themselves to improve things.

12.5 The approach brings together affected parties and provides an environment for the expression of feelings and exploring options. The outcome of the meeting(s) is to allow participants to come to a shared understanding and to rebuild working relationships. The overarching principle is that the people who are party to the conflict are given support to find solutions themselves instead of having solutions imposed on them.

- 12.6 This approach also reduces the number of formal HR cases/employee relations issues within the Council which can be time consuming, costly and have a negative impact for the parties impacted and the people, teams and customers around them.
- 12.7 The programme of work to implement restorative HR practice within the Council involved:
- A successful pilot within Children's services (complete in 2014)
 - Training managers on how to support conflict, issues and complaints within their teams via a restorative approach (started in 2014 and ongoing)
 - A 6 month accredited training programme for HR advisors on how to support casework via restorative practice, including action learning sets to help embed such practice (training completed October 2015)
 - Training staff across the organisation to be restorative facilitators to support restorative meetings (to be completed by Dec 2015)
- 12.8 Since restorative HR practice has been implemented across the organisation, more cases are being resolved via this informal approach. Approximately a third of HR activity is casework management and 20% of casework activity is informal and restorative which aligns positively with the strategic direction
- 12.9 Feedback from managers and staff using the approach has been positive including:
- managers and staff prefer an informal route to seek agreed resolutions
 - staff feel they have been listened to and treated with dignity
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- 12.10 It is recognised that it can be difficult and emotional to have an honest conversation on issues concerning staff and they need to feel supported throughout. Therefore, training is taking place for more colleagues within the Council to be trained as restorative facilitators to support such meetings to continue to encourage employee relations issues to be resolved via the restorative approach.
- 12.11 Continuing development work includes:
- for managers to continue to attend the County Council's Leadership Programme, the High Performance Development Programme, to learn new skills in having difficult conversations and to learn about how the approach works
 - To complete the training for restorative facilitators within the different services across the Council – we aim for an initial 45 trained Restorative Practitioners
 - To work with East Sussex and Babcock to support the approach within Orbis and Schools

Next steps

The HR&OD service is a key part of the remit of the Council Overview Board. The Scrutiny Board will be continue to regularly schedule items to review and scrutinise elements of the HR&OD service.

Recommendations:

The Scrutiny Board are asked to consider which HR&OD topics they would like to scrutinise at future meetings.

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Sources/background papers: *None.*